

Rethinking Africa's transcontinental continuities

QUEST: An African Journal of Philosophy /
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EDITORIAL

After a long silence spanning most of the 2010s, this is at long last a new volume of *QUEST: An African Journal of Philosophy / Revue Africaine de Philosophie* – postdated to the years 2012–2014. The year 2009 marked the end of the five-years hospitality agreement between *QUEST* and the African Studies Centre, Leiden (ASCL), which implied that henceforth the journal's postage and printing expenses could no longer be paid by that famous institution. Failure of other applications for subsidy meant that soon, already at the beginning of the present decade, lack of funds and of (wo)manpower forced us to dispense with the subscription system, and to opt instead for separate annual volumes to be purchased in the open market. Meanwhile Mrs Kirsten Seifikaar née van Ummersen, who for many years had taken excellent care of the journal's financial administration including subscriptions, and who had also contributed her extensive editorial skills and experience, had to discontinue her unremunerated involvement with *QUEST*. We have lost in her a very capable and dedicated colleague, and we thank her for all the work she has done for the journal over the years. After the successful publication of a special issue on Masolo, protracted illness on the part of the Editor did the rest to condemn the journal to a state of dormancy, from which it is only being revived with the present, three-annual volume considering *Africa's transcontinental continuities*.

An earlier special issue of *QUEST* was already devoted to the transcontinental dimension of African philosophy. However, our journal has always been a meeting place between philosophy and other disciplines (especially the social sciences, and history), and this felicitous combination also marks the present volume.

That it can appear under the banner of *QUEST* is largely due to the limitless generosity and paradigmatic constancy of the ASCL and its present Director. That institution initiated (in the person of the then Director, Ton Dietz), organised, hosted, and largely funded the Leiden 2012 international conference 'Rethinking Africa's transcontinental continuities in pre- and proto-history', whose proceedings are offered here. Documents exchanged in the early 2010s leave no doubt that the proceedings were agreed to be published by the ASCL in one of its two series with the Leiden publishing house Brill – and this prospect was also repeatedly shared with the contributors. However, when in the years after the conference no copy-editorial or secretarial assistance whatsoever was extended towards the publication of this timely and costly project, it became clear that the project was increasingly being disowned by the ASCL's leadership. It had become a bone of contention in the predictable paradigmatic tug of war between the North Atlantic Africanist establishment (evidently partial to the splendid isolation and essentialisation of Africa and Africans), and the globalising, de-essentialising perspective prevailing at the conference and in the present book. Here Africa and its inhabitants appear, at long last, as integral parts of the world as a whole, involved in a constant and complex process of exchange where Africa now gives, then takes; now (in Afrocentrist fashion) takes the initiative in socio-cultural, political and religious developments, then follows developments in the wider world. When the present manuscript was finally (against the odds of retirement, illness and unremuneration) edited and submitted for publication to the ASCL, it was not treated for what it was (that institution's own commissioned, prestigious achievement), but as an unwelcome external submission, and was brutally, if predictably, rejected.

We at *QUEST*, committed to the production of relevant and up-to-date Africanist knowledge, decided that we could not let our contributors (including a fair number of African colleagues) nor our readers wait any longer, so we are here presenting the integral proceedings to an audience which, we trust, will be in a better position to appreciate their value.



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Rethinking Africa's transcontinental continuities

**Proceedings of the Leiden 2012 international
conference**

ed. Wim M.J. van Binsbergen

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cover illustration: al-Idrisi's world map, 539 AH / 860 AH (1154 CE / 1456 CE). Al-Idrisi, an Islamic scientist, was born in Morocco and worked at the court of King Roger II, Palermo, Sicily, Italy. Therefore, while less famous than the same cartographer's *Tabula Rogeriana*, also this map may be considered a product of the fruitful interaction of the three continents Africa (which occupies the top of the map), Asia, and Europe.

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

by Wim van Binsbergen

1.1. This volume

This volume is based on the International Conference 'Rethinking Africa's Transcontinental Continuities in Pre- and Proto-history', held at the African Studies Centre, Leiden (ASCL), the Netherlands, 12-13 April 2012. The conference was meant as a valedictory event to mark the retirement of Wim van Binsbergen (who has held appointments at the ASCL since 1st January 1977, and who in that long period of more than 35 years, for nearly two decades served that institution in senior leadership capacities); it was also to constitute one of the significant activities celebrating the 65th anniversary of the ASCL.

The conference topic was prompted by the transcontinental dimensions which van Binsbergen's research had acquired over the previous decade. The comparative element had always been strong in his work (ever since his first major book, 1981, *Religious Change in Zambia*, where the comparison was limited to the region of South Central Africa but extending over a period of half a millennium); however, with his work on Southern African ecstatic cults prompted by his fieldwork in North East Botswana, from 1988 on, and his subsequent concentration on intercultural philosophy and comparative mythology¹ with increasing empirical emphasis on long-range stretches of space and

¹ Comparative Mythology, as recently revived by former Leiden Sanskritist Michael Witzel now at the Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Harvard University, Cambridge, USA. In regard of my increas-

time, it was time to make Africa's transcontinental continuities in pre- and proto-history the focus of an international conference – meant to take stock of existing research in this counter-paradigmatic field, and to prepare an agenda for the imminent future.

In this Introduction, I shall set out the purpose of the conference as defined in the conference's *Call for Papers*; acknowledge the extensive contributions from many institutions and individuals without which the conference, and the present book, could never have materialised; and briefly outline, by specific reference to the papers collected in the present volume, to what extent the original conference objectives have been realised and what remains to be done.

Finding that the original *Call for Papers* was an accomplished scholarly text in its own right with continuing relevance as the background to the present volume, I propose to reproduce that text here, in the next section, with only minor editorial changes (which will be largely relegated to the footnotes and the bibliography).

1.2. The original *Call for Papers*

As recent African and Africa-orientated scholarship has stressed,² European / North Atlantic thought, from at least Early Modern times onwards, has conceived of Africa in terms of oppositions and juxtapositions. It has used (*e.g.* in the works of Immanuel Kant and Georg W.F. Hegel) the concept of Africa in order to contrastively construct the European / White / Western identity as different from, discontinuous with, and superior to, African somatic, socio-cultural, productive, political and religious forms. The subsequent consolidation of Africanist anthropology in imperialist, colonialist and racist times initially largely (though usually implicitly) followed the same orientation. Lacking a sophisticated theory of culture, of cultural integration and of culture change, the diffusionist and evolutionist perspectives that dominated scholarship until well into the 20th century sought to explain the details of African societies as encountered in historical times, by invoking locally a low level of socio-cultural evolution, which was claimed (under the now-notorious Hamitic hypothesis)³ to have been enriched by the postulated influx of superior genes, minds, language forms, production technologies

ing, and increasingly facilitated, preoccupation with transcontinentality I acknowledge my great indebtedness to this connection. A similar acknowledgment is due to the African Studies Centre Leiden, which – despite its explicitly regional focus – has greatly stimulated and facilitated the transcontinental dimension of my research over the decades; and the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences, formerly at Wassenaar, the Netherlands, where, through my co-optation to the Working Group on Religion and Magic in the Ancient Near East, 1994-1995, much of the foundation was laid for the scholarly elaboration of the transcontinental questions arising from my Africanist ethnographic research in Botswana from 1988 onward.

² Valentin Mudimbe, Emmanuel Eze, Heinz Kimmerle; also *cf.* the *Black Athena* debate initiated by Martin Bernal.

³ On the Hamitic thesis, *cf.* Aaron 1995; Sanders 1969; Seligman 1913; Sharp 2004; Spöttel 1998; Zachernuk 1994; van Binsbergen 201b: 310 *f.*, and (asserting that van Binsbergen's transcontinentality, although a mildly polemical alternative to the Afrocentrist position (*cf.* Osha 2017) does not amount to a revamped Hamitic thesis) 331 *f.*; van Binsbergen & Woudhuizen 201: 380 *f.*

and forms of socio-political organization from *outside* Africa, notably from the Mediterranean and the Middle East. It was only towards the middle of the 20th century that African Studies, in turn, began to function as a corrective of the general anti-African orientation of North Atlantic thought; African Studies used the concepts of culture and cultural relativism, the critique of 'scientific' racialism, the increasingly vocal discourse of human rights, and the specific critique of the colonial situation in order to vindicate African cultures' specificity and dignity, claiming for them major contributions in their own right to the global heritage of humankind. However, in a way that continued to reflect 19th-century geopolitics, the *prehistoric* emergence of comparatively advanced forms of human culture (with microliths, symbolic thought, articulate language, art, bodily adornment) was until quite recently considered to have taken place in Europe and West Asia. The very idea that the African continent could have made a significant, initial contribution to global cultural history only became thinkable and more or less acceptable (although Afrocentrism has remained suspect for mainstream North Atlantic scholarship, see below), several decades after the actual decolonization of the continent in the second half of the 20th century.

Recent decades have seen breathtaking genetic, linguistic and archaeological advances: the *Out-of-Africa* hypothesis (Rebecca Cann *et al.*); the *Back-into-Africa* hypothesis (M.F. Hammer *et al.*, Fulvio Cruciani *et al.*, Valentina Coia *et al.*); the Nostratic hypothesis (Vladislav Illich-Svitych, Aron Dolgopolsky) and the *Borean* hypothesis (Harold Fleming, Sergei Starostin); the retrieval, from African soil, of the oldest traces left by Anatomically Modern Humans (Christopher Henshilwood *et al.*) and the development, within a revived comparative mythology, of new methods to make that field open up new vistas on the conceptual systems of humankind in the very distant past, and on their transcontinental ramifications (Witzel, Berezkin, van Binsbergen & Venbrux). Still, such a revision of remote prehistory as brought about by these developments did not immediately lead to the revision of the place attributed to Africa with regard to more recent centuries and millennia.

Taking their distance from the conceptual violence that they felt the earlier, Eurocentric and racialist scientific orientations had done to the global image of Africa, Africanists (both from the North Atlantic region, Africa and worldwide), from the 1960s onwards, came to insist on a strict 'Africa for the Africans' form of political correctness. Under that facile orthodoxy, African phenomena are still to be explained by almost exclusive reference to the specificity of African conditions; and any transcontinental argument in the genetic, linguistic, archaeological, mythological or comparative ethnographic field has to be distrusted and dismissed as an assault on the integrity and dignity of Africans – as, allegedly, an attempt to deprive Africans of a uniquely local past that (as seems to be the tacit underlying assumption of this orthodoxy) would seem to constitute their only source of solace and their only justified ground for pride anyway.⁴ This orientation is

⁴ The violent dismissal, up to this very day, of anything remotely similar to the Hamitic Hypothesis reflects this mode of thinking. However, below we shall see how in the work of Dierk Lange a formally similar model, once cleansed from its implicit racialist condescension, remains illuminating for an understanding of the proto-history of sub-Saharan Africa.

not only to be found among professional Africanists; it has also been incorporated in the Afrocentrist movement (starting in the 19th century but gaining momentum after the mid-20th century: William E.B. du Bois, Cheikh Anta Diop, K. Molefi Asante, Théophile Obenga, Clyde Winters,⁵ etc.) – which in its most militant variants tends to see Africa as the *fons et origo* of human culture, not only in Palaeolithic times (where this view appears to be correct and uncontested) but also in more recent millennia, scarcely tolerating the thought – which is pivotal to the present book – that major *transcontinental* elements of culture, genes or language may have *contributed*, from the outside, to the shaping of latter-day African societies and cultures.⁶

- Meanwhile, the spate of globalization studies since the 1980s has played havoc (e.g. Amselle 2001) with the very idea of continental boundedness and specificity – at least, when it comes to modern phenomena such as the adoption and appropriation of new weaponry; new technologies of information and communication including transport; new expressions of increasingly fragmented but also increasingly transcontinental identities; new forms of a-historical fundamentalism in the North Atlantic and in the realms of Islam and Hinduism – forms that

⁵ Although largely shunned within mainstream debates on African Studies and global cultural history, and although the product of a scholar who is, in the first place, not a linguist but an educationalist (PhD, University of Illinois-Urbana, USA), the strongly linguistically-inspired work of the Afrocentrist writer Clyde Ahmad Winters is remarkable in the context of the present book on transcontinental continuities. Transcontinental connections abound in his work, mainly between East and South Asia and West Africa, and in such a way that, for a change, Africa is depicted as the initiating rather than the receiving end. One characteristic title out of many is: Winters, C.A., 1983, 'Blacks in Ancient China, Part 1: The Founders of Xia and Shang', *Journal of Black Studies*, 1, 2: 8-13. West Africans sailing to East Asia and founding pivotal dynasties there makes a provocative statement running counter to established notions as to the impossibility of early seafaring and of Africans to take significant initiatives in history. But Winters may have a point, after all. Of course, the global transcontinental maritime network I propose in my contributions to the present book is multidirectional and multicentred, so would allow for movement of goods, people and ideas both from Eastern Eurasia to sub-Saharan Africa, and *vice versa*.

⁶ The above formulation suggests a greater distance from the Afrocentrist position than in fact is to be found in the convenor's / editor's work up to the 2012 conference. Reissued in greatly augmented form as a book in 2011 under the title *Black Athena Comes of Age*, the earlier version of that collection was published as a special issue of the Mediterranean-archaeology journal *Talanta*; it largely amounted to a defence of Martin Bernal and his *Black Athena* thesis, which in important respects approaches the Afrocentrist position (van Binsbergen 2000b). Moreover, Afrocentrism was specifically discussed with great sympathy, and defended (van Binsbergen 2000a, 2005a, 2011c) against dismissive critics both from Africa (Mudimbe 1997) and in the North Atlantic (Lefkowitz & MacLean Rogers 1996; Appiah 1993). Yet, in the last analysis, van Binsbergen found there was grossly insufficient empirical basis for attributing to sub-Saharan Africa something as sweeping as the one and only decisive initiative in global cultural history since the Neolithic. Without denying the sub-Saharan African contribution, and with continuing insistence on the global value and validity of African knowledge systems throughout his work to this very day, he has insisted (2010b) on the important and original contribution from West and Central Asia, especially in shaping the seminal ancient cultures and polities of the Ancient Near East including Egypt. This, among other considerations, brought him to propose a transcontinental, multicentred, multidirectional model of global cultural history (cf. Chapter 7, below), which his loyal commentator the Nigerian / South African philosopher Sanya Osha (2017; cf. Chapter 3, below) has recognised as a viable alternative to Afrocentrism.

implicitly deny⁷ what ever since Hegel has been a basic orientation in North Atlantic culture: the inherently relativistic and change-orientated idea that a thing's, a person's or a group's *history* is its most important dimension. *In the light of recent globalization studies, the idea of an Africa evolving – from Palaeolithic times on – in splendid isolation from the other continents (or even, in the Afrocentrist variant, of an Africa merely giving to, but not at the same time receiving from, other continents) has become less and less tenable.* Recent studies of proto-globalization⁸ have projected back into preceding millennia, today's typical phenomena of intense cultural plurality and hybridity, albeit under older technologies of information and communication – those of the sailing ship, the mail pigeon and the chariot or horseback. Transcontinental arguments continue to both intrigue and offend⁹ – in the times of Thor Heyerdahl¹⁰ no more than today (cf. Stephen Oppenheimer's Sunda thesis for South and West Asia; Robert Dick-Read's application of a similar idea to Sub-Saharan Africa – where incidentally the Indian Ocean coast has always been regarded as a window on Asia;¹¹ Clyde Winters' insistence on Mande elements from West Africa in South and East Asia). A considerable library has grown around the thesis of the Ancient Hebrew background of the Southern African Lemba (Harold von Sicard, N. van Warmelo, T. Parfitt, Magdel Le Roux; but also for other parts of Africa, Ancient Israelite associations have been suggested), whilst Dierk Lange (2004a, 2004b) has cogently argued Assyrian-West African continuities in state building – later also contributing to the same discussion on Asian Jewry dispersed over Africa (Lange 2011, 2012). West African-Egyptian continuities have been discussed extensively (though not always convincingly) by Gerald Wainwright and E. Mey-

⁷ Deny – in an implicit sense, by rigidly, fetishistically, clinging to the letter of ancient religious documents whilst denying the need to submit them to a contextualising, relativising historical critique. In the North Atlantic study of the Judaeo-Christian sacred texts (notably those brought together in the *Tanak / Bible*), such critique has been an important achievement of Early Modern times (Erasmus, Spinoza); in the Islamic context such critique is still a minority option (e.g. in the work of the Iranian economist and theologian Abdolkarim Soroush) --- a state of affairs which is in part responsible for the apparent 'clash of civilisations' (Huntington) marking our violently conflicting times.

⁸ E.g. van Binsbergen 1997 / 201a, 2012; van Binsbergen & Woudhuizen 2011.

⁹ Another example of a highly contested idea of transcontinental continuity remained entirely out of scope at the Leiden 2012 conference: the idea (most vocally voiced by the pre-Gluckman Manchester diffusionists Smith and Perry, a century ago) that megalithic phenomena, which have occurred all over the world since the Bronze Age, are indeed genetically and not just typologically interrelated, and that there exists something like a megalithic culture, even a megalithic religion, underlying this distribution. The idea was passionately dismissed especially in British archaeology of the second half of the 20th c. CE (e.g. Renfrew 1967, 1976a, 1976b, 1983), and today counts as utterly counter-paradigmatic – despite sporadic indications of its potential plausibility (e.g. von Heine-Geldern 1928; Middleton 1994; Ruggles 2015; Bradley 19890).

¹⁰ Although the accumulated evidence for trans-Pacific contacts in all directions is considerably more extensive than is generally admitted; e.g. Cavalli-Sforza *et al.* 1994; Barnard 1972, 1968; Needham & Lu 1985; von Heine-Geldern 1937, 1950, 1954, 1960, 1964, 1964-1967, 1966a, 1966b, Jett 2002).

¹¹ Notably in studies focusing on the Swahili context; e.g. Chittick & Rotberg 1975; Middleton 1991.

erowitz – as part of a large literature assessing the relationship between Ancient Egypt and sub-Saharan Africa.¹² Extensive work on the Mediterranean Bronze Age brings out striking Mediterranean / sub-Saharan continuities in the linguistic, religious and cultural field and situates these in a more general Old World pattern, and the same has recently been done for South Central African mythology (Wim van Binsbergen & Fred Woudhuizen).

Over the last decades, studies of modern Africa have driven home the fact that one cannot understand *current* African conditions unless from a transcontinental, global perspective – whether it comes to capital and demographic flows, development, formal education, cosmopolitan medicine, statal political organization or the dynamics of world religions. This makes it all the more pressing to investigate the transcontinental continuities involving Sub-Saharan Africa in *pre- and proto-historic times*. To what extent is it true (as is widely assumed) that the roots of contemporary African predicaments, and their possible solutions, lie primarily in the recent conditions and developments of the 19th-21st centuries? *Or, alternatively, to what extent can we discern transcontinental relations and dynamics of a much longer time span, shaping and reshaping African cultures, politics, economies and religions in close relation with the other continents?* And, lest we make the mistake of attributing self-evidence and global applicability to the dominant (but rapidly declining), potentially hegemonic North Atlantic perspective: *what instruments do we need to develop, in the theoretical, methodological and epistemological fields, in order to avoid the blinkers of regional self-interest and ethnocentricity, and to move effectively – with an ever-increasing and ever more vocal African participation – towards valid, reliable and relevant global knowledge about Africa?*

See there the main focus of our 2012, and of the book that has now emerged on that basis.

Clearly, the *Call for Papers* had in the first place an empirical scientific orientation. Hence one important dimension of any present-day knowledge formation concerning Africa was not explicitly defined in that document:

- since most academic Africanist knowledge has been generated, published, collected and managed outside Africa, especially in the North Atlantic region,¹³
- whereas the African initiative in, production of, and control over, academic Africa-related knowledge is only slowly expanding,¹⁴

¹² For a selective overview, cf. van Binsbergen 2011c.

¹³ Especially in the North Atlantic region, but of course not exclusively so: e.g. Russia, Japan, Brazil, the Czech Republic (or is this still part of the North Atlantic region?), Australia, have important African Studies contexts in their own right, and several other significant national African Studies tradition could be adduced. What Mudimbe has called 'the Colonial Library' (a concept which in his hands has gradually lost its pejorative, hegemonic and distortive connotations) has largely survived, and has even been very much expanded, in post-colonial times, since c. 1960, passionately and with well-intended attempt to preserve integrity, yet further enhancing the imbalance I am signalling.

¹⁴ Expanding, slowly but surely, largely as a felicitous result of the endeavours of African universities, and of the excellent work of transnational associations of African Africanist researchers, such as CODESRIA

- whilst the international discourse of academic teaching and publishing, although a highly globalised undertaking, largely takes for granted the cultural, linguistic, epistemological, ideological, and political assumptions of the North Atlantic region,
- the production of Africanist knowledge inevitably has a strong element of a transcontinentality that is potentially condescending, even hegemonic.

Some of the papers in the conference, and in the present collection, have specifically touched on this hegemonic danger (notably those by Osha and van Binsbergen). It need not be central here. The problem has been amply discussed in recent writings,¹⁵ and anyway would need a book and conference, and more, in its own right in order to go to the bottom of it. The empirical orientation of our conference more or less allowed us to steer around such burning questions of the *global politics of knowledge* – the same questions that have been raised, with the greatest insistence and justification, and for more than a century now, by our Afrocentrist brothers and sisters. Meanwhile it would be true to say that, even given the empirical angle, the transcontinental hegemonic danger hovers over all the contributions in the present collection, regardless of whether their authors are visibly aware of it, and particularly when they appear not to be. Such a problematic risks to challenge the most fundamental self-evidences of Africanist research as conducted by non-Africans – an uneasiness which is likely to make such a topic less obviously attractive to potential participants // contributors, and probably one of the factors accounting for the reservations one may in regard of the present, somewhat one-sided and inconclusive volume.

1.3. Conference acknowledgments

This conference was an happy and timely initiative of the then Director of the African Studies Centre (ASCL), Ton Dietz. Major funds towards its realisation were made available by that same institution. The Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences (KNAW) also contributed a substantial sum, and minor contributions were made by the Philosophical Faculty of the Erasmus University Rotterdam (where the convenor held the Chair of Foundation of Intercultural Philosophy, 1998-2006, and was still exercising his PhD-conferment rights), the Leiden University Foundation, and *Quest: An African Journal of Philosophy / Revue Africaine de Philosophie* (whose Editor the convenor has been since 2002). The logistic organisation was in the capable hands of Mrs Marieke van Winden, the ASCL Public-Relations Officer. The academic organisation was in the hands of the convenor, Wim van Binsbergen, despite his retirement (effectively mid-November 2011,

(mainly covering West Africa), and its counterpart organisations in other regions of the African continent. Of course, the principal test of integrity for non-African institutions and individual researchers is whether they are demonstrably committed to this process, and demonstrably contribute to it. In this respect and in many others, I have been proud of my several decades of the closest association with the ASCL. The support which the present conference and book initiative initially met from that institution's leadership further testifies to this state of affairs – even though thwarted by later developments.

¹⁵ E.g. Mudimbe 1988, 1994; Semmes 1992; van Binsbergen 2003, 2007, 2008, 2015; Mosima 2018; Osha 2005, 2011-2013, 2017.

half a year before the conference). Mrs Gitty Petit expertly handled the funding application with the KNAW. The conference was opened by Ton Dietz, highlighting the importance of the conference topic and sketching Wim van Binsbergen's contributions to the ASCL and to African Studies. During the splendid valedictory festivities in which the conference culminated, the floor was taken by Jan Hoorweg and Wouter van Beek, as two long-standing colleagues of the parting researcher, and by the latter's eldest son Vincent van Binsbergen. Along with over a dozen international participants and several dozens local participants (towards whose welcoming Nezjma van Binsbergen made substantial contributions), all these people and institutions worked together in making the conference an unmistakable success, and in reinforcing the international scholarly community's awareness of Africa's transcontinental continuities. We are immensely grateful for their efforts towards the present book, and for their patience when (due to prolonged illness on the part of the editor, the unexpected impossibility of extending institutional copy-editorial assistance towards this book's production, and delay in the submission of revised final versions) that book's realisation took longer than envisaged.

This is a book on transcontinentality, but it is also a feat of transcontinental collaboration in its own right. The contributors represent all three continents of the Old World, and moreover the Caribbean as the heart of the New World. It would have been fitting to have contributors from Oceania including New Zealand and Australia, but failing these we have to console ourselves with the simple though amazing truth that all the airline bookings involved (as financed by our generous sponsors) were made from a computer in New Zealand, in a time frame alien to nearly all participants. In our present age of globalisation our eyes are opening up to the extent to which our human world has always been involved in proto-globalisation. The great variety of national and continental schools of method and thought, and of presentational and editorial practice, lends to this collection a special transcontinental flavour, which even my painstaking editing has not managed to conceal. The result is a book which is unmistakably inchoate and imperfect in itself, but which ushers in an era when transcontinentality, and even the new understanding of diffusion, will no longer be counter-paradigmatic to the point of ridicule and ostracism. I am increasingly convinced that the best way to serve Africa as an Africanist is, not to imprison that continent and its people in a well-intended prison of essentialising regional or continental identity, but to insist on the many ways in which Africa has always been a part of the wider world. I salute the wide and bright vision of the previous ASCL leadership, in initiating and loyally facilitating this important, future-oriented goal through the present conference. All the more reason to regret that in the final publication the ASCL declined its manifest responsibility.

1.4. The present collection of papers

After the conference, most of the papers were lightly revised in the light of the conference discussions. One of the speakers, the American linguist Christopher Ehret, although vocal in the many linguistic discussions at the conference, could not make his paper available for the present publication because it was already spoken for elsewhere.

Robert Dick-Read's paper could not be revised by him, and in fact he was unable to deliver it in person at the conference, due to critical family circumstances; however, in view of his great merits for the study of the conference topic (especially his 2005 book *The Phantom Voyagers*) it was felt that his paper could not be missed out in the present collection, the editor applying a few finishing touches. More than in any other paper, the two conference objectives appearing in expanded Call for Papers printed above and more extensively set out in the convenor's conference key note (Chapter 2), were successfully addressed in the oral presentation given at the conference by the anthropologist *cum* archaeologist Michael Rowlands; however, because of his many pressing commitments a few years went by before he came around to writing out his argument, and we have gladly postponed the final editing of this volume for the sake of this impressive contribution. In addition to his Key Note Address (included here as Chapter 2), Wim van Binsbergen originally had two papers at the conference: his exposé on the Oppenheimer–Dick-Read–Tauchmann Hypothesis otherwise known as the Sunda Hypothesis, included here as Chapter 7; and an extensive and detailed paper on 'The relevance of Buddhism and Hinduism for the study of Asian-African transcontinental continuities' (van Binsbergen 2012b). The latter has meanwhile been published elsewhere in greatly revised and augmented form (van Binsbergen 2017b).

Collective books are engendered within a virtually unbounded global market of potential contributors and institutional / disciplinary priorities, but realised within the very real and limiting boundary conditions of personal contacts, skills, loyalty, friendship, ambition, rivalry, academic power games protecting and threatening paradigms. Already during the conference it became manifest that it may have been too early yet to centrally focus on this particular conference topic. Our hopes of producing a major and authoritative book around this pioneering topic proved premature. Anthropologists, linguists and historian did fill the ranks of our conference speakers, but – with the exception of Mike Rowlands¹⁶ – archaeologists were sadly missed, partly because few of them were working on such comprehensive topics (although Rowlands does cite a few in his contribution), partly perhaps because they must have felt uncomfortable in the company of non-archaeologists, partly because the conference *Call for Papers* seemed to challenge the prevalent 'Africa for the Africans' adage: also in archaeology the idea of transcontinental continuities was, in the early 2010s, still sufficiently counter-paradigmatic to discourage participation. On the positive side, therefore, we may conclude that there remains ample room for a repeat exercise on this book's topic, but then with many more archaeologists actively and centrally participating.

¹⁶ Perhaps I draw the lines too narrowly here. Admittedly, Hromník and Thornton deal with potentially archaeological data, but they do so largely from their habitual perspective as historian and sociologist, respectively. Van Binsbergen did repeatedly publish in an unmistakable archaeological context and by reference to mainly archaeological literature (van Binsbergen 201a, 2018: ch. 8; van Binsbergen & Woudhuizen 2011) but also in his case, his perspective remains that of a social scientist in the first place. In the early decades of African Studies, disciplinary boundaries could be seen to be fading within that emerging discipline, in the face of the immense vistas there were opening up before us, conceptually, comparatively, theoretically, and politically, soon after most African countries had gained Independence. Should we go back to those times, half a century ago? Can we?

With his polemical title, 'Resurrecting diffusion', Mike Rowlands addresses one of the principal problematics underlying the present volume, and one that I prefer to introduce more fully in the following section.

1.5. The spectre of 'diffusionism', and the significance of seafaring

1.5.1. *The modern myth of continents as natural and naturally separate units, only to be joined by modern technologies of locomotion, communication and administration under North Atlantic control*

'A spectre is haunting the study of culture: the spectre of diffusionism' (freely after Marx & Engels, 1848 / Marx 2012: opening sentence of the *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*)

The standard perception of present-day researchers in cultural dynamics is that the seas which cover over 70% of the earth's surface, have played mainly a restrictive role in global cultural history. An ironic summary of such common thinking could run as follows: *'The world's six or seven continents are to be considered, not as recent human inventions, but as timeless natural units of natural and socio-cultural analysis, within which the history of each continent is safely embedded. The absence of transcontinental continuities is the rule in global cultural history.'*

Numerous examples could be given of this paradigmatic prejudice. I limit myself to two cases.

(1) As an anthropology student at Amsterdam University in the mid-1960s, my principal teacher had a great admiration for the second Manchester School of anthropology as founded by Max Gluckman (cf. Werbner 1984; van Binsbergen 2007); at the same time he could not get enough of ridiculing, in his lectures, the first Manchester school, of staunch diffusionists such as Grafton Elliot Smith (1915 / 1929, 1916)¹⁷ and William James Perry (1927 / 1923) – authors who showed a healthy awareness of the role of ships and the sea in global cultural history: Smith 1916; Perry 1923, 1935). Our professor's description of suitably veiled and amulet-bedecked Egyptians setting sail for the South Seas in order to proselytise their sun worship there, never failed to elicit a good laugh from us, his students, who knew better since instead of myth, material culture and broad culture areas, we were steeped in statistico-mechanical cross-cultural comparison, kinship algebra and the reduction of all social life to socio-political relationships. In standard Oedipal fashion, in subsequent decades I was irresistibly drawn towards transcontinentality – but always with a pang of

¹⁷ The Egyptianising anatomist Grafton Elliot Smith – an autodidact in studies of cultural history – was, conceptually, the most radical of the Manchester diffusionists. His book *The Migrations of Early Culture* (1915 / 1929) sketched in broad sweeps the apparently closely related global distributions of the following somewhat abstruse traits: 1. megalithic monuments; 2. mummification; 3. sun worship*; 4. the swastika; 5. serpent worship*; 6. artificial deformation of head; 7. ear-piercing; 8. deluge / flood myths; 9. tattooing; 10. the couvade, i.e. the custom where a husband ostentatiously; mimics the movements and throes of childbirth at the moment that his wife is giving birth. In Smith's opinion all these traits formed part of a 'heliolithic complex' emanating from Ancient Egypt. Inevitably, he constantly appeals to transcontinental navigation to make sense of the distribution pattern he claims. I cannot discuss his exceptional, extreme (but sloppily documented) case here at length; a book-size argument on the matter is in an advanced state of preparation now (van Binsbergen in press (f)).

guilt. The difficulties (see Introduction, above) we have had in organising the conference on which this book is based, and the paucity of colleagues from the Netherlands prepared to participate in that connection, suggest that the fear of 'diffusionism' is still not allayed, over half a century later.

(2) The driving force behind the recent, felicitous revival of comparative mythology has been the Harvard (formerly Leiden) Sanskritist Michael Witzel, whose research project in comparative mythology, after over a decade of inspiring international conferences at which Witzel presented, and discussed, provisional instalments of his result, yielded the *magnum opus* entitled *The origins of the world's mythologies* (Witzel 2012). Spanning the entire earth and the entire history of Anatomically Modern Humans since 200 ka BP,¹⁸ Witzel's argument had inevitably to be transcontinental. However, leaning heavily on insights unexpectedly appropriated across firm disciplinary boundaries, of recent molecular population genetics with its solidly established 'African Eve' and 'Out-of-Africa' focus, Witzel insists on the gradual unfolding and transformation of the world's mythological material from common sources in the Palaeolithic – and dismisses the possibility of horizontal transcontinental borrowing. Yet, in Witzel's own excellent and extensive bibliography, titles affirming transcontinental relations may be found, e.g. Mair 2006 (which includes Sorenson & Johannessen 2006); Schuster 1951; von Sadowszky 1978.

I continue my ironic summary: *The scattered and immensely varied socio-cultural groups of humankind were supposedly in a state of rigid confinement to their continental positions until European initiative, less than half a millennium ago, liberated them by the nautical feats of the Age of [sc. European!] Discovery. Thanks, allegedly, to the European genius the seas could finally be crossed, and the peoples of the earth united under one mercantile, colonial and imperialist canopy. Inevitably, non-Europeans had the price to pay in terms of racial and colonial marginalisation, humiliation, and exploitation under the globally expanding capitalist mode of production.'*

Throughout the present book, these assumptions and their hegemonic, Eurocentric, and presentist presuppositions are effectively challenged, yet they constitute an almost insurmountable paradigmatic barrier for more realistic approaches towards transcontinental contacts and continuities.

It is one thing to empirically establish socio-cultural parallels between continents at the observational level; it is another thing to convincingly, systematically, explain these parallels, in other words, to argue a generalisable causal mechanism accounting for them. In principle, four broad models are at the disposal of researchers in this field:

1. *horizontal borrowing*: a socio-cultural item, found in continent A, was transmitted to continent B through a concrete process (identifiable within narrow limits of space and time) of direct locomotion of people, or through more indirect forms of communication and learning,
2. *shared origins*: a socio-cultural item, found in continents A and B, was not specifically transmitted from A to B, but owes its presence in both A and B to a shared, factual historic background both have in C.
3. *universal workings of the human mind*: a socio-cultural item, found in continents A and B, may be explained by reference to some universal feature of the human

¹⁸ ka = kiloannum = 1000 years; Ma = mega-annum = 1,000,000 years; BP = Before Present; (B)CE = (Before the) Common Era.

mind, which in similar situations may be counted upon responding with similar ideas and institutions

4. *sheer chance*: similar socio-cultural items, found in continents A and B, yet have no systematic connection whatsoever, their similarity is due to sheer change.

In the history of scholarly transcontinental cultural comparison, (1) constituted a dominant paradigm in the half century between 1870-1920, along with another then leading idea, that of human evolution going through specific pre-ordained stages each with their own characteristics. After World War I, as a result of the work of such pioneers as Franz Boas and Bronislaw Malinowski¹⁹ (both taking a continental European training to an English-speaking new academic environment in the USA and the UK respectively), classic anthropology took shape, with its familiar traits: a theory of intricately integrated culture, emphasis on transcultural knowledge formation through prolonged, eminently personal fieldwork by means of participant observation within very limited horizons of time and space and on the basis of increasing mastery of the local language and culture, and insistence on the scholarly representation of the *emic* perspective (emphasising the local participants's own perceptions, categorisations, representations and motivations) rather than merely imposing an alien, *etic* analytical model upon their socio-cultural life. Under the classic model, intercultural, including transcontinental, cultural comparison became much more complicated and problematic, because only by unmistakable conceptual violence could the meticulously collected, greatly diverging emic categories from different cultural traditions be translated in etic data amenable to systematic, including statistical, comparative analysis outside their original context.

This has been one of the factors why the idea of transcontinental borrowings and the resulting continuities has become so unpopular in modern anthropology. A further factor has been that in many present-day ideological contexts, both left-wing and right-wing, both within academia but especially in the wider society, there is a disqualifying aspect to the claim of distant origins: only true locals may be considered to have a right to the land, its institutions, facilities and representative political bodies; thus the suspicion, even the admission, of distant – even transcontinental – origins constitutes important ammunition in the identity wars that have emerged in the wake of recent globalisation, and seem to deprive already marginalised populations (*e.g.* Africans in the North Atlantic region, or Native Americans, or even African transnational migrants within today's African states) from their last claim to a place under today's local sun. A very different factor again has been the power dynamics of the circulation of scholarly paradigms: a paradigm suggests a privileged way for the production of valid knowledge, and such privilege is expressed in academic power (academic chairs, institutions, journals, administrative bodies, research funds and other endowments) – assets that seek to perpetuate themselves and that those controlling them do not readily give up. Classic anthropology was established upon

¹⁹ On Boas, *cf.* Benedict 1943; Boas 1888, 1896, 1897, 1902, 1908, 1920: 281-289; although Boas is here credited with ushering in the next paradigm as a replacement of diffusion, yet the transcontinental dimension became increasingly important in his later work (Boas 1925, 1929, 1933). On Malinowski, *cf.* Gluckman 1949; Hays 1971; Firth 1957; Kluckhohn 1943; Malinowski 1922 (where the sea and maritime skills play a central role but only on a region scale within northwestern Melanesia), 1929, 1967.

the generation conflict with predecessors engaged in the study of diffusion and evolution, and the creation of extremely negative stereotypes concerning the preceding paradigm and its exponents was an inevitable part of that struggle. Most European anthropologists trained at European universities in the middle of the 20th century, are congenitally afflicted by a deep-seated fear and contempt of ‘diffusionism’ (the very reduction to an –ism already suffices to make the approach suspect – the neutral term ‘diffusion’ is seldom used in modern anthropological parlance).

Meanwhile three factors have contributed to the survival (albeit under a cloud) of the concept of diffusion in socio-cultural studies. In the first place, diffusion has continued to constitute a key concept in archaeology – with its wide horizons of space and time, and usually unhindered by the specific and limitations of emic concepts and representations: the subjects of archaeology are usually dead and (unless they belonged to the recent millennia and left decipherable texts) their own conceptualisations are usually unreachable through archaeological methods (*cf.* van Binsbergen 2018: ch. 8). Secondly, the same holds true for art history – a discipline like some others (*e.g.* comparative mythology, Assyriology, Egyptology, phenomenology of religion, classics) in which obsolete paradigms from the 19th and early 20th century may still survive and circulate without much interdisciplinary contact with present-day academic discourse in other areas of specialist thought and research.²⁰ Thirdly, with the rise of globalisation studies in the 1980s a new focus on material objects and their global circulation emerged,²¹ which led some commentators (*e.g.* Amselle 2001: 31 *f.*) to speak of ‘the new diffusionism’ – suddenly a popular and fundable theme again, and academically respectable. The 2012 Leiden conference, and the present book, are much indebted to this third factor. In the background is a fourth factor again: the natural sciences, much like nature itself, are not intimidated by culturally and politically reified continental boundaries, and have always recognised that the universal range of applicability of the laws of physics and chemistry, as well as the movement of continental plates and the distribution of plant and animal species, play havoc with the idea that continents are natural units of analysis immutably fixed since the beginning of time. For the first time in over half a century, the question as to origin, transmission and interdependence of cultural items in long-range extents of space and time became worthy again of anthropological attention.

²⁰ In the 1980s, the British, USA-based Sinologist *cum* political scientist Martin Gardiner Bernal (1987, 1991, 2006) sought to popularise a view, then already shared by many specialists in the Ancient Near East and Ancient Egypt and now mainstream, to the effect that Ancient Greece was not the unprecedented local miracle (like the virgin goddess Athena sprung forth in adult shape and in full armour from her father Zeus’s head) which classics had constructed it to be after the Enlightenment; on the contrary, Greece was recognised to be a child of much older civilisations around the eastern Mediterranean – a simple transcontinental argument. Given his predilection for once-mainstream theories which had long been supplanted by other paradigms, Bernal invoked a ‘modified diffusionism’ to make his point – appropriately, but his critics would attack him with all the more relish. *Cf.* Lefkowitz & MacClean Rogers 1996; and in defense of Bernal: van Binsbergen 1997 / 2011.

²¹ *Cf.* Miller 1987, 1995; Appadurai 1986; van Binsbergen & Geschiere 2005.

1.5.2. *The evidence for transcontinental contacts*

Even if we make generous allowance for the repression of ideas and data due to the collective rejection of the idea of diffusion among modern anthropologists, we would still be greatly surprised the find that, against the general denial of the possibility of transcontinental contacts prior to modern technologies of shipcraft and aircraft, the actual evidence testifying to the facts of transcontinental contacts is simply overwhelming. Here the same sequence of moves in academic debate may be observed over and over again:

- somewhere,²² outside the power houses of mainstream paradigmatic anthropological production, a transcontinental claim is made;
- the claim is dismissively reviewed in mainstream venues of debate (with the journal *Current Anthropology*, famous for its leading articles with specific commentaries drawn from a global pool of recognised specialists, often occupying an intermediate position of tolerance and non-dogmatism);
- the discussion is considered to be closed and anti-diffusionism resumes the order of the day.

It is time we relinquish such quichotic battles, or if they have to be fought, fight them on our own terms. My proposal²³ of a global maritime network in existence since at least the Early Bronze Age is a challenging attempt to do just that – even though I realise that much of the required empirical evidence is still missing, so that part of the network sketched must still be considered conjectural. However, in my opinion this is a matter of details which does not incapacitate the overall picture.

The first step towards substantiation of my claim is to consider the *technological requirements for transoceanic maritime contact, and the ways in which these requirements appear to have been met throughout history.*

Considering the seas impossible to navigate in remote Antiquity, and considering the then available nautical technology hopelessly inadequate, writers on this topic in the early 20th century still frequently took recourse to the fantasy of extensive *land bridges*²⁴ supposedly allowing human populations to make a transcontinental crossing otherwise

²² E.g. in the Germany-based journal *Anthropos*, which – also because of its institutional link with the Roman Catholic church – has preserved a measure of continuity with the diffusionist schools of a century ago; or in the case of the *Frobeniusinstitut*, based at Frankfurt, Germany, which in the footsteps of the leading German Afrikanist of his generation Leo Frobenius (cf. 1931, 1954 / 1933; Haberland 1973) propagates a sophisticated post-diffusionism under the name *Kulturmorphologie*, centring not on isolated cultural items in themselves but on broad, allegedly regionally specific cultural patterns of such items's organisation.

²³ Throughout my contributions to the present book, and in my forthcoming monograph in press (c).

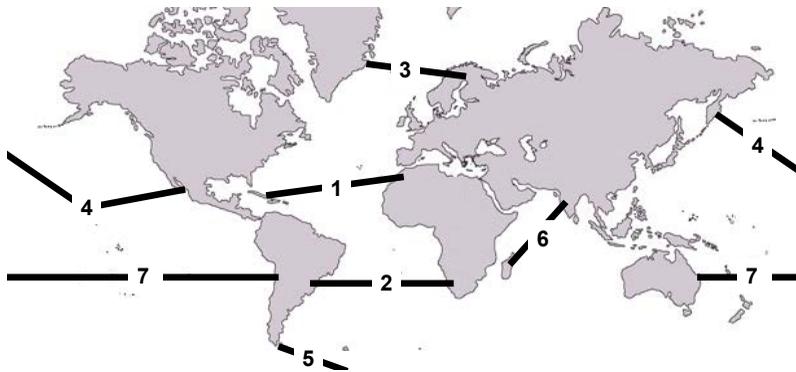
²⁴ By analogy with, e.g., the present-day Lesser Sunda Islands and land bridges leading towards New Guinea / Australia (Karafet c.s. 2005); or the present-day Aleutian islands between Asia and North America; Laughlin 1980; Williams *et al.* 1985; Colinvaux 1964. On recent mainstream views concerning the vital importance of Beringia as a land bridge between Asia and the Americas, cf. Tamm *et al.* 2007. And even such an apparently well-established point has come under attack in modern identity politics, with Native Americans (e.g. the writer and Nakota activist Vine Deloria, Jr) dismissing the idea of an Asian background for their people disqualifying (Anonymous, 'Indigenous peoples of North America'; Lee c.s. 2001; Stone 2003).

inconceivable. Such imaginary land bridges²⁵ were thought to feature in the Mediterranean Sea, and across the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans. Marcou's original inspiration (1857-1860) for this now bizarre idea, for which there was not the slightest direct evidence in modern oceanographic / geological observations, were unmistakable oddities in the global distribution of animal and plant species, e.g. the occurrence of *Marsupialia* in both Australia and South America (separated by the entire extent of the Pacific Ocean), or of *Lemurian* primates / their fossils in both Madagascar and India. In the meantime, modern plate tectonics, and Wegener's theory (1912) of the desintegration of the primal continent of Pangaea (initially splitting into Laurasia and Gondwana, then further desintegrating), have offered a totally satisfactory explanation (the (sub-) continents now oceans apart were once – hundred of millions years ago – adjacent and continuous) and have rendered all land-bridge theories totally obsolete. Needless to add that human history is measured in millennia (ka), or at best a few million years (Ma) – far too short a period than that the macro processes of geotectonics could have an observable impact upon socio-cultural phenomena.²⁶

With hypothetical land bridges out of the way, and geotectonics inapplicable given the relatively short time span of human history, seafaring would be the principal explanation for transcontinental continuity in terms of horizontal diffusion. Refusal to entertain early, i.e. Palaeolithic, seafaring as a possibility has been an important reason for the almost total rejection, throughout most of the 20th c. CE, of the idea of horizontal diffusion, in favour of the three alternatives ((a) common origin – the favourite option of comparative mythologists such as Witzel; (b) universal human mind – the favourite option of structuralists à la Lévi-Strauss 1958-1973, 1949, 1962; and (c) pure chance – the facile and irresponsible platitude still adopted by many modern anthropologists).

²⁵ Cf. Bartlam 1938; Karst 1931: 437 f. (north-south across the Mediterranean) and 428 (across the Aegean); Anonymous, 'Land bridge', which led me to Corliss 1975, and Ingersoll 1920.

²⁶ This has implications, not so much substantive but aesthetic, and knowledge-political, for Witzel's recent work. Here he insists on the distinction between what he calls 'Laurasian' proto-mythologies – those of Eurasia mainly, considered to be advanced, with exalted figures such as kings, and a linear progress of time between a cosmogonic / anthropogonic beginning and a *ditto* end; and 'Gondwana' proto-mythologies, claimed to be characteristic of Africa, South America and Australia, and considered to be primitive, lacking hierarchy as well as a developed sense of time. One recognises the familiar, late-19th c., colonial and hegemonic distinctions which inhabitants of the North Atlantic region thought, at the time, to self-evidently coincide with the distinctions between present-day continents. Of course, Witzel is sufficiently aware of modern geology to realise that the geological time scale of the desintegration of Pangaea is measured in hundreds of Ma, and that of global mythology only in tens of ka – a difference in order of magnitude of 10⁴. Yet his choice of terms is unfortunate because it suggests, essentialisingly, that today's South peoples are to be relegated to a primordial category which North peoples have left behind them as a sign of their superiority. Intriguingly, the region of Witzel's own specialisation, India (to which he predictably attributes Laurasian mythologies), geologically was a part of Gondwana drifting north, slamming into the southern coast of Eurasia and thus producing the Himalayas some 45 Ma BP.



1. Archatlantis from the West Indies to North Africa
 2. Archhelenis from Brazil to South Africa
 3. Archiboreis in the North Atlantic
 4. Archigalenis from Central America through Hawaii to Northeast Asia
 5. Archinotis from South America to Antarctica
 6. Lemuria²⁷ in the Indian Ocean
 7. Marsupials between South America and Australia
- data derived from: Anonymus, 'Land bride', wiki

Fig. 1.1. Land bridges proposed in the 19th c. CE and now radically rejected

1.5.3. Overland transmission? The qualified necessity of navigation

What makes the seafaring option precarious yet essential for any discussion of transcontinental cultural continuities, is that the facts of oceanography and geology impose severe limitations upon the extent to which transcontinental transmission could have taken place overland. The Old World (Africa, Asia and Europe) today consists of one contiguous continental land mass traversable on dry feet. There is considerable agreement among specialists to the effect that it is in the Old World, notably in sub-Saharan Africa, that proto-humans have emerged a few million years ago, and again, that (after the world-wide spread of such humans) Anatomically Modern Humans emerged some 200 ka BP. While still confined to the African continent, they developed the impressive common package of linguistic and cultural achievements (I have termed it 'Pandora's Box') which today we still encounter, in greatly transformed yet recognisable and especially in converging form across all continents, in the forms of universals²⁸ of language and of culture – with proto-mythologies as a particularly well studied component thanks to the efforts of Witzel and his associates. This package must have spread transcontinentally through *demic diffusion*, e.g. on the wings of the spatial movements of populations owning the traits in question. The present-day distribution of such traits as recorded by comparative

²⁷ According to other fantastic sources, Lemuria would be situated rather in the equatorial to southern Pacific, and be identical with the land of Mu.

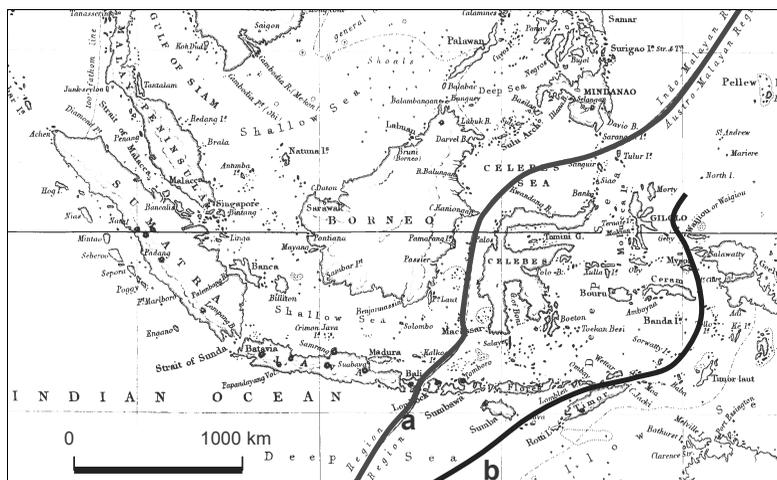
²⁸ It is impossible to discuss this vital but contentious topic merely in passing here. For extensive recent treatments, with copious literature, see van Binsbergen 2015, 2018.

ethnography is conclusive evidence of transcontinental diffusion, largely overland but in part also through navigation, ever since the Out-of-Africa Exodus.

North and South America have been connected by the Panama landbridge for the past 3 Ma (3 million years), long enough to facilitate the spread of modern humans all over both Americas, where they may have been present since, at most, 30 ka BP. However, it is only around Beringia (the Bering Strait region) that the Old World and the New World come anywhere close to one another. Many specialists²⁹ have resigned themselves to the probability (*cf.* Tamm *et al.* 2007) that periodically the Beringia region offered windows of opportunity for Anatomically Modern Humans (arctic hunters, at the time) to cross from the Old World to the New, and *vice versa*. It is not at this geographic spot that the seafaring option becomes essential. However, we still have Australia, New Guinea, Melanesia, and the other islands of Oceania to account for. Specialists agree that Anatomically Modern Humans were present in Australia c. 60 ka BP, and for New Guinea a similar date is considered. One assumes that the first major sally of Anatomically Modern Humans ‘Out-of-Africa’, 80-60 ka BP, led, to begin with, across what is now the باب المنذب Bab al-Mandab / ‘Strait of Tears’ at the Red Sea’s mouth into the Indian Ocean – a narrow crossing with the other shore in view, and at the time navigable or even fordable by humans – and from there slowly eastward along the Indian Ocean coast, facilitated by continuing similarities of climate and ecosystem, unhindered and with dry feet all the way to what are now the Lesser Sunda Islands, southern Indonesia. Before the melting of the polar caps at the onset of the Holocene (10 ka BP), what is now insular South East Asia was one contiguous subcontinent negotiable with dry feet, but between the isles of Sumba and Timor (Fig. 1.2) there was never, since the emergence of humans, less than a stretch of 70 km of open sea, which had to be crossed in order to reach Australia and New Guinea.³⁰ And which evidently was crossed by humans, c. 60 ka BP. The main researcher looking deeply into this problem and publishing widely on it, is the Australian palaeoanthropologist Robert Bednarik (1997a, 1997b, 1999a, 1999b, 2000). He established without a shimmering of doubt that in the Middle Palaeolithic, humans had the capability of seafaring. Against this background we need no longer be surprised that Melanesia – only accessible by boat from the continental Old World during the last few Ma – was colonised by Anatomically Modern Humans c. 25 ka BP, and that especially in the course of the last 5 ka the rest of Oceania was colonised by maritime means, last so New Zealand which, although lying much more to the west, was reached from Tahiti in Eastern Polynesia only in the 13th c. CE.

²⁹ But certainly not all; *cf.* Stanford & Bradley 2004, who propose an extreme northern Atlantic alternative.

³⁰ The biological explorer Wallace, who formulated the evolution theory slightly prior to Darwin, discovered the phytogeographic and zoogeographic divide between Bali and Lombok – now known as the *Wallace line*. However, the *Sahul line* between Sumba and Timor has now been found to be more of a challenge to early Anatomically Modern Humans – without seafaring they could not have crossed here into New Guinea and Australia, where their presence has been attested from 60 ka BP on.



after Wallace 1863; at no point in human history the Sahul line had less than 70 kms of open sea, which necessitated seafaring in order to populate New Guinea and Australia by c. 60 ka BP

Fig. 1.2. The Wallace line (a) and the Sahul line (b)

In other words, our history as Anatomically Modern Humans cannot be told unless by recourse of seafaring as a very old achievement going back to the Middle Palaeolithic, and obviously honed to such perfection in the tens of millennia to elapse before the Early Bronze Age, that by then the entire Pacific Ocean could be colonised, as well as the pelagic islands of the Indian Ocean.

Viable seafaring at the eastern-hemispheric outer edge of the distribution area of Anatomically Modern Humans, in Oceania, does not guarantee that such exalted nautical technologies and skills were also available, by the Early Bronze Age, in the other continents. There is extensive evidence to this effect, but its discussion is outside our present scope.³¹

³¹ Cf. van Binsbergen, in press (c), and extensive references cited there.

1.5.4. Enters the Sunda hypothesis³²

We have, moreover, a totally different angle to consider (*cf.* ch. 7, below), which particularly affects our understanding of African pre- and proto-history – the focus of the present book. If the Oceanian mariners were capable of colonising the entire, enormous expanse of the Pacific Ocean from the onset of the Bronze Age, their expansion may not have remained limited to the Pacific Ocean but may have spilled over, first to the Pacific Ocean shores, but also into the Indian Ocean and ultimately perhaps even the Atlantic Ocean. Disreputable fantasies in this sense, doing much harm to the academic acceptability of the idea of transcontinental continuities, have been expressed ever since the end of the 19th c. CE (Blavatsky 1877, 1888 / 1950; Churchward 1926; Steiner 1923), often highlighting the imaginary continent of Lemuria in the Indian Ocean or Mu in the Pacific as the origin of humankind and culture and as the epicentre of westbound, and (if thought to pass by India) ‘Atlantean’ migrations towards Western Eurasia. In recent decades, and not as esoteric fantasy but as a testable scientific proposal, we have seen the formulation of the *Sunda Hypothesis* or *Oppenheimer–Dick-Read–Tauchmann Hypothesis*³³ according to which South East Asia constituted a major centre of culture in the Early Holocene, whose human bearers fled by maritime means in all directions when the Sunda subcontinent was flooded because of the melting of the polar caps at the end of the last Ice Age / the onset of the Holocene. Oppenheimer has claimed that, in the process, important cultural themes, *e.g.* the Paradise and Flood mythology to be found in the Ancient Near East including *Genesis*, and by implication nautical skills, would spread westward and engender, or at least fertilise, such proto-historic centres of civilisation as the Indus valley, and the Persian Gulf. Dwelling mainly on more recent millennia, and without emphasising the push factor of sub-continental flooding, Dick-Read in a thoughtful and well-documented argument (*The Phantom Voyagers*, 2005) was to argue the extent of Sunda effects specifically on Africa – mainly on the basis of cultural and artistic traits reminiscent of South East Asia. Over the past decade and a half, I have repeatedly and profoundly considered the Sunda thesis (van Binsbergen 2007, 2012, in press (d); van Binsbergen with Isaak 2008)³⁴ and found that – if it is not limited to South East Asia but generalised so as to include all seaborne trans-Indian Ocean influences upon the Africa and Europe, *i.e.* not just those attributed to South East Asia but also those from India, China, Japan, New Guinea and Oceania) it has considerable value, especially for myriad puzzling, apparently exotic elements in

³² I am using the term Sunda here exclusively to denote the South East Asian subcontinent, both in its original contiguous form and as it was largely flooded and fragmented into myriad large and small islands due to the rising of the sea level by c. 200 m with the melting of the polar caps at the end of the last Ice Age, c. 10 ka BP. My argument does not specifically address the Greater or Lesser Sunda Islands, which make up a substantial part of the Indonesian archipelago. Nor does the term Sunda here denote the sizeable minority of c. 30 million speakers of the Sunda language on Western Java – and their specific culture.

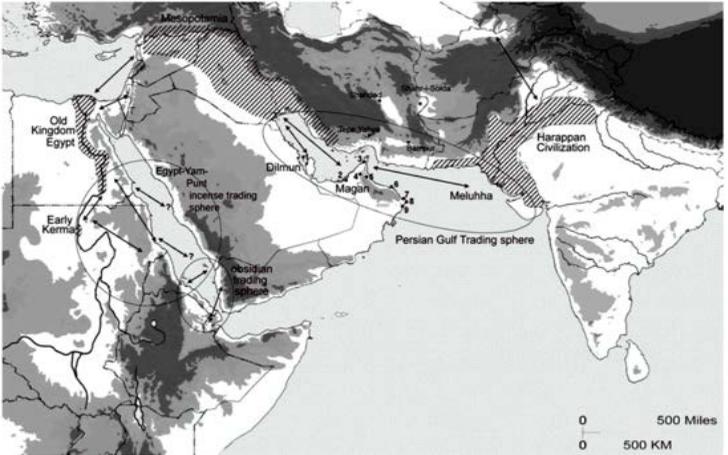
³³ Oppenheimer 1998; Dick-Read 2005; Tauchmann 2010; see Chapter 7, below.

³⁴ In van Binsbergen with Isaak 2008 I contest, on the basis of both a theoretical argument and of complex multivariate analysis of flood myths world wide, Oppenheimer’s claim to the effect that the basic mythologies in *Genesis* (Paradise and Flood) would derive from Indonesia through Sunda expansion. However, Oppenheimer’s thesis, while featuring extensive mythological claims, is not limited to comparative mythology, and its wider applicability has only been confirmed in subsequent years – while even apart from the Paradise and Flood mythology, the applicability in the field of comparative mythology still seems worthy of consideration.

the culture and society of the Nkoya people of Zambia, with whom I have closely associated since 1972.³⁵

However, despite the obvious heuristic value of Oppenheimer-Dick-Read-Tauchmann's Sunda Hypothesis, there is still a major puzzle to be solved. Why *phantom* voyagers? If these long-distance sea voyages actually did place, why did they completely disappear from local memory – even in the one uncontroversial case when they unmistakably took place, the maritime migration from Indonesia to Madagascar ca. 2 ka BP?³⁶ Must we conclude that, apart from the population of Madagascar, no such phantom voyages did ever actually take place? Having personally investigated the abundance of transcontinent clues suggestive of Sunda (in the wide sense to include Indian, Chinese, Oceanian) influence in Africa I am not inclined to accept this alternative, but it needs to be taken into account.

Against this background the idea of emerging ancient transcontinental maritime networks, although of a more fragmented nature, is also to be found in the mainstream literature. Thus, by the third mill. BCE (Early Bronze) the maritime network of the NW Indian Ocean was already in place, as Fig. 1.3 shows:



Barbar; 2. Umm an-Nar; 3. Tall Abraq; 4. Hili; 5. Wadi Suq; 6/ Ras al-Hamra; 7. Ras al-Hadd; 8 Ras al-Jinz; 9. as-Suwayh; after Boivin *et al.* 2010: 261, Fig. 7, with thanks

Fig. 1.3. Maritime trade systems in NE Indian Ocean in the third millennium BCE

³⁵ van Binsbergen 1981a, 1981b, in 1984, 2014, in press (d); the latter offers an overview of Sunda traits among the Nkoya – and so do, *passim*, my contributions to the present volume.

³⁶ The puzzle *need not be solved* before the possibility of long-distance sea travel in proto-historic times can be seriously considered. The Phoenicians / Carthaginians form a case in point. While their seafaring all over the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Atlantic Ocean all the way to Cornwall and Cameroon, even their circumnavigation of Africa (Herodotus, *Historiae*, 4.42) has gone largely uncontested, the Phoenicians themselves, although credited with the crucial invention of the alphabet, left almost no written records – Hanno's *Periplus* would constitute an important exception but is only preserved in a Greek translation (Picard 1982a, 1982b).

1.6. The present collection of papers: Continued

Not only in terms of the disciplines involved, but also institutionally the conference topic proved even more eccentric that we might already have anticipated. Out of the dozens of Africanist researchers associated with the ASCL, and out of hundreds of members of the Netherlands Association for African Studies (of which the convenor was a founding-member, and a former President 1990-1993), only Wouter van Beek came forth – much to our delight and gratitude – to join the conference and contribute a paper, inspired by his great expertise in the ethnography of iron-working in Africa. Was ours the voice of one calling in the wilderness?

Of the international, intercontinental set of contributors, each allowed herself or himself to be guided by the *Call for Papers*, but mainly narrowly and selectively so. Sanya Osha asks the timely and relevant question as to the nature of Africanity – and offers us another instalment of his close reading of the work of that great African and cosmopolitan intellectual Valentin Mudimbe. Cathérine Coquery-Vidrovitch traces the highly significant transition that has led from Eurocentric outside raids upon African history (up to the 1950s), to the recognition of African history as an aspect of world history – but whereas she herself has been one of the prominent actors in that transition, pre- and proto-history, as the conference's focus, have remained outside her scope as documentary historian. And we have to admit that the prehistoric data on transcontinental continuity are limited – which is why, in Chapter 7, Wim van Binsbergen sets out to glean some pertinent transcontinental insights from a category of data not often featuring in African Studies discourse: genetic distribution maps – albeit that these maps (adapted after Cavalli-Sforza *et al.* 1994) represent the swan's song of a older paradigm in population genetics, now solidly supplanted by molecular biology based on the minutest inventory of the human genome. In Chapter 8, Ndu Life Njoku grapples with another dimension of transcontinentality: the meaning of Africa for Africans in the diaspora of intercontinental migration. Whereas these chapters are mainly approaching transcontinentality from a theoretical angle, we have been extremely lucky and grateful to find, long after the conference, in the leading Sri Lankan scholar Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya an additional contributor who brings to life the colours and identity strategies of African transcontinentality – admittedly, not in pre- and proto-history, but in the most recent centuries, in the enclaves of selectively surviving African culture in Sri Lanka; similar enclaves exist in Indonesia and elsewhere in South East Asia.

After these general perspectives, we proceed to Parts III, IV and V, all occupied by specific case studies highlighting significant aspects of transcontinental continuity in the African case.

Chapter 10 is a particularly graphic demonstration of the very considerable extent to which Africa has been part of the wider world, not only in our post-modern times of globalisation, but also, and especially, in pre- and proto-history. The Russian scholar Yuri Berezkin, Americanist, and comparative mythologist of long standing, is the creator of a gigantic high-quality and high-resolution data-base of mythological and folklore motifs, reflecting virtually the entire world-wide corpus of data in these fields. Interro-

gated on the distribution of folklore motifs in Africa and other continents, this data-base returns the most fascinating and convincing pattern of transcontinental continuity for some of the best-known motifs in the international literature, e.g. on muddled messages, and tricksters. Interesting is Berezkin's conclusion concerning the emerging patterns, to the effect that

'The evidence suggests that ecological, economic or social variables are rarely enough to explain them.'

Then what explains them?³⁷ An innate archetypal / neurobiological programming? A hitherto inexplicable cultural inertia, comparable with the excessive survival tendency of lithic industries and of cat's cradles? A common origin, therefore, in remote prehistory? A trickle down from literate cultures? The converging tendencies of the universally similar human mind, making for repeated parallel inventions? However, at this stage it is enough for us to establish transcontinental patterns – their very idea, as we have seen, is sufficiently counter-paradigmatic to discharge us from the obligation, to explain such patterns. But ultimately we shall have to face the task of explanation, too.

In the next chapter, 11, the leading Chinese historian of transcontinental contacts between China and the West in Early Modern times, Li Anshan, summarises the extensive evidence on this point.

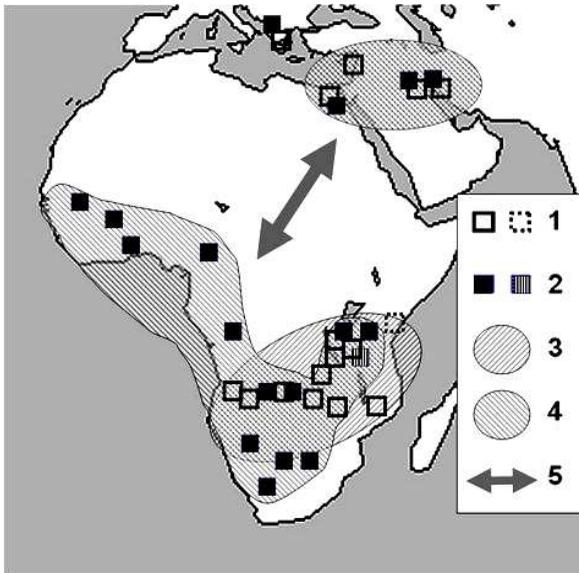
Li Anshan largely relies on Chinese historical records. More obviously belonging to the realm of *proto*-history, and specifically addressing transcontinental continuities between the Ancient Near East and West Africa, is the next contribution, by the German but France-trained historian / philologist Dierk Lange.

The timely nature of his argument was immediately clear to me when I brought to mind the great puzzle of African flood myths, with which I have struggled ever since coming into contact with the New Comparative Mythology, and sought to analyse in that light the mythology (van Binsbergen 2010) of the Nkoya people among whom I have done research since 1972. On a global scale, one of the most widespread mythemes is that of the Flood, found in nearly every region of every continent. For nearly a century, James Frazer's dictum (1918) that Africa has no flood myth, has kept comparative mythologists spell-bound, further contributing to the conceptual marginalisation of the African continent. Meanwhile a few dozen cases of African flood myths have come to our attention (Fig. 1.4), but this leads to another problem: in the Ancient Near East (e.g. in *Genesis*, *Enuma Eliš*, the *Atrahasis Epic*, and the *Gilgamesh Epic*; Dalley 1991; Lambert & Millard 1969; Smith 1876; Hilprecht 1910), flood myths and tower myths are both attested, although rarely combined within one narrative ensemble – as is the case in many instances in South East Asia. The distributional map suggests continuity between the Ancient Near East, and the overlapping African attestations of both mythemes – but – with the rejection of the Hamitic Hypothesis – so far no convincing mechanism of transmission could be imagined to bridge the gap across the Sahara. Lange's bold migration thesis, linking the earliest layer in West African dynastic oral traditions with the well-documented, written king lists of the collapsing Assyrian Empire, provides our

³⁷ On this moot point, cf. van Binsbergen 2018, s.v. 'inertia, cultural' – pp. 74, 336, 120n, 126n.

answer with eloquent simplicity. It is a solution that closely ties in with other, similar answers: the migration of some remnants of the West Asian so-called Sea Peoples, at the end of the Bronze Age, via Egypt into North Africa and possibly into West Africa (van Binsbergen & Woudhuizen 2011: 367 f.); the interpretation of such migrations as the southernmost branch of Pelasgian expansion (*ibidem*); and earlier claims of Israelite remnants in North Africa, West Africa (e.g. Williams 1930) and further afield, including the Lemba.

However, the paradigmatic implications of Lange's argument go much further than solving a specific little problem in mythological distribution. They put paid to an inveterate paradigm that, at all costs, seeks to deny Africa and Africans access to the mainstream of Eurasian / Old-World cultural history since the Bronze Age. They affirm the resilience of empirical truth over (vicarious) political correctness.



Tower mytheme attested (dotted outline = conjectural); 2. Flood mytheme attested (crosshatched symbol = conjectural); 3. African distribution of (1); 4. African distribution of (2); 5. inexplained gap making it unlikely that borrowing took place from South West Asia where both mythemes occur together. This figure after van Binsbergen 2006: 329, Fig. 4); sources include Frobenius 1931: Introduction and pp. 166f, 169; van Binsbergen 1992; van der Sluijs n.d.; Isaak 2006.

Fig. 1.4. Flood myths and tower myths in Africa in connection with the Ancient Near East

Part IV is reserved for linguistic contributions by eminent linguists and Egyptologists, who, however, again with a somewhat selective application of the *Call for Papers*, in the first place deal with *intracontinental* processes of linguistic continuity: between Ancient

Egypt and the Saharan-Nubian region (Alain Anselin); African resonances of the Egyptian god Aker and its affinities with the Roman god Janus (Pierre Oum Ndig).³⁸ A similar, largely intracontinental focus characterises Chapter 15, by Zuzana Malášková & Václav Blažek, on assessing the chronology of the Berber linguistic phylum against the background of Phoenician / Punic loans, from Carthage in North Africa, and ultimately hailing from Phoenicia on the West Asian Levantine coast – just beyond the fringe of the African continent. The article is an excellent illustration of state-of-the-art forms of long-range linguistic analysis through glottochronology, and may ultimately inspire others to far-reaching interpretations in terms of transcontinentality.³⁹

With Part V we arrive at the last section of this collection, which has a focus on technology. Cyril Hromník (whose book *Indo-Africa* (1981) created havoc in the last decade of

³⁸ On this point I suggest that further research could reveal even more impressive transcontinental continuities. The Italic god Janus can be seen as continuous with the Basque / Ligurian god Basojaun, but also with the aquatic mythical culture hero Oannes allegedly founding the Sumerian civilisation in Berossos' account in Hellenistic times, and with South Asian Ganesha – which takes us, from Africa, not only into several regions of Eurasia, but also into the Bronze Age, or earlier. One is reminded of the chain of goddesses associated on the one hand with weapons and their expert wielding, on the other hand with the feminine domestic arts of spinning and weaving. This complex ranges from West and Central Africa (Nyambi / Anansi), via North African Antinea, the much contested Egyptian Neith and Greek Athena, Proserpina and Harmonia, to West Asian Anat, Anahita, Sumerian Uttu, the Ancient Germanic goddesses of weaving Holda and Perchta, and the classic Chinese myth of the Weaving Girl set in the sky as counterpart of the Shepherd Boy, as well as the weaving sun goddess Amaterasu, of Japan; and even (Bryant 1949) the Inkosanzana, Celestial Princess, of the Zulu (further cf. van Binsbergen 2015: 20 f., 32, and references cited there).

³⁹ One obvious way to further develop the transcontinental dimension of Malášková & Blažek's argument is by asking whether Berber did originate in North Africa. Recent proposals, probably not endorsed by Militarev's close colleague Blažek, situate the emergence of the Afroasiatic linguistic macrophylum, to which the Berber phylum belongs, in the outgoing Upper Palaeolithic of the Levantine Natufian culture, c. 12 ka BP (Militarev 1996, 2002; Militarev & Shnirelman 1988; on the other hand, McCall 1998 opts for an Afroasiatic homeland in Africa, yet (McCall & Fleming 1999) sees food production as arriving in the Maghrib by sea from the Levant – perhaps along with Afroasiatic?). There are other, cultural reasons to look to West Asia in order to illuminate the early history of Berber (van Binsbergen, in press (a)): although it may be attractive to suggest an Egyptian background for the Greek god of fire and artful handicraft, Hephaestus / Hēphaistos (Blažek 2010 equates him with the Egyptian primal god Ptaḥ, even regardless of the masturbation parallel – the birth of Erichthonios / of Šū and Tftt – with the Egyptian creation god Atum); yet the most likely etymology for Hephaistos's name (van Binsbergen in press (a)) links it to proto-Berber **hifāu*, 'fire'. However, Hephaestus is peculiar to the Aegean region, especially the isle of Lemnos and the city of Athens, and the apparent epicentre of his cult is in a volcanic area in Caria, South West Anatolia. Recent population genetics have brought out the probability

'that the Neolithic transition in this part of the world [North Africa – WvB] was accompanied by demic diffusion of Afro-Asiatic speaking pastoralists from the Middle East' (Arredi *et al.* 2004). ['demic diffusion' designates the geographic displacement of items of culture, not as a result of social communication processes such as learning, trade, theft, imitation, stimulus invention etc., but simply by the geographical migration of the population possessing that item of culture. – WvB]

So in addition to the Phoenician / Punic loans dating from the late 2nd / 1st millennium BCE, much earlier affinities with other Afroasiatic languages may be considered to make the transcontinental (Africa / Asia) history of Berber somewhat more complete.

South African apartheid being chided for depriving Africans from their cultural past), looks at curious landscape features which abound in the Moordenaars Karoo region of South Africa. These are interpreted against the background of a complex, exciting and largely⁴⁰ illuminating narrative of transcontinental presences (especially from South Asia), and the latter's reflections in ethnic names, where the impact of Dravidian prospectors for minerals emerges as an important explanatory factor. Transcontinental mineral involvement also forms the background for Walter van Beek's illuminating overview of the enigmas and dilemmas of research on smithing / metalworking in Africa (cf. Alpern 2005), where Walter's ethnographic expertise in various parts of West Africa allows him to shed a revealing light on the extensive literature. Robert Thornton, finally, looks at the glass technology of beads in the context of Southern Africa's ecstatic cult of *bungoma* / *sangomahood*, and again stresses the latter's links with South Asia which have come up time and again in the specialist literature of the last two decades.⁴¹

1.7. Conclusion

Overlooking the present collection as a whole, we are reminded of the fact that the value of a conference rests, primarily, not in the lasting arguments it may ultimately turn out to have generated, but in bringing into focus a fascinating and promising package of themes, problematics, ideas and perspectives – as well as a critical mass of specialists prepared to grapple with this package in years to come. It is in this sense that *Rethinking Africa's Transcontinental Continuities* may serve to lead to more incisive and more coherent research in the near future, and to a better, properly globalised and no longer essentialising-Africanist, paradigm. If such a goal could be achieved, it would be thanks to the many people who have contributed to this book's materialisation in many complementary ways. They have, once more, our sincerest recognition.

Although our final results invite criticism on several counts, let us not be tempted to underestimate the significance of the present endeavour (both conference and book) in terms of the global politics of knowledge and of identity. For centuries, Africa and Africans have been objectifyingly engineered as essential categories, props for the North

⁴⁰ *Largely* – for the real problem of proto-historic ethnonyms is not so much to identify 'to which population they refer' (as if populations are stable in space and time, and constitute natural units of analysis), but to realise that ancient ethnonyms are usually multilayered, situationally and perspectively used, polysemic, anachronistic, oscillatingly referring now to locality now to population, subject to popular etymologies in their original context as well as in that of reporting travelers, traders, scholars – while the composition of local populations changes constantly, and while incorporation in any wide socio-political context almost inevitably leads to a streamlining and distortion of existing ethnonyms and the emergence / invention of new ones (cf. van Binsbergen & Woudhuizen 2011: 29–60 for an elaborate theory of ancient ethnonyms (with special reference to the Late-Bronze-Age Mediterranean); and van Binsbergen 2008b, 2019. Thus, e.g., if we claim to identify 'the Wakwak' in African proto-history (as Hromník is doing in his contribution; and has been done earlier by Hromník 1981; Dick-Read 2005 (who affirms their Austronesian background); Tolmacheva 1987) we might at the same time acknowledge that this originally Arabic ethnic designation may have been freely applied to any population situated at the edges of what the speaker considered the known world.

⁴¹ Cf. van Binsbergen 2003: ch. 8, 2005b.

Atlantic region (and for the elites identifying with that region all over the globe) to construct themselves, through denial and contrast, as different, superior, pure and original. For decades, Afrocentricity has been an appropriate, sympathetic and defensible response to this process, yet it has presented largely a faithful mirror image of the same perverse essentialisation. It is time to turn a new page. Africa and its peoples have always been part and parcel of the world as a whole, now taking the initiative in productive, cultural, religious, and political development, now following transcontinental leads or being oppressed by them. In a globalised world where a brilliant person (Barack Obama) with immediate ancestry in sub-Saharan Africa and extensive adoptive / childhood experiences in South East Asia, could be incumbent of the highest office in the most powerful North Atlantic state, racialism is obviously a monstrous relic of the past, but also the retreat to essentialising continental positions is obsolete.

This is the social and political topicality of our insistence, throughout this book, on Africa's transcontinental continuities.

ENVOY. Let me conclude by admitting a somewhat embarrassing peculiarity which renders this volume and its editor especially vulnerable. With three contributions from my hand (even after relegating my most voluminous conference contribution, on the African impact of Taoism, Buddhism, and Hinduism, to another publication – 2012b / 2017), to those many researchers today who have been misled to see academic production in terms of competitive fetishistic scoring of publications rather than as the collective, passionate pursuit of an intellectually and socially relevant problematic, the book may look like a vain ego trip rather than a politely, ritualistically balanced exercise in academic equality. There are, I think, mitigating circumstances: after all, the conference was supposed to be my well-earned valedictory present from the ASCL (even though this aspect blew up in my face when it came to publication); the conference and book were in fact conceived as a *Festschrift* in my honour, and it was only when none of my local colleagues stepped forward to take responsibility for the publication, that I had no option than reluctantly – preposterously – acting as editor myself; still, I have grappled with this book's topic longer and more intensively than most of the other contributors; and when I found (already having convened the conference single-handedly while already retired) that the specific *empirical* points in my Call for Papers were taken up only reticently and selectively, I felt compelled to step in with texts of my own. Nonetheless, this imbalance is among the many deficiencies of this volume, and anyone trying to do better will have my full support.

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PART II. GENERAL THEORETI-
CAL PERSPECTIVES

Chapter 2

Key note – Rethinking Africa’s transcontinental continuities in pre- and proto-history

by Wim van Binsbergen

2.1. Introduction^{42 43}

Why should we study Africa’s transcontinental continuities, and how could this be a surprising and counter-paradigmatic topic, more than a century after the professionalisation of African Studies? The Leiden 2012 conference was organised in my honour, I set the topic, so let me introduce this topic, in the first place, by explaining how I myself

⁴² I will refrain here from a discussion of transcontinental continuities between the Americas and sub-Saharan Africa, partly because these emerge from the work of the Americanist Yuri Berezkin who participates in our conference (*cf.* ch. 10, below), partly because this conference’s focus (and that of my own recent research) has been on African-Asian continuities. Yet there are unmistakable continuities in the field of language (the convergence between the African macrophyla, Austric, and Amerind as ‘peripheral cluster’ within *Borean), divination and games (where American and African artefacts look very similar and may go back to common Eurasian prototypes from the Upper Palaeolithic – as I have argued elsewhere in detail; *e.g.* 2012), comparative mythology, technologies of hunting, fishing, basketry, and puberty rites.

⁴³ I have not been able to touch on all the ambitious topics of our conference’s initial Call for Papers, which therefore may still be referred to for further critical reflection.

came to study Africa's transcontinental continuities. My purpose here is not autobiographical self-indulgence, but to help lay bare the structures and preconceptions of Africanist research to the extent to which they determine our view of these transcontinental continuities. In the process we shall also address the important issue of why transcontinental continuities were obscured, not only from the (potentially hegemonic) view of Western scholars but also from the consciousness of historical actors in Africa and Asia. After a few methodological considerations, we will end with the question of what a fuller awareness of transcontinental continuities brings to Africa, and what it risks to take away from, Africa – finally considering, all too briefly, the interplay between empirical regional Area Studies, and Intercultural Philosophy.

2.2. How I came to study Africa's transcontinental continuities

2.2.1. Internalising the localising and presentist paradigm of classic anthropology

I read social anthropology and development studies at Amsterdam University,⁴⁴ specialising on popular Islam (notably in North Africa) and the anthropology of religion, and with a fair portion of South, East and South East Asian studies thrown in – offered by Wim Wertheim c.s., in reflection of the once prominent part which Dutch mercantile and colonial presences had played in Asia. At the end of my studies, I was groomed to either do a PhD on my North African fieldwork, or to start fresh fieldwork on the retail trade in Bombay (now Mumbai, India) – but instead, following up on an earlier African experience of my first wife, I was offered and accepted appointment with the University of Zambia, on the strength of the network ties of another one of my principal teachers, the Africanist André Köbben (*1925-2019). Thus I became an Africanist myself, for the next four decades of my career entrenched in the production and supervision of religious, ethnic, political and finally philosophical research all over the African continent. Here my personal fieldwork concentrated, for decades, on the Nkoya people of Western Zambia, and on the urban community of Francistown, Botswana, with its local versions of the *sangoma* cult that is widespread throughout Southern Africa – also engaging, for a shorter time but no less passionately, in the study of indigenous psychiatry in Guinea Bissau. However, from the very start my Africanist research was comparative, both inside Africa, and beyond that continent's boundaries; and from the very start it was (in

⁴⁴ Then still a programme of an interdisciplinary and temporal scope inconceivable at present, scheduled to span seven years full time, and comprising not only full training in anthropology and sociology, but also undergraduate fields in physical anthropology, linguistics, and psychology, to be crowned by minors in general linguistics and religious anthropology (especially Islam) for the Doctorandus degree.

deviation from the presentist classic anthropological paradigm at the time) historical,⁴⁵ seeking to apply the methods of proto-history which I had explored in my North African research, to regional comparisons reaching into the middle of the second millennium CE, way before the onset of European mercantile and colonial involvement in South Central and Southern Africa.

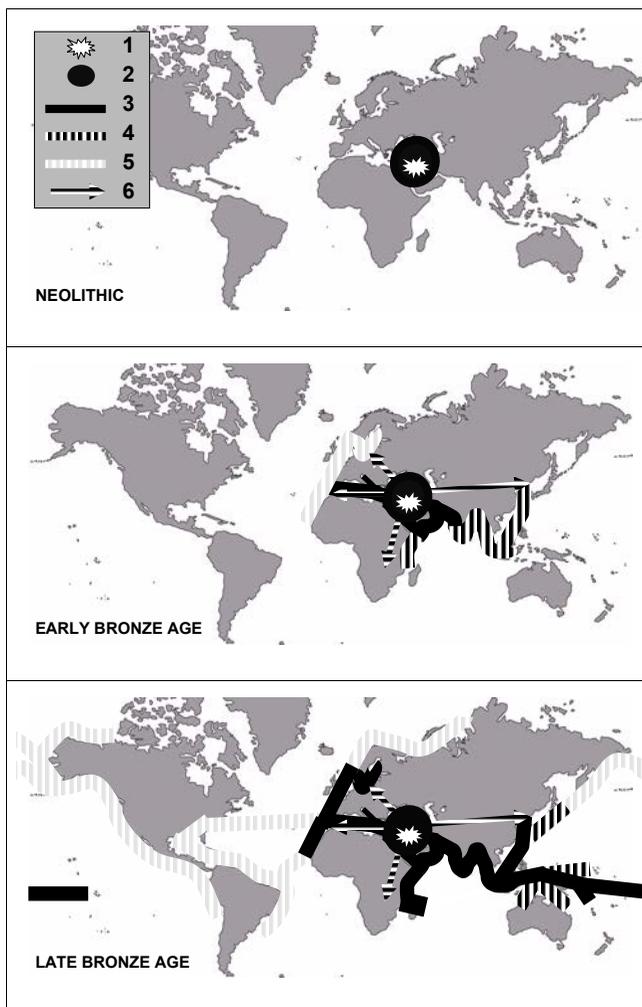
Despite my substantial background in Islamic and Asian studies, it took a surprisingly long time before I got so much as an inkling of the transcontinental resonances surfacing in my various African fieldwork sites. This had a number of reasons.

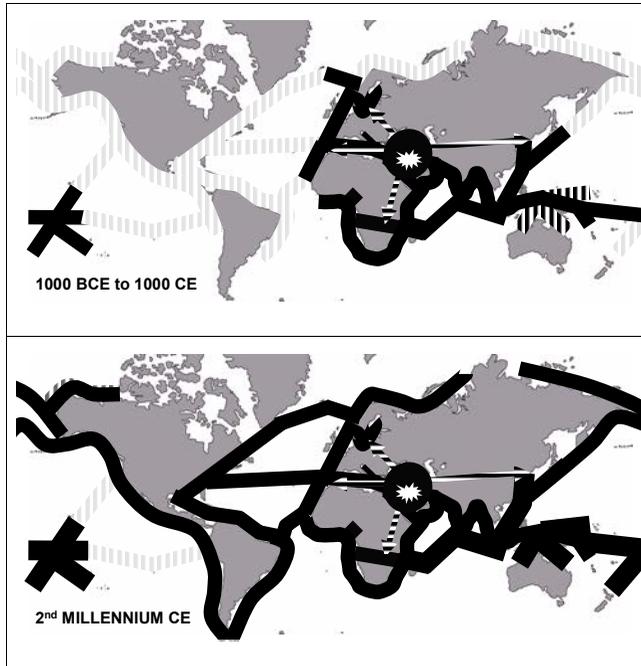
2.2.2. *The sheer unimaginable extent of the postulated global maritime network from the Bronze Age onwards*

In the first place, there is the sheer unimaginable extent of the postulated global maritime network since the Bronze Age, as most tentatively presented in my Fig. 2.1. It would require a full-length book to argue in detail the evidence for such an emerging global maritime network, and to situate such a claim against the background on debate on transcontinental continuities since the late 19th c. CE when Tylor (1880, 1882, 1896) stressed Asian / Polynesian / Meso American continuities in games and colour symbolism and *diffusion* became the main stock-in-trade of the young anthropological discipline. Obviously a fuller discussion would be outside our present scope – I must refer the reader to my forthcoming book *Daedalus's Invention: Arguing the Case for the Emergence, Since the Bronze Age, of a Global Maritime Network* (van Binsbergen in press (b).

⁴⁵ Whence this historical inclination, which was counter-paradigmatic at the time? In our post-Hegelian Age, the history of a thing is considered its essence, so in fact it is not an individual anthropologist's historical inclination but classic anthropology's lack of it that needs explanation (such an explanation can be found in the blind zeal with which early anthropologists, especially in Western Europe including the British Isles, in the foundation and definition of their new subject, sought to keep those very disciplines out that until then used to deal with the topics that anthropology was appropriating – history, art history, philosophy, linguistics. Personally, I was driven to ethnohistory in North Africa because (characteristically, I am afraid) it had been the research topic of my predecessor in the same village, the late lamented Guus Hartong; moreover, under the immensely stimulating guidance of my supervisors Douwe Jongmans and Klaas van der Veen I found that I needed to reconstruct, on the basis of myriad oral sources, the highly complex residential history of a local valley since the late 18th century CE, before I could account for the distribution and selective veneration of the several dozen shrines in that area. Soon, as a young lecturer at the University of Zambia, I engaged in ethnographic and contemporary-historical research of an urban healing cult among the Nkoya people of Western Zambia, and of a major millennialist movement, that of Lenshina, in Northern Zambia; this allowed me to be co-opted in the company of the Manchester School and of Terence Ranger's comprehensive Ford Foundation project on religion and history in Central Africa, which brought me in contact with my future PhD supervisor Matthew Schoffeleers and also resulted in my Simon Professorship at Manchester at a tender age. But much more is involved – my scientific career is marked by the constant strong passion to try and write history where previously there was none, and this truly pre- and proto-historical passion (which brought me to extend my historical reconstructions ever further into the past, right into pre-colonial times, the Bronze Age, even the Middle Palaeolithic) must have to do with my self-perception as a childhood victim of family secrets too long concealed.

(b).





1. Proposed origin; 2. Initial expansion of 1; 3. Extent of (semi-)maritime network; 4. idem, putative; 5. idem, highly conjectural; 6. The 'cross-model': expansion of Pelasgian traits (largely overland)

Fig. 2.1. Proposed emergence of a global maritime network since the Early Bronze Age

Our underestimation of transcontinental continuities is not only the effect of localising and subordinative geopolitical ideologies, but also of the sheer unimaginable extension of the postulated global maritime network since the Bronze Age. Thus a map on display in the Colombo National Museum, Sri Lanka, does admit African transcontinental connections. It claims that *dhow* nautical technology reached from East Africa to Indonesia, but by a surprising myopia strikingly restricts the area of outrigger technology to the North-western Indian Ocean. Recent commonly supported views are that outriggers were invented in an Austronesian-speaking South East Asian / Western Pacific context c. 3000 BCE, and were decisive in the recent peopling of the Pacific Ocean. The outrigger canoe in itself is treated as an indication of Sunda influence, e.g. by Dick-Read 2005, who also discusses its African distribution.

Partly as a result of the localising paradigm of classic (i.e. mid-20th c. CE) anthropology, and partly because of the popular Modernist tendency to totally underestimate technological advances made outside the North Atlantic Early Modern period, our common-sense perception of transcontinental continuities in pre- and proto-history tends to be obsessed with a pre-scientific, or rather unscientific, prejudice of geographical immuta-

bility. However, the truth of the matter – as brought out by abundant empirical data – is that animal species, including the various varieties of humans that have walked the earth during the last three or four million years, have always been mobile. There is no reason to assume that Anatomically Modern Humans were stationary during the more than 100 ka when they were apparently confined to the African continent, and from 80 ka BP on they have peopled the other continents by being on the move. Since continents are largely defined by maritime boundaries (the Ural Mountains' broad interface between Asia and Europe – the latter being a hegemonic geopolitical concept rather than a convincing geographical and historical one for most of humankind's history – , and the narrow but overland connection between the Americas being the main exception in modern times) this immobile misconception of humankind has much to do with the belief that navigation is an invention of the last few millennia. Thus the remnants of a Mesolithic or Neolithic migration risk to be cherished as an unexpected boon from the past. However, the Exodus out of Africa across a few kilometres of open sea across the Bab al-Mandab (the mouth of the Red Sea), into Asia, and especially the peopling of Australia c. 60 ka BP (at no point during Anatomically Modern Human's 200 ka history was there less than 70 km of open sea between Sumatra and Australia!) make it abundantly clear that some degree of navigation was done already in the Middle Palaeolithic.⁴⁶ This is an essential corrective to our view of transcontinental continuities in pre- and proto-history, and adds plausibility to the idea of a global multidirectional maritime network in the Late Bronze Age (Fig. 2.1).

2.2.3. *The paradigm of classic anthropology: localisation and presentism*

In the second place, those seeking to affirm transcontinental continuities are up against a dominant, institutionally highly powerful scientific paradigm. Culture is a machine to produce self-evidences in the collective human experience; and scholarly paradigms are part of a disciplinary sub-culture, in the sense that they dictate what, in a scientific discipline at a given moment, may be considered self-evident, and what, by contrast, is self-evidently untrue or incredible – whatever the supporting data to the contrary.

As a student, I had internalised, like most of my colleagues, and had not yet taking my distance from, the localising wisdom of regional studies at the time. *According to this unspoken paradigm, things African were to be explained by exclusive reference to Africa, or else one would be found guilty of the political incorrectness of depriving Africans (allegedly already in a pitiable position as victims of recent global history) from, allegedly, what little they had left to be proud of..* In this light, a true and trustworthy scientist – i.e. one readily submitting to the dominant paradigms of his discipline at the time – could only have *contempt* for the transcontinental approaches of an early vintage, such as Frobenius' *Kulturmorphologie* (linking South Central Africa to Mesopotamia, West Africa to Ancient Italy, etc.); Seligmann's 'Hamitic hypothesis' (attributing cultural initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa to the effect of the immigration of lightly-pigmented cattle keepers from West Asia); and the arch-diffusionist global Egyptocentrism of Elliot Smith and

⁴⁶ Cf. Bednarik 1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 1999a, 1999b, 2003.

Perry; or the early-twentieth-century (CE) suggestions (from Trombetti (1905), van Oordt (1907), Johnston (1907) etc.) on the transcontinental affinities of the Bantu (< Niger-Congo) linguistic phylum.

The same dogged response followed, in regard of South Central and Southern Africa, more recent attempts to trace transcontinental connections, e.g. that of the comparativist of religion Harold von Sicard (who in his mid-20th century writings claims parallels between African and general Old World beliefs in an unilateral mythical being, or between such *palladia* as African royal drums and the Biblical Ark of the Covenant, and whose work is replete with suggested parallels between the Bantu languages of South Central Africa, and Indo-European).

Similarly, Cyril Hromnik, who at the height of South African apartheid dared suggest (1981) massive cultural (including linguistic, and especially metallurgical) South Asian influence on Southern Africa in proto-history, and who was severely criticised for the political incorrectness of such a view (e.g. Hall & Borland 1982) – only to be more or less vindicated in the last decade, as is borne out by his presence at our conference.

When, in the 1930s, Schwartz⁴⁷ claimed truly massive Chinese presence in sub-Saharan Africa in the late 1st-early 2nd mill. CE, and sought to situate Great Zimbabwe in an Asian Buddhist context, he was not taken seriously by Chittick (1975) – after the work of Caton-Thompson,⁴⁸ and despite the excavation, at Great Zimbabwe, and careful publication, of numerous traces of trans-Indian-Ocean mercantile contacts, the orthodoxy of exclusively African antecedents of Great Zimbabwe became a cornerstone of the 'Africa for the Africans' paradigm, after decades of transcontinental interpretations by Bent, MacIver, and others.⁴⁹ For me, personally, this issue was clinched when I came across, in Bent's early account, archaeological finds unmistakably representing the standard *linga* and *yoni* representations which I, by now, have encountered in numerous Hinduist and Buddhist temples in South and South East Asia.⁵⁰

Also Forke's extensive study⁵¹ of possible Chinese contacts in the Red Sea region in the Bronze Age was still dismissed as mere fantasy by Chittick.

⁴⁷ Schwarz 1938.

⁴⁸ Caton-Thompson 1931.

⁴⁹ Bent 1892 / 1969; MacIver 1906. Incidentally, the fishbone-masonry pattern that is popularly celebrated as one of the hallmarks of Great Zimbabwe architecture and related archaeological sites on the Zimbabwe and Botswana Plateau, is not so unique as all that. In Ancient Roman architecture it was explicitly known as *opus spicatum* (cf. 'Opus caementicium', at: www.romanaqueducts.info/aquasite/hulp/tekusbreed.htm), and I have also seen it applied sporadically at the famous Greek archaeological site of Olympia – as well as in recent Eastern French rural architecture. I am bringing this up, not to insist on a Northern connection of Zimbabwe (like Bent and MacIver did), but to defuse a myth. I visited the site of Great Zimbabwe in 1989 during a short extension of my Botswana fieldwork into Bulawayo and the Matopos Hills – before I became familiar with Buddhist and Hindu architecture in South and South East Asia.

⁵⁰ van Binsbergen 2012.

⁵¹ Forke 1904.

Although a recognised specialist on Malagasy history, Kent's claim (1968, 1970; cf. Birkeli 1936) of extensive South-East-Asia-derived kingdoms in continental East Africa was ridiculed (Southall 1975). Thus we have the contradictory situation that historico-philological scholarship has by now accumulated piles of evidence concerning Asian-African transcontinental continuities (e.g. Duyvendak 1938, 1949; Neville c.s. 1975), and that much of this evidence was even anthologised and transmitted to Africanist circles half a century ago (Davidson 1959), yet mainstream African studies, like mainstream Asian studies, on the power of prevailing intra-disciplinary paradigms (and the ensuing power relations in the politics of knowledge production), aided by an inveterate condescending and othering geopolitics vis-à-vis Africa and Africans, could afford to dissimulate these facts until quite recently.

2.2.4. *The strength and weakness of classic anthropology*

In the third place, still dominant until the 1990s (when neo-diffusionism and multi-sited fieldwork became the shibboleths of globalisation studies), the model of ethnography through participant observation under conditions of total social and mental immersion, whatever its merits in terms of local relevance, validity and depth, had the disadvantage of forcing the researcher to invest so excessively in linguistic, cultural and relational localisation, that the wider geographical (let alone the wider historical) horizons of contact and comparability tend to be obscured in the process. Diffusion, although it was to remain a standard concept in archaeology and art history, had become a dirty word in anthropology once that discipline had shed the earlier paradigms of evolutionism and diffusionism, and had emerged in its classic, mid-20th century form combining culture theory with prolonged participant observation.

But perhaps the main factor blinding me from the transcontinental traits my African fieldwork sites now appear to be replete with, was the characteristic objectifying and altering stance of the classic anthropology in which I had been trained (foremost by André Köbben) at Amsterdam University. Classic anthropology was the sublimated intellectual reflection (in the optical, not the mental sense) of the colonial grip in which Western Europe had held a substantial part of the world from the late 19th to the mid-20th century CE. Despite all good intentions and individual protestations to the contrary, classic anthropology, therefore, was the hegemonic study of the objectified other defined as geographically, socially, culturally, linguistically and historically distant; in other words, *it was literally predicated on the implied notion of transcontinental discontinuity*. This phase of my career was over, and my cosy acceptance of the classic paradigm shattered, when, in 1975, instead of nicely staying in his Tunisian telephone-less *duār* (village) waiting for me to visit him, my first field assistant Hasnāwī bin Ṭahar, for the first time ever, spoke to me over the phone from what turned out to be a location in my home town Amsterdam, and the next day visited me in my home.

2.3. Counter-paradigmatic and interdisciplinary experiences

2.3.1. *An eye-opener*

In Francistown c. 1990, I learned what I thought was a local divination system during total immersion at a multi-ethnic *sangoma* lodge where Ndebele, Tswana and Kalanga were the main languages. That divination system was organised around 16 standard combinations produced by the throwing of four differently marked wooden tablets, each combination being named in an anecdotal and vaguely kinship- and generation-related idiom. It is only here that I began to suspect that such a system – with all its suggestions of a literate, scholarly, mathematical, more specifically astrological background – had not sprung directly from local African soil, but had reached Francistown at the end of a long trajectory through space and time. I was soon to learn, from painstaking library research, that variants of the same system (commonly designated ‘geomantic divination’) had branched off from that Francistown-bound trajectory in order to make their way to ‘Abbāsīd Mesopotamia in the end of the 1st mill. CE, Byzantine and medieval Europe, India, Madagascar, the Comoros Islands, Renaissance courts and peasant divination in Western Europe, and that variants of it had even installed themselves as the dominant divination systems of West Africa.⁵² Graduated as a *sangoma* in 1991, I have continued in this local practice and have made it one of the cornerstones of my empirical, theoretical, and epistemological reflections.⁵³ The latter enabled me to trade, in the late 1990s, my chair in anthropology at the Free University, Amsterdam, for one in intercultural philosophy, Erasmus University Rotterdam.

⁵² van Binsbergen 1991, 1996.

⁵³ For the social-science aspects of my divination studies, I am indebted to three of my long-standing colleagues and friends: René Devisch and Richard Werbner, who were deeply engaged in African divination studies, and shared their growing insights with me, long before my own fieldwork guided me in that direction; and Sjaak van der Geest, whose initiative for the 7th Market Day on Medical Anthropology, Amsterdam 1990, and for a Dutch-language book on medical anthropology, in the same year, persuaded me to write my first account of *sangoma* divination, and explore the extensive literature. However, becoming a *sangoma* meant, for me, the end of the kind of complacent, distancing, othering, condescending anthropology as I had pursued until 1989, and put me on the road to intercultural-philosophical reflection, where my colleagues Jos de Mul, Henk Oosterling and Heinz Kimmerly (the latter my predecessor in the Rotterdam chair of the foundations of intercultural philosophy which I occupied in 1998) were so generous and courageous as to offer me a framework to explore an entire new set of questions, often ranging beyond Africa. In the person of Wiep van Bunge, Dean of the Philosophical Faculty of the Erasmus University Rotterdam, I wish to thank that institution for the immense inspiration which it has brought me between the mid-1990s and 2012 – exploring the philosophical possibilities and impossibilities of interculturality, and increasingly concentrating, also in my empirical Africanist research, on the central questions of the fundamental underlying unity of humankind, and of intercultural epistemology. In the background, all these ventures had been impossible without the support from my main employer through the years, the African Studies Centre, Leiden, where therefore my greatest institutional debt lies. In the personal sphere, my greatest debts lie with the late lamented Henny van Rijn (1936-2019), a physicist who as my first wife and mother of our daughter Nezmja took me to Africa and had a great impact on my scientific and statistical outlook; and with my present wife Patricia Saegerman, who as a trained Africanist and mother of our four children encouraged and shared my research over the last nearly 40 years.

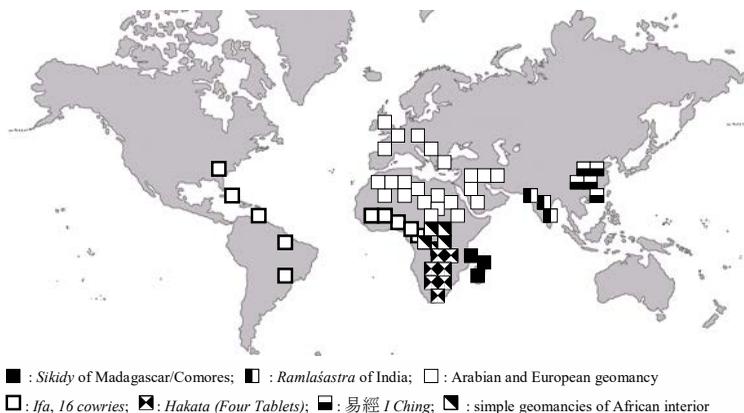
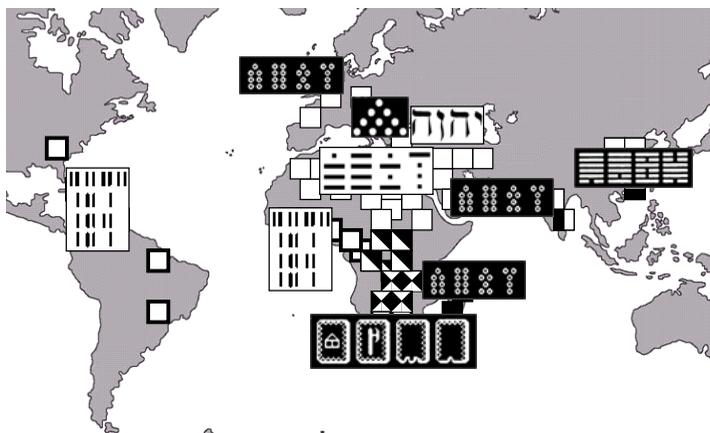
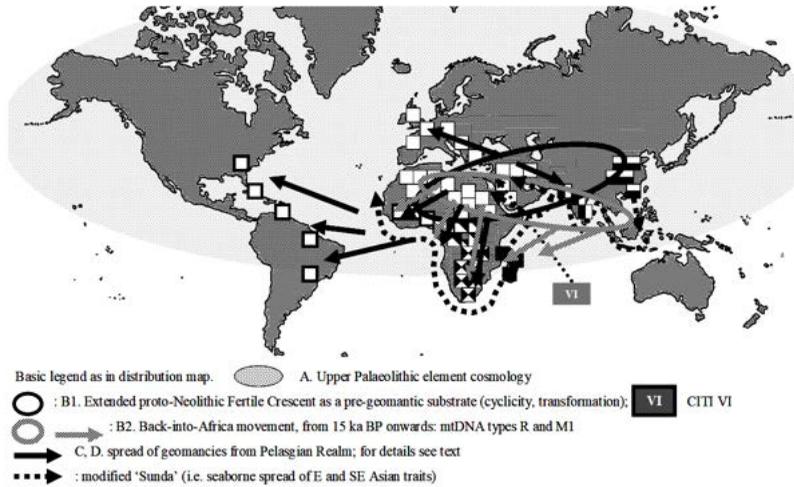


Fig. 2.2. Geomancy: Distribution



(legend as in Fig. 2.2; Pythagoras' *tetractys* and Ancient Israelite *tetragrammaton* shown as early expressions of a four-element system leading to proto-geomancies in Mediterranean Late Antiquity; cf. van Binsbergen 2012)

Fig. 2.3. Comparing geomantic notational systems worldwide



source: van Binsbergen 2012

Fig. 2.4. Proposed historical reconstruction of world history of geomancy

Meanwhile, in the pursuit of the remotest historical antecedents of the widely distributed family of geomantic divination systems, I was fortunate to join the Work Group on Religion and Magic in the Ancient Near East, during an intensive sabbatical at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (NIAS), 1994-1995. It was here, in a most stimulating and productive environment of Assyriologists and Semitists, and with the benefit of NIAS's fabulous library facilities, that I could familiarise myself with the oldest literate, therefore documented, systems of human thought, writing, mythology, magic, religion, and science – dating from a time when divination was still the queen of the sciences, even for centuries the only form of science, rather than the pseudo-science that astrology has inevitably become today on Popper's grounds that its pronouncements cannot be falsified.⁵⁴ At the NIAS the foundation was laid for much of my text-based and archaeological transcontinental explorations of the last decade – however, it was to take some years before this huge investment could be brought to fruition.

Also at the NIAS, I realised that it was fruitful to combine the investigation of the global cultural history of geomantic divination with that of other formal systems, such as games, writing systems, and myths. Here I began to look at the global distribution of a

⁵⁴ Popper 1959, 1976; cf. Glymour & Stalker 1982. I do realise that the position which I summarise here as my own, and which I discussed and autocritiqued extensively in my book *Intercultural encounters* (2003) and other writings, have all but expelled me from the discipline of social and cultural anthropology; cf. Olivier de Sardan 1988 – the latter piece especially written in reaction to a postmodern genre emerging in ethnography and exemplified by Paul Stoller's engagement with the occult in an African setting (Stoller & Olkes 1987; Stoller 1989). Incidentally, it was the exposure to pre-Greek Antiquity at NIAS which brought me the first inkling of Africa's (trans-)continental continuities beyond divination systems: fragments from Ancient Egyptian royal titlature, and from the Ancient Mesopotamian Flood story, turned out to surface in Nkoya oral traditions recorded in the 20th c. CE and alleged to refer to kings in Early Modern centuries (van Binsbergen 1998, 1998-2006); it was also there that I began to seriously engage with the *Black Athena* debate

family of games based on the circulation and reaping of tokens around holes organised along two to four rows, and known not only as *mankala* but even as 'the national game of Africa' (Culin 1896; van Binsbergen 1996, 1997, 2012). Initially I followed Culin's cue and adopted an Afrocentrist perspective (which was subsequently heavily criticised in Amselle's (2001) *ad hominem* argument), but more recently I realised that the distribution of *mankala*, with geomantic divination, the belief in a unilateral mythical being, and numerous other traits, is more convincingly understood if we look at it another instance of the exemplary ('Pelasgian') distribution pattern of the hunting device known as the *spiked wheel trap* (Fig. 2.5): found all over Africa, and only sporadically in West and Central Asia, my hypothesis is that this pattern yet originates in West Asia in Neolithic times, from there was spread West and South, and only became so massively represented in sub-Saharan Africa not because it originated there but because it found an uncontested, open cultural niche there by the Late Bronze Age.



for sources of the data points: see van Binsbergen n.d.; Lindblom 1935; inset (obscuring a part of the world map where there are no attestations anyway): modern spiked wheel trap from the Acholi people, Southern Sudan (Sparks 2006).

Fig. 2.5. Global distribution of the spiked wheel trap (as typical of Pelasgian distributions)

Meanwhile, riding the waves of the time and discharging our institutional responsibilities, the prominent Dutch Africanist Peter Geschiere and I had taken the initiative for the WOTRO (the Netherlands Science Foundation's tropical branch) national research programme on globalisation (1993-1999), which at its peak comprised over forty senior and junior researchers from the Netherlands and world-wide. It is in this stimulating and congenial context of researchers that I explored the theoretical and methodological requirements for an approach to pre- and proto-historical transcontinental continuities –conceiving of the latter as a form of proto-globalisation.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ I therefore wish to express my indebtedness to WOTRO / NWO, to my fellow-directors of this programme (Peter Geschiere, Bonno Thoden van Velzen – the latter in the 1960s my first teacher of anthropology –, and Peter van der Veer), and to the programme's members and associates.

So far my explorations into the antecedents of geomantic divination had been concentrating on the Ancient World of West Asia and North Eastern Africa – without yet paying much attention to the more recent civilisations of South, South East and East Asia. After all, I had by now become firmly established as an Africanist, and I was convinced (more than I am today) that the life-long investment involved in becoming a specialist in one continent, cannot be extended to or repeated for other continents.

2.3.2. Continuities revealed

In the early 1990s, however, exploring the iconography of divination tablets in Southern Africa, I had begun to see continuities between wood-carving patterns there and throughout the Indian Ocean region (cf. Nettleton 1984). Around 2000 (cf. van Binsbergen 2003: ch. 8; 2005b)⁵⁶ I began to suspect the transcontinental, specifically South Asian connections of the entire *sangoma* cult and not just of its divination technique. A philosophy-Master's student of mine from Italy, steeped in Buddhism, pointed out to me that one important *sangoma* song had striking similarities with the famous *Heart sutra*. Puzzlingly forced, at my *sangoma* graduation at a secluded spot in rural Northern Botswana, not only to eat my first sacrificial meal as a graduate *with chopsticks* (otherwise unknown in this region but with strong East Asian connotations) and particularly to wear (as the only member of my lodge, and greatly envied for that) a leopard skin which was proclaimed to be 'the traditional attire of my kind of people', I started on a worldwide search into leopard-skin symbolism, which brought me, eventually, to the realisation that my *sangoma* leopard skin was an African adaptation of the tiger skin which is not only donned by the principal South Asian god Indra and by the South Asian kings identified with him at their enthronement, but that was also stipulated (in a famous Indian text from the beginning of the Common Era, *The Institutes of Vishnu*, XXVII, 15-17; Jolly 1988: 11) as the standard initiation dress for adepts from the Kshatriya class – while the *sangomas* had constantly insisted on my (real, adoptive or imagined), military and aristocratic background (van Binsbergen 2004). Thus finally aroused to transcontinental continuities, I undertook, also around 2000, a statistical analysis of animal symbolism in ancient astronomical, divinatory and clan systems throughout the three continents of the Old World, and I found, much to my surprise, that Nkoya and Tswana systems of nomenclature appeared to cluster much more closely with those of Ancient China than with those from Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Aegean, and Early Modern Europe. Was this a very old, Upper-Palaeolithic substrate surfacing both in East Asia and in sub-Saharan Africa? Or was the surprising communality the result of specific and much more recent cultural exchange in proto-historical time – *i.e.* the last few millennia? Or was my statistical finding merely a research artefact, such as multivariate analysis, and especially cluster analysis may so often produce, with its wide optionality of parameters, every option giving different outcomes.

In 1994 I had acquired, in Lusaka, Zambia, a wooden statuette of a Kuba king (Fig. 2.6.b), whose iconography, while continuous with other South Central African specimens, yet struck me as revealing South / South East Asian Buddhist influences.

⁵⁶ van Binsbergen 2005.



a. Kuba / Bushongo *ndop* sculpture: King Shamba, British Museum London / Parrinder 1968: 121; note the *mankala* board and the staff of office; b. Kuba / Bushongo *ndop* sculpture (author's collection); note the copper neck ring, the conical coiffure and the serene facial expression reminiscent of Buddhist representational conventions; c. Ancestral image, Nias Isl. (West of Sumatra), Royal Tropical Institute Amsterdam / Schnitger 1991; note the two hand-held staves, and the diadem which follows a very widely distributed type, from Mwenekahare in Zambia to Tut-^{an}-Amun in New Kingdom Egypt and to Samoyed shamans;⁵⁷ d. Two of three dozens of gigantic sculptured heads of celestial guardians at the City of Angkor, Cambodia, early 2nd mill. CE, 'The Angkor temples' © 2004 Dave Parker; the coiffure follows an iconographic prototype for the Buddha; the reduction to a conical shape is especially noticeable in the Angkor Wat context of 12th c. Cambodia

The headdress of the royal sculpture (b) seems to follow (cf. d) a continental South East Asian Buddhist iconographic convention relating to celestial guardians – which of course well in line with the idea of kingship, as a major form for the connection between Heaven and Earth to take. More in general the expression of the face, but also the position of arms and legs in the South Central African sculptures (a) and (b) is suggestive of meditation stances and ritualised hand gestures (*mudras*) prevalent in the iconography of the Buddha in continental South East Asia; such gestures are not the prerogative of the Buddha but tend to be emulated by Buddhist believers in meditation.

Fig. 2.6. Iconographic suggestions of Buddhist-African continuity: Congo sculpture and Sunda parallels

For a long time I had been familiar with the work of the nautical historian Hornell (1934) who already stressed 'Indonesian influences on East African culture'; and with the musicologist Jones' findings (1964) that African xylophones were tuned very similarly to Indonesian ones. Such instruments were prominent in the Nkoya royal orchestra; the stranger founder of the Kahare dynasty himself was reputed (van Binsbergen 1992)⁵⁸ to have arrived in the region not only with a *Conus* shell bottom used as a regalia (which

⁵⁷ What seems to unite these three cultural expressions, even though wide apart in space and time, is the mechanism of the 'Pelagian model', briefly discussed towards the end of the present argument, and more fully elsewhere (Cf. van Binsbergen 2011; van Binsbergen & Woudhuijzen 2011).

⁵⁸ Van Binsbergen 1992.

could only have come from the Indian Ocean)⁵⁹ but also with a xylophone whose sublime alien sounds so enraptured a local queen that (given the great sexual freedom Nkoya female royals have – again with South Asian parallels)⁶⁰ she married him on the spot. Yet my identification with the dominant, localising paradigm was so strong that it was only with the greatest effort that I could bring myself to see the Kahare situation as one potentially testifying to transcontinental diffusion from South East Asia. But finally⁶¹ I began to look with different eyes upon the royal capital of King Kahare; I opened up to the capital's many potential reminiscences of South and South East Asia in mythology, kingship and court culture, music, personal names, etc., and set out to document and understand these more fully. I found that both the hourglass drum (Nkoya: *mukupele*) and the kettle drum (*mawoma*) – major regalia used by the Kahare royal orchestra, the latter even the object of human sacrifice – had a wide distribution in South and South East Asia, – a distribution which by the late 1990s I had still attributed to Islamic transcontinental influence (van Binsbergen 1999); when I found that in Sinhalese a kettle drum, widely in use in temples, is called *mahabela*, 'big drum', it became tempting to

⁵⁹ In general, and with emphasis on the world of material production rather than symbolic production, early Nkoya kings appear in tradition as culture heroes, bringing new seeds and agricultural methods, as well as metallurgy. This resonates with South Asian royal traditions, and with protracted scholarly discussions on the origin and spread of ironworking. This takes us to the much-debated general question whether Africans did or did not invent ironworking (Alpern 2005; cf. below, ch. 17, by Walter van Beek). My provisional analysis of metallurgical terms in proto-Bantu (even though I realise that the very concept of one delineable corpus of proto-Bantu is contentious, in ways that are beyond our present scope) suggests that Bantu-speakers were close to the invention of ironworking (cf. the Homeric references to the Sinties as special servants of the firegod Hephaestus, and the Gypsy / Sinti / Roma parallels of the Kahare / Kale title), but did not invent it themselves: all the metallurgical terms (a mere handful, anyway) that I identify in proto-Bantu can be construed to be reflexes of *Borean (cf. Starostin & Starostin 1998-2008), and since only 27% of the reconstructed *Borean roots can be traced back in proto-Bantu, this is an indication that it was not Bantu speakers but the speakers of some preceding language form spoken in Eurasia between 15 and 5 ka BP who were primarily involved in the invention of metallurgy. Incidentally, my extensive demonstration of Bantu being among the languages spoken in the Bronze Age Mediterranean (van Binsbergen & Woudhuizen 2011; van Binsbergen 2011), perhaps among some of the Sea Peoples, as well as my statistical demonstration of the affinity between Niger-Congo and Austric, suggest the need to reconsider the established, Africa-for-the-Africans view that Bantu arose inside the African continent (Lake Chad is often suggested) some 8 ka BP.

⁶⁰ E.g., cf. Sankalia 1960; Brubaker 1977; Beck 1969, 1971; Blumenberg 1994-1996-2006.

⁶¹ An important step was my realisation (van Binsbergen 1993 / 2003) that the Nkoya kingship constitutes an entirely different cosmological and value system from that of the commoner villages that surround the royal capitals and on which the latter feed. Was this merely an internal segmentation of local culture, as in Leach's famous *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (1954); was it a sign that the Nkoya kingship was a totally alien body implanted from afar? Or was the similarity to the South East Asian situation as described by Leach the result of specific transcontinental influence, upon South Central Africa, from that region? The contemporary-historical and legal analysis of African political systems was a major strand in my work from the 1970s to 1990s, and I acknowledge the inspiration from my colleagues during these years: Martin Doornbos, Emile van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal, my PhD student the late lamented Gerti Hesseling, and especially the late lamented Robert Buijtenhuijs.

interpret the Nkoya word *mukupele* (which although phonologically Nkoya has no transparent Nkoya etymology) as a loan from across the Indian Ocean. By the same token, South, South East, and East Asian temples abound with ritual bells, used to announce any kind of offering to the residing deity; on the other hand, royal bells constitute a trait throughout South Central and West Africa.⁶² The following distributional equation or rather transformation presented itself:

religious-priestly use in
Hinduism and Buddhist : Asia = ceremonial use in
sacred kingship : sub-Saharan
Africa

as if the kings of sub-Saharan Africa derived part of their regalia and court culture, from a localisation of Hinduist and Buddhist ritual from Asia. In my tabulated overview of Nkoya-Asian apparent continuities, below, I present several other indications for such an equation.

Ten years later, this endeavour led to an extensive statement on the transcontinental continuities of Nkoya mythology (van Binsbergen 2010a), and ultimately to the present conference and book.

2.3.3. *Decisive external influences and forms of support*

Meanwhile, I had taken aboard various other decisive influences.

In the first place, my association with Martin Bernal and the *Black Athena* debate initiated by him rekindled my interest in the Mediterranean and forced me to pursue the knowledge-political and epistemological dilemmas of long-range research. Although there is much reason⁶³ to distrust Bernal's *empirical conclusions* concerning the transcontinental linguistic, religious, and cultural continuities between Ancient Egypt, the Ancient Aegean, and sub-Saharan Africa, *Black Athena I* (Bernal 1987) has been an extensive and convincing reminder to the effect that it is not by accident that the West has 'forgotten' (in Bernal's reading: only as recently as Early Modern times, after allegedly affirming 'the Ancient Model' [of such indebtedness] throughout Antiquity and at least implying it throughout the Middle Ages) its massive historical indebtedness to the other continents, and that retrieving this awareness (in our present age of globalisation and global identity and religious conflict), not only puts the record straight but is, in fact, a *conditio sine qua non* for the survival of our species.

Further the association with Michael Witzel, the Harvard Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, and its annual interdisciplinary Round Tables, created the immensely stimulating environment in which I could visit various East Asian countries and engage with Asianists and comparative mythologists worldwide, as essential steps towards the formulation of my theoretical and methodological long-range approaches in comparative

⁶² Cf. Vansina 1969. The potential influence, on royal bells, of Roman Catholic church bells in Western South Central Africa cannot be denied but seems minimal since few other Christian elements have been incorporated into African kingship, whereas Asian parallels (including the central role of metal bells in Buddhism) abound in conceptualisation, organisation, enthronisation, burial and mythology of African kings.

⁶³ van Binsbergen 2011.

mythology (also as founding member and one of the directors of the International Association for Comparative Mythology), and as vehicles towards the several ancillary disciplines (comparative linguistics, archaeology, genetics) without which such approaches could not be developed. In my *Diachronic Model of World Mythology* (van Binsbergen 2006a, 2006b, 2010a) I sought to identify (from an inspection of African cosmogonic myths as recorded in historical times) what Pandora's Box may have contained in terms of mythology, and I indicated ways of tracing the innovations and transformations of this package after the Exodus out of Africa, largely inside Asia, and then fed back into Africa in the 'Back-into-Africa' process. Having thus forcefully affirmed Africa's place in the transcontinental space, my Pelasgian model and my linguistic explorations in Bantu, further refined the conceptual and methodological apparatus, as did my subsequent application, largely outside Africa, upon *Ethnicity in Mediterranean Protohistory* (2011, with Fred Woudhuizen), until finally Africa's transcontinental continuities in pre- and proto-history can now be considered, at the present conference.

It is in this connection that I came across Stephen Oppenheimer's (1998) Sunda thesis (attributing decisive importance, in global cultural history since the onset of the Neolithic and the Holocene, to the dissemination of genes, material culture, and stories from South East Asia once that region was flooded as a result of the melting of the polar caps after the last Ice Age). My MA and subsequently PhD student from Indonesia, Stephanus Djunatan, created a context in which to revive my strand of Asian studies, and to have my first modest experiences of fieldwork in and publishing on South East Asia. On a lesser scale, my Cameroonian PhD students Pius Mosima and Pascal Touoyem took me to their respective rural areas and made me appreciate especially what I came to see as the Sunda element in Western Grassfields / Bamileke cultures and kingships. And finally there has been my close collaboration, over the years (initially as contributor in the context of the *Black Athena* debate, then as my PhD student, and ultimately as co-author) with the ancient historian Fred Woudhuizen, which not only led to our monumental and provocative book *Ethnicity in Mediterranean Protohistory* (2011), but also forced me to further develop my linguistic, archaeological and comparative-mythological skills as a stepping-stone towards viable transcontinental analysis – with my Pelasgian Hypothesis as one of the project's outcomes, illuminating for the analysis of African proto-history in the light of the Sunda hypothesis.

2.4. Combining the empirical fruits of fieldwork with the identification of African-Asian parallels in scholarly texts

If, in the course of half a century, I could conduct intensive and prolonged participant-observational fieldwork in several African contexts, could become somewhat competent in several African languages and cultures, and could involve myself (as a form of action research, far beyond the call of duty as an ethnohistorian and ethnographer) in local social, medical, political and religious situations, and adopt locally defined specific roles there – is that then because, genetically, I share with Africans (on the basis of a communality going back 200,000 years) merely the basic datum of an Anatomically Modern

Human's body and mind – or is the continuity much more recent, and are Africans like me because we share a **recent** history of a few millennia of intensive transcontinental movements and exchange?

Here the incomparable detail and depth of ethnographic fieldwork opens vistas which remains closed to a mere text-based philological-historical approach, as in Orientalism

Although in some respects classic anthropological fieldwork may be a pitfall of narrowing spatial and temporal horizons, *yet its great merit is that it equips the researcher with a very comprehensive and profound inside view of local cultural practices and perceptions, that (even if the anthropologist may envy the philologists' usually superior language skills) can never be derived from textual scholarship and library research alone.* On the other hand, an Africanist anthropologist at the end of his career, despite repeated explorations into the South and South East Asian field, can never hope to gain sufficient first-hand ethnographic knowledge on Asia to spot relevant Asian-African parallels. Therefore, my favourite method in approaching the central question of our conference has been to scan through texts on South Asia in the light of whatever I know of Nkoya and *sangoma* life from fieldwork.

For example, one arbitrarily chosen text which yielded an astonishing number of such elements, is from a Buddhist lady of European background, Marie Musaeus-Higgins' (1914 / 2000) charming, simple recounting of Arya Sura's *Jataka* cycle of stories (showing the ascent of the Buddha through previous incarnations as Boddhisatva in the animal and human world – followed by an effective and moving account of the Buddha's life; cf. Arya Sura 1895). I note the following Buddhist-Nkoya parallels.

page	Buddhist trait	Nkoya parallels (from <i>Likota Iya Bankoya</i> ; van Binsbergen 1988, 1992) unless otherwise stated
16	royal orchestra must play every morning and evening	same (ethnography)
10	Boddhisatva as king of fishes produces rain, although he is not rain himself	Mvula / Rain, is the demiurge linked Heaven and Earth/humankind
103	A Brahman has to live on gifts alone	literally the same claim for the Nkoya king, who seems to be a secular adaptation of the idea of the Brahmin or Boddhisatva
154 f., 158	King of the Cibis, lives by tribute alone, but is fond of redistributing his wealth among his subjects; emphasis on the king's largesse	same
174, 175	reference to female warriors and to a female sword-bearer	same
179	whatever is requested from a king the latter cannot refuse	whatever Nkoya joking partners ask from one another, cannot be refused
185	florid royal praise names, e.g. 'a Prince like Vessantara, whom they called the 'Fruit-Tree', the 'Foster child of Mother Earth'...'Well of Pure Waters of Wisdom', 'Well of Plenty'.	quite similar praise names among the Nkoya, e.g. the discussion in van Binsbergen 1992
186 f., esp. 189-190	under the influence of the rule cited under p. 179 Prince Vessantara, has no option but to let a cruel Brahman take away his children, 'The poor children	There is a famous Nkoya court song, 'Nkeye-keye', whose lyrics present this very same story; also cf. Kawanga 1978; Brown 1984.

	fell on their knees, embraced the legs of their father and pleaded with tears in their eyes to be allowed to wait till their mother came.’; ‘Our poor mother will weep for us for a long time. Father, give her our last farewells, for I doubt whether we shall see her again’; reference to a magical fruit tree	
216	In a previous life, the Boddhisatva Siddhartha has won his wife as tiger: ‘That veil of thine, in black and gold, does show me that thou also dost remember.’ She only nodded and understood.	Nkoya royals have the royal privilege of donning leopard skins, but upon death they are rather considered to turn into lions roaming around the royal capital at night. This trait is admittedly not very convincing as a Buddhist/Nkoya parallel]
237	Mara [‘deceptive material world’] seduces Buddha as an artificial woman in the shape of Yasodhara	the envious sister princess Likambi Mange, a sorceress, sends an artificial woman to her brother prince Shihoka Nalinanga, who sleeps with her and dies ⁶⁴
241 f.	the Buddha praises himself with the following words: Many a House of Life Hath held me-Seeking ever Him, who wrought These prisons of the senses, sorrow-fraught; Sore was my ceaseless strife ! But now, Thou Builder of this Tabernacle -Thou ! I know Thee ! Never shalt Thou build again These walls of pain, Nor raise the Roof-tree of deceits, nor lay Fresh rafters on the clay ; Broken Thy house is, and the ridge-pole split! Delusion fashioned it! Safe pass I thence - Deliverance to obtain	<i>cf.</i> (albeit with a cruelty unbecoming a Buddhist yet not unheard of in South Asian Buddhist royal circles) the praise name of Mwene Kayambila, ‘the Thatcher who thatches his house with the skulls of his enemies’ ...
245	Kashyapa was the leader of a fire cult; in a typical hagiography with numerous Islamic and Christian parallels, the Buddha demonstrates his superior power over a snake associated with Kashyapa’s place of worship, and thus converts him to Buddhism	Kapesh [<i>cf.</i> Kashyapa] Who-Joins-the-Forked-Branches, a name without proper Nkoya / Bantu etymology, seeks to steal the moon from Heaven as a regalia, but collapses in the process.
248	‘on his wanderings, the Buddha reaches Shrivasti, the capital of Kola, where he lived and where he wished to build a Temple and dedicate it to the fraternity’	Nkoya kings, like many dynasties in South Central Africa, claim to hail from Kola, a mythical, ‘distant Northern land’ ⁶⁵ . Although this is beyond our scope in this Table, there are more applications of the word or name <i>kola</i> in the South Asian context (the Kola Sanni demon; the meaning of kola as ‘hog,

⁶⁴ However, as I have discussed in fully referenced detail in van Binsbergen 2010a: 192 f., this motif is not at all specific to the Nkoya but has a wide global distribution.

⁶⁵ Not unlike the ‘distant Northern land’ Zembla in Nabokov’s novel Pale Fire in the diseased imagination of the novel’s protagonist, Kinbote.

	<p>pig' in several relevant South Asian languages⁶⁶), hence with an implied reference to the principal South and South East Asian god Vishnu (who may be depicted in that animal shape), but also reminiscent of the taboo on pork in many Bantu-speaking settings, and with the legend that the founders of the Nkoya dynasties left the Mwaat Yaamv's ['King of Death'! – we are in the middle of myth here even though Mwaat Yaav has been a recognised Paramount Chief's title in Congo], Musumba capital in South Congo because of the humiliation of being housed by the pigsties) and each has something to contribute to our view of Nkoya-South Asian relationships. There may also be a link with the Tamil Chola dynasty, which ruled large parts of South India and Ceylon from obscure and legendary beginning around the beginning of the Common Era, to the late 13th c. CE.</p>
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Table 2.1. Nkoya / Buddhist parallels gleaned from Musaeus-Higgins 1914/ 2000.



Fig. 2.7. The Hindu primal god Vishnu with a hog's snout as depicted on a relief at Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu, South India

⁶⁶ Sanskrit, Pali and Sinhalese; but not in the Dravidian family including Tamil, where 'pig' is denoted by reflexes of proto-Dravidian *pand_; cf.? Pandava, the five brothers married to Draupadi who is venerated as a goddess in Southern India – Hildebeitel 1991. When applied to South Central Africa, the kola / 'pig' connection may be a red herring, for (as the many Nkoya parallels in Tamil culture and history as brought out by Chitty 1934/ 1992 indicate) it is especially with Tamil that we detect South Central African resonances.

2.5. Obscuring transcontinental continuities from the local actors' consciousness

2.5.1. Asian representations of Africa and Africans are rare and tend towards demonisation and racism

Meanwhile a problem needs to be faced that considerably complicates our approach to Africa's transcontinental continuities in pre- and proto-history: Asian representations of Africa and Africans are rare and tend towards demonisation. The study of African-Asian connections would be much easier if, on either side of the Indian Ocean, historical actors would display conscious awareness of such connections. This turns out to be very rarely the case. The Asian agents appearing to have culturally and genetically contributed to sub-Saharan Africa in recent millennia, are virtually invisible – by Robert Dick-Read's (2005) apt expression, they have been *Phantom Voyagers*. The South and East Asian, 'Sunda' elements I believe to detect in South Central, Southern, and West African kingship and religion, are hardly ever articulated in the local consciousness – except to the minute extent that cults of affliction, and *Conus* shell regalia, in the interior of South Central Africa are consciously traced to the Indian Ocean coast, – but not beyond. In Asia a similar situation is found. Just as in Chinese Africa is 非洲 *fēi zhōu* 'The Non-Continent',⁶⁷ so also in Sri Lanka Africa was conceptually remote, and tended to be demonised⁶⁸ – like in a series of statues in a temple 20 km East of the city of Galle, where the Buddha image is surrounded by a square of orange-attired monks, at whose feet kneel statues representing all local and overseas peoples featuring in the Lankan maritime intercontinental complex – with at the end what seem demonised Africans

⁶⁷ It may be that I interpret this lexical item out of context. The basic meaning of 洲 *zhōu* is 'island in a river', hence a stretch of land that can be circumnavigated on all sides. Given the Isthmus of Suez, this condition does literally not apply to Africa – despite man-made canals connecting the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea both in Antiquity and in modern times. Major East Asian ancient maps (such as referred to by Li Anshan below in ch. 11, and in van Binsbergen 2012c / 2017) reveal that East Asian detailed maritime knowledge (not necessarily first-hand) reached as far as the Mediterranean and Greece. So rather than as an expression of contempt, 非洲 *fēi zhōu* 'The Non-Continent' might be taken as a neutral and correct geographic expression.

⁶⁸ Sri Lanka's popular religious and therapeutic scene is replete with demons, often represented through very specific and elaborate masks. Could these be among the submerged African elements we have been looking for, largely in vain? Would the proposed installation of a global maritime network from the Neolithic onward, have facilitated the travelling of ecstatic cults, not only from South Asia to sub-Saharan Africa (for which there is considerable circumstantial evidence), but also the other way around? Sri Lanka and Indonesia have African minorities as a result of Africans moving East as slaves and soldiers in Early Modern times; Barnes attributes the presence of *mankala* in Indonesia to such movement, and it might also explain the presence of the game in Sri Lanka (see my discussion in ch. 7, below, p. 165f.). It stands to reason that with the recognised African-Asian transfers of Neolithic times (cattle, foodcrops) also cultural items were transmitted, but how to identify them? The Afrocentrist linguist and educationalist Clyde Winters, implying a similar global maritime network since the Bronze Age, has claimed considerable African impact on South and East Asia, but his publications are difficult to find and cannot be assessed here.

(Fig. 2.8). Also in museums, the extension of the Lankan maritime intercontinental complex to Africa is implied (*e.g.* in relation to African products of domestications such as kaffir corn, bulrush millet, a type of cattle, and trade beads⁶⁹) but never highlighted.

Thus it appears as if a similar geopolitical ideology that has led to recent scholarship's widespread paradigmatic repression of Africa's transcontinental continuities in pre- and proto-history, has also informed Asian consciousness and artistic representation for millennia. Despite the passionate claims of the absence of anti-Black racism in classical and medieval times, and the attempts to construct Modern anti-Black racism as primarily a justification of the Transatlantic slave trade and colonial expansion (*cf.* Snowdon 1970; Bernal 1987; Davidson 1987), racism is apparently not just an original invention of the North Atlantic region in Early Modern times – as even a superficial inspection of North African, Arabian and South Asian social perceptions of somatic differences in pigmentation would already make emphatically clear.



Fig. 2.8. African demonised in Buddhist iconography in South Sri Lanka⁷⁰

⁶⁹ In the Sri Lanka National Museum, Colombo, an African provenance is specifically claimed for carnelian / cornelian beads on display, and indeed, similar beads are widespread as tradebeads especially in the Sahara and its fringes. However, they are not indigenous to Africa, but hail from Eurasia. The oldest attestation of human use of worked carnelian is from Neolithic Mehrgarh, Baluchistan, Pakistan (Anonymus, 2011, 'carnelian'). By the same token, ostrich-shell beads are commonly (not only in the South Asian situation but also in regard of Ancient Egypt and other parts of Africa) attributed to the presence and activities of Khoisan speakers – notably the hunter-gathers of South Western Africa (San) and of isolated groups in Tanzania. The situation is however far more complex and far less specific, once we realise that (a) Anatomically Modern Humans have been associated with such shells since at least 70 ka BP in South and East Africa; (b) that identical artefacts have also been attested in South Asia (just like the ostrich itself occurred in South Asia in Upper Palaeolithic times (*cf.* Bednarik 1993) ; and (c) that ostrich-shell beads are strikingly similar to similarly strung shell beads which, from the Upper Palaeolithic on, have had a wide global distribution including Europe (*e.g.* Dimitrijevic & Tripkovic 2006; Tripkovic 2006).

⁷⁰ My fieldwork in Sri Lanka, April-May 2011, was generously financed by the African Studies Centre, Leiden, for which I wish to register my great indebtedness.



Fig. 2.9. One of the Sigiriya ‘damsels’ – note the double left-hand nipple

And even where an African connection is consciously affirmed, as is the case (at least in popular tradition – no inscriptions accompany the paintings) for one of the damsels depicted in a crevice half-way the famous Sigiriya rock fortress in Central Sri Lanka, and known as ‘the African lady’ (Fig. 2.9), dating from the early 2nd mill. CE, and again representing various local and overseas peoples); the portrait’s features and pigmentation suggest anything but an African origin – and in fact, the third nipple suggests that we are looking at an image of the Lankan/ Tamil queen Kuwene (Chitty 1934 / 1992: 10 f.), an epiphany of the goddess Meenakshē centrally venerated at the South Indian town of Madurai.

2.5.2. *A gem of transcontinental imagination?*

I cannot bring myself *not* to burden this argument with the following gem of possible transcontinental imagination. For forty years, my research into the ethnohistory of South Central Africa has been haunted by the image of Kapesh Kamunungampanda, ‘The Kapesh [Tower] of joined forked branches’ – a legendary incumbent (female or male) of the kingship who built a tower in order to steal the moon, which was intended as a royal pendant on the breast of the heir apparent; like in Genesis 12, the tower collapsed and ethnico-linguistic diversity then came into the world. In my analysis of Nkoya myth (van Binsbergen 1992, 2010a) I have come closer and closer to an appreciation of the possibly South Asian strands in this story, *e.g.* deriving *kapes* (without convincing Bantu etymology) from the proto-Indo-Aryan **ghabasti*, ‘carriage beam, forked pole’; and interpreting the Kale alias of the Kahare kingship of the Nkoya, as an indication of ‘Gypsy’ / Roma connections (throughout the near-global distribution of ‘Gypsies’, the name Kale is found in the sense of ‘black person’), which have been recognised to ramify into East Africa in the course of the second millennium. (The name or nickname Kalu is also used in present-day Sinhalese, likewise to denote persons with high skin pigmentation.) A century ago, the classicist / anthropologist Frazer (1918) has

interpreted 'stealing the moon' as a quest of immortality, of which the moon (being reborn every month) is a widespread symbol. The history of the Sigiriya rock fortress, a volcanic chimney rising a perpendicular 200 meters above the plains of Central Sri Lanka, added a serendipity to this analysis – after all, the very word 'serendipity' derives, via Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, from Serendip, the ancient Arabic and Persian name (in itself a garbled version of the Pali and Sanskrit names) for the isle of Ceylon – which in ancient India was called Lanka / Siḥaḷādīpa / Siṃhaladvīpa. In the late 5th c. CE, prince Kashyapa (born from a mere concubine) killed his father and usurped the throne of the North-Central capital Anuradhapura; and for fear of revenge from his father's close kin and loyal followers, Kashyapa took refuge on the Sigiriya rock. Here he built a fabulous palace. His brother exiled himself to Southern India, but after some 12 years came back with an invasion army. Instead of confidently awaiting the enemy in his impenetrable Sigiriya fortress, Kashyapa ventured into the plain, his war elephant made an unexpected move which his army interpreted as a sign of retreat, and Kashyapa was defeated and killed. Many of the elements of the South Central Asian Kapesḥ legend are here: the hubris and transgression, the strong vertical element reminiscent of a tower, the collapse and dispersion, even the name of the protagonist (Kapesḥ <? Kashyapa). If, in the course of more than one and a half millennium, the echoes of Kashyapa's historical fate were transmitted across the Indian Ocean, they may well have been distorted into something like the Kapesḥ story – especially in an environment that already had the Flood and Tower complex on the basis of a historical substrate going back several millennia (van Binsbergen 2010a, 2016).



Fig. 2.10. Artist's impression of Kapesḥ 'Who-Joins-the-Forked-Branches'

Kashyapa's rival was hiding with the Tamil Chola dynasty, which has a long history of

invading Theravada Buddhist Sri Lanka in a bid to reconvert it to Hinduism. If many kingships in South Central Africa trace their origin to a legendary land 'Kola', it may be to this Tamil context – especially since, as we have seen in Table 2.1, many other Tamil elements may be detected in the kingship of Kahare.

2.5.3. *Also within Africa, the local actors's awareness of North-South indebtedness is shunned*

Incidentally, the same problem attends the claim (perfectly plausible, in fact inescapable) of intra-African continuities between Ancient Egypt (once firmly established as one of the Ancient World's most powerful and long-lived states) and sub-Saharan Africa: whether we wish to stress (I have called this 'Fairman's dilemma'; cf. Fairman 1965) sub-Saharan Africa's indebtedness to Egypt (e.g. Seligmann, Meyerowitz, Wainwright etc. – a brief overview of the relevant literature in van Binsbergen 2011: 268 f.), or Ancient Egypt's indebtedness to sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. Petrie 1914a, 1914b; Hoffman 1979; Celenko 1996) – from neither perspective one would really expect the Ancient Egyptian iconographic convention – persistent from pre-Dynastic times (4th mill. BCE) to the Late Period (1st mill. BCE) where Black Africans are reduced to powerless slain enemies, sacrificial victims, slaves, even end pieces of walking canes and chair legs so that they would automatically be downtrodden (cf. Fig. 2.11).

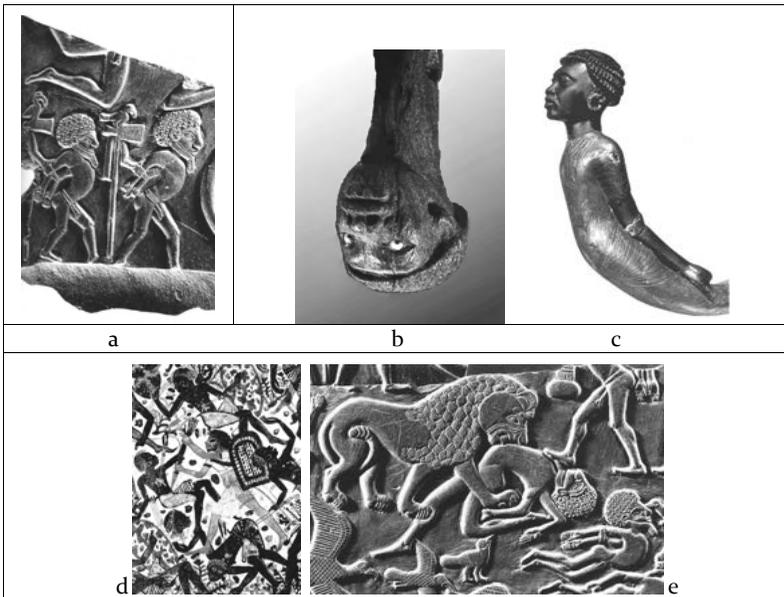




Fig. 2.11. Black Africans depicted as victims in Ancient Egyptian iconography from the predynastic period (a, e) to the New Kingdom (b, c, f)

2.5.4. *Why was awareness of Asian-African continuities obliterated from the local actors's consciousness?*

No doubt a critical, anti-hegemonic History of Ideas can help us to understand why the possibility, rather, the certainty of transcontinental continuities was not admitted to the North Atlantic modern mind. However, if it is true that there has been considerable Asian-African cultural, political and mythological interpenetration in the course of the Common Era or even since the Bronze Age, why then was virtually all awareness of such Asian-African continuities obliterated from the local actors' consciousness? This is a central question to our conference,⁷¹ and I would suggest that an answer would include the following factors, among others:

- to the extent to which Asian influences were underpinned by very specific forms of literate and organised Asian religion – Hinduism and Buddhism – the awareness evaporated as soon as the relevant forms of literacy, religious leadership, and Asian-derived state support evaporated
- the short-lived nature and almost inevitable collapse of African state systems (Egypt being an exception, although even Egypt's history has known its well-recognised periods of chaos and collapse) has much to do with the exceptionally low carrying capacity of African soils, which – often dating from pre-Cambrian eras – are among the oldest and most eroded, most depleted in the world; states therefore thrive not so much on sustained regional agricultural production and its appropriation and subsequent recirculation by a ruling elite, but on the violent and destructive appropriation of both regional and transregional products

⁷¹ For which I am indebted to Patricia van Binsbergen.

and human personnel – which makes such states dependent on global markets beyond their control

- most African state systems encountered and scientifically studied in Early Modern and Modern times, derived much of their local legitimacy from the rulers' link with the local earth, the earth cult, and the local officiants in that cult (often considered 'owners' or 'masters' of the land); under such circumstances, shedding distant associations and posing as local is an excellent strategy
- to the extent to which Asian-influenced states on African soil had a Buddhist or Hinduist orientation, the advent of Islam in the course of the 2nd mill. CE made for a radical, theologically underpinned discontinuity, where (like in many parts of Asia, especially Central Asia, right up to the present day) the suppression of pre-Islamic religious forms and their material vestiges was pursued with pious fanaticism. If by the onset of British expansion in India,⁷² Buddhism had been so radically wiped out – by the joined efforts of Islam and Hinduism – that it had to be very gradually brought back to scholarly awareness and retrieved through intensive archaeological and documentary/scriptural explorations, much like the Sumerian civilisation of Ancient Mesopotamia was retrieved in the course of the 19th century, then we have a model for the oblivion attending Asian influence in Africa, even if going back only one millennium or less.

2.6. Geographic focus and methodological considerations

Although my own ethnographic expertise is mainly on South Central and Southern Africa, shorter spells of fieldwork in West Africa, once linked with the comparative knowledge I have derived from research supervision and library research, suggest that we may well extend the hypothetical 'Sunda' (i.e. South East, South and East Asian) proto-historic influence on Africa, to include West Africa. We may invoke a whole series of West African traits as indicative of such influence:

- the use of umbrellas in royal ceremony
- in general, kingship in East, South Central, Southern, and West Africa
- the preponderance of cults of affliction reminiscent of the Indian Ocean region
- the iconographic and agricultural material presented by Robert Dick-Read (2005)
- masks, generally associated with East, South Central and West Africa, yet conceivably stimulated there under the impact of the extensive mask rites of South and South East Asia – however, at the present, limited state of our knowledge the opposite vector appears also quite plausible. Meanwhile, let us not pretend

⁷² Cf. Allen 2002.

that we have entered on a smooth, royal road once we have seen the light and admitted the existence of extensive transcontinental continuities in Africa's pre- and proto-history. For with the best of intentions one might still easily jump to unwarranted conclusions.

- Is mere similarity, proof of historical connection?
- How superficial or how profound is the similarity?
- Suppose the similarity is indicative of genuine historical connection, how can one begin to assess its nature:
 - from A (Africa) to B (Asia)
 - or from B to A (which is in line with the Oppenheimer–Dick–Read–Tauchmann hypothesis, and with the evidence concerning the peopling of Madagascar),
 - or (in general the most convincing alternative when genuine historical connections are involved) do A and B both derive their similarities from a hitherto unidentified common historical source, C?
 - *or is sheer provenance the wrong question, once we have resigned ourselves to the existence, gradually building up since the Neolithic, of a global maritime network that by its very nature is multcentred and multidirectional?*

Whatever the correct answers, far more fieldwork and library research will have to be done before meaningful and methodologically grounded conclusions can be attempted.

These difficulties, however, will sort themselves out, by the concerted critical efforts of large numbers of researchers in debate with one another – provided African and in general non-Western researchers vocally participate in the debate and exposing and counter-balancing its potentially hegemonic nature. Personally, I feel that the real problem lies not in empirical methods, better databases, more discriminating statistical tests, but in a conceptual and paradigmatic change that, by its very nature, combines empirical concerns with critical reflection.

2.7. Beyond the empirical fruits of anthropological fieldwork: its *existential* fruits

2.7.1. Crossing boundaries during the intercultural encounter of fieldwork, then deconstructing these boundaries in subsequent theoretical reflection

I had the great good fortune (not to say I was congenitally / ancestrally predestined) that the three major contexts of my African fieldwork, over the decades (the highlands of North-western Tunisia, the Nkoya people of Zambia in town and in the rural areas, and the booming urban society of Francistown, Botswana) prominently featured ecstatic cults; and that I was given the institutional and relational means to make these cults into the cornerstones of my anthropological, historical and even philosophical

writings – contrary to my initial formal research plans. The promise of crossing and dissolving cultural, linguistic, personality, boundaries – even the boundaries between genders, generations, life and death, human and divine – is a central theme in such cults. This invites both the researcher's unconditional boundary crossing into the host society, its beliefs and especially its bodily enacted (including repetitive and trance-inducing; and as such largely pre-verbal) ritual actions. But also, these cults' local and transregional past, have enabled them to cross great geographical and social distances. Thus they have constituted the ideal topic from which to embark on a prolonged study of transcontinental continuities, throwing into relief both enduring similarities and local specificities – the results, often, of localising transformations and innovations. In the process, such cults are also deconstructing the classic anthropology's obsession with social relationships (the classic assumption⁷³ that all religious imagination and action is simply a model of and for actual social relationships concretely existing on the ground, is far too much of a simplification in the domain of ecstatic cults and healing), boundaries and distancing objectification between researcher and the researched. Instead they invite the researcher to turn the intercultural encounter in the field into a most productive laboratory situation for the exploration and experiencing of such continuities.

Intellectually, interculturally and existentially, my 'Becoming a sangoma'⁷⁴ (title of a piece I drafted in 1990 and published a few months later) was the turning point for me. The shocking point is not that, from then on, I would combine my scientific work with going through the motions as a diviner and healer – the latter could be just learned imitative behaviour and nothing more, – such as every anthropologist adopts in the field. The shocking point is that when I go through these motions, effects seem to be produced (the production of scraps of divinatory knowledge about my clients I could not have acquired by ordinary sensory means; the signs of actual effective healing) which have made me suspect that *sangoma* science – contrary to the condescending, dismissive perspective of North Atlantic religious anthropology) may have its own validity parallel to that of North Atlantic science (cf. van Binsbergen 2003, 2007 2009). Adopting a layered (and, admittedly partly performative – but performativity is an aspect of all religious leadership, certainly among the *sangomas*, where it is explicitly taught to novices and trainees) identity as *sangoma* and as Nkoya prince, engaging in African rituals, healing, divination and philosophy, and professing a bricolaged African worldview hinging on ancestral continuity and intercession, I felt free to leave behind

⁷³ Feuerbach n.d. [1957], 1967 [1846]; Marx 1941; Marx & Engels 1975; Godelier 1975; Feuchtwang 1975; Maduro 1975; Mudimbe 1967; Geertz 1966. These Marxist references bring me to acknowledge my indebtedness to my fellow-members of the Amsterdam Working Group on Marxist Anthropology, who in the late 1970s created a stimulating environment for my Africanist work.

⁷⁴ Cf. van Binsbergen 1991, 2003: ch 5, pp. 155-193. The latter book is, among other topics, concerned with the problem of how to overcome the hegemonic, subordinating stance of the anthropology of religion, which could be sarcastically summarised as follows: 'I understand why you could not by yourself arrive at my superior, deconstructive insight in your religion, which of course is not true and cannot be true, but if you could please step aside, I will explain to you why you erroneously cling to it'.

the localising political correctness of 'Africa for the Africans'.⁷⁵

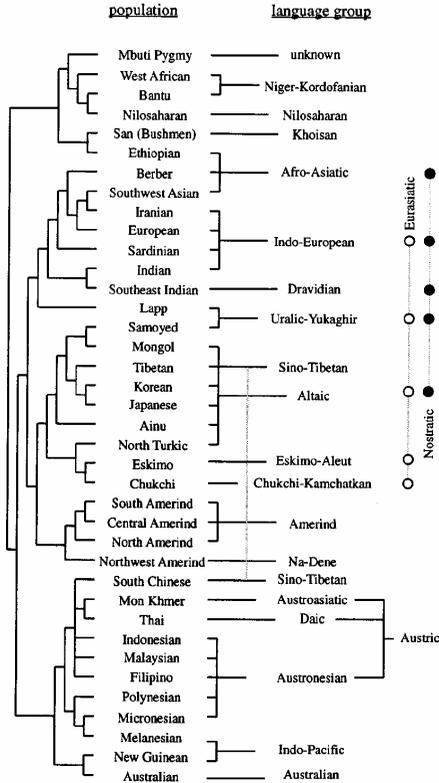


Fig. 2.12. The othering of Africans disguised as inescapable scientific truth

⁷⁵ This is not the place to consider in detail my intimate relation with Afrocentricity across the decades. Having increasingly identified as an African in the sense of Robert Sobukwe ('a person who considers Africa home'), let it suffice for me to say that affirming both the cause of scientific methodically underpinned truth, and of Africa's dynamic place among the continents, is more important in the long run, certainly for Africa and Africans, than merely contemplating a glorious origin and distant past whilst depriving oneself intellectually from the main tools (methodic scientific ones) to fully participate in shaping the future.

2.7.2. *Transcontinental continuities: Giving Africa a place among the continents, but reducing it to passivity once more?*

The West has, since Early Modern times including the writings of Kant and Hegel, constructed itself by claiming contrastive identity vis-à-vis Africa and Africans. That inveterate tendency in North Atlantic thought is not over – as my sallies into Philosophers' Land have made clear to me over the past two decades. A telling example is the following. Luigi Cavalli-Sforza (*1922-) has been one of the worlds leading geneticists under the pre-molecular biology paradigm of classic genetic markers (*cf.* his monumental synthesis Cavalli-Sforza *et al.* 1994). Fig. 2.12 presents his much-cited diagram (published as recently as Cavalli-Sforza 1997: 7722) of the correspondence of major genetic and linguistic groupings of Anatomically Modern Humans. Here African languages and population groups are consistently relegated to the far periphery of present-day humanity – genetically constituting one separate, peripheral branch whereas the entire rest of humanity constitutes the other branch!

Meanwhile, this apparently inescapable scientific verdict as to the irreparable otherness of Africans has to be revoked, as a result not only of political correctness, but especially as a result of three recent developments in empirical science:

- (a) the geneticists's state-of-the art 'Back-into-Africa' hypothesis⁷⁶ which affirms genetic continuity between present-day Asian and African populations),
- (b) long-range comparative linguistics (Starostin & Starostin 1998-2008), which admits the extensive *Borean roots in the African Khoisan and Niger-Congo linguistic macrophyla – like in all other macrophyla spoken today) and
- (c) comparative mythology (van Binsbergen 2010a), stressing the great continuity between African and Eurasian mythologies.

By stressing Africa's transcontinental continuities in pre- and proto-history, we are at least affirming that the African continent has always been part of the wider world. That is one step in the right direction, but it is not enough to restore Africa to its proper place among the continents in the modern world – for cynically, also the trans-Atlantic and trans-Indian-Ocean slave trade in Africans could be read as such an affirmation of Africa as part of the wider world.

How can we prevent that our recognition of Asian-African continuities has the effect of reducing Africa, in the scientific and popular perception, once more to total passivity? Despite the glorious origin of Anatomically Modern Humans, 200 ka BP (and of humankind in general, 3 or 4 million years ago), in Africa, The Back-into-Africa population genetic movement since 15 ka BP (as discovered by geneticists in the last 20 years) suggests (contrary to Strong Afrocentrism) that, by and large, in recent millennia, more has moved westward, into Africa, than eastward, into Asia; and the empirical detailed evidence from culture, religion, political systems, material culture etc. to be highlighted in the context of our conference, appears to point in the same direction.

⁷⁶ *E.g.* Hammer *et al.* 1998; Cruciani *et al.* 2002; Underhill 2004; Coia *et al.* 2005.

This invites us to try and put the record straight and search for Africa in Asia. Our insistence on a multidirectional, multicentred global maritime network, rather than in a onedirectional flow from Asia to Africa, already gives us a good start.

Asia-Africa comparisons are hampered by an asymmetry in the archaeological and documentary record on either side of the Indian Ocean: because Asian civilisations have been literate for three to five millennia, and most of sub-Saharan Africa only for a few centuries (with Ethiopia, the West African centres of Islamic learning, and the Swahili coast as notable exemptions), we tend to be much better informed, in much more detail, on Asian historical situations in the course of the last two millennia, than on African ones – even though present-day Africanists would be less likely than those of one or two generations ago, to fall into the trap of taking African situations as recorded in historical times, to be timelessly representative for the African past. So we have little means of identifying relatively recent (1st and 2nd millennium CE) African borrowings on Asian soil as originally – they would almost irretrievably disguise as Asian – just as it is only by accident, by the unique opportunity of catching Southern African divination forms that looked so convincingly African, in a comparative net of partly literate, trans-continental parallels, that I detected their originally ‘Abbāṣīd, perhaps even Chinese, background. In the field of comparative ethnography and comparative religion there is an enormous exercise of codification, classification and comparison ahead of us, before we can claim to have exhausted the possibility of identifying African traits in Asia.

2.7.3. *From anthropology to intercultural philosophy – and back again?*

The bitter history of global exclusion of Africa and Africans brings up some of the dilemmas which I have experienced in my research work over the past decade; let me end by briefly considering what to some must be one of the most puzzling aspects of my long and successful career as an Africanist. Having succeeded to the Rotterdam chair of Foundations of Intercultural Philosophy, I set out on fundamental research into the possibility and impossibility of interculturality, not only practically, by adopting (from 2002 on) the Editorship of *Quest: An African Journal of Philosophy*, but particularly by confronting the immense epistemological difficulties of intercultural knowledge construction:

- culture is essentially a local device to construct the world (in a very literal sense) and make it appear self-evident, but the implication of that position (brought out popularly though forcefully by postmodernism) seems to be that knowledge and truth can really only be constructed and affirmed within one local cultural domain, and become meaningless *across* cultural domains
- yet every human being participates (especially under today's conditions of globalisation) at the same time in a plurality of local cultural domains whose pre-suppositions are differently constructed, as a result of a what appears to be an irreconcilably different history
- therefore both the monolithic, integrated human subject, and the monolithic,

all-encompassing culture within which it is possible to live an entire life from cradle to grave, appear to be performative and deceptive collective representations without sound empirical and/or conceptual-theoretical grounds

- yet our everyday experience, as persons and as social actors, is that of constantly crossing into and out of such bounded cultural domains, of the promise of interculturality (even when this often seems to dissolve into the pre-language, oneiric and bodily experience, not of cultures meeting, but of not-yet-culture), and in fact of the existential encounters in the inchoate domains that do not already exist as bounded and structured cultural domains but that only constitute our inchoate attempts, together with our fellow-actors, to construct communality where it did not already exist – in the menacing face of the alternative – the violent destruction of parts of humanity by rival parts, and ultimately the self-destruction of humanity as a whole.

Under such circumstances, as I sought to articulate as a budding intercultural philosopher, I was increasingly forced to take up my habitus as empirical scientist again, and to strive towards a much-needed result that I could not produce on the basis of first principles alone.⁷⁷

- If the stale-mate of modern life presents itself as a plurality of mutually inimical cultural positions that yet each lay a total claim to truth and meaning, and therefore cannot be reconciled by recourse to formal logical means
- and if both the social tools of negotiation and persuasion, and the philosophical instruments of critical reflection, conceptualisation and logical analysis produce the effect of highlighting and acerbating, instead of attenuating these contradictions, and instead of rendering them manageable in practical social interaction,
- then the very idea of fundamentally different positions constructed in fundamentally different cultural life worlds, needs to be deconstructed
- and such a deconstruction needs to take place with different, more compelling and more intersubjective tools, than ‘just’ philosophical analysis.

Already in my 1999 inaugural lecture I had launched my adage *Cultures do not exist* – but how could such a slogan contribute to solving the dilemmas of the modern world, unless it was translated into the idea of a *fundamental underlying communality*, that already informs the possibility of shared meaning, shared experience, shared existence, at a more comprehensive level (both existentially, historically and geographically) than that where the various actors, in their conceptualisations and utterances, created and maintained boundaries? If I could bring out the unity of present-day humankind, not so much as humanistic anthropology’s dream for the future, but as an empirically under-

⁷⁷ This empirical turn should not come as a surprise. I had already indicated repeatedly that, given the factual claims many philosophers make with regard to the present-day world and its structure, philosophy should be much more of an empirical science than it is in actual practice, and should heed, more fully, social-scientific methods for the production of valid and reliable knowledge about man and society (van Binsbergen 1999, 2000, 2003: esp. ch. Introduction and ch. 15).

pinned, firmly established shared historical heritage from the past, and not only from the very distant past (where we had always had and shared Adam, and Eve) but from the relatively recent past, then the modern stale-mate might be situationally exposed for the optical, perspectival illusion I had found it to be.

For that is what my decades of intensive participatory fieldwork in Africa had taught me for a fact: not the alleged otherness of Africans, nor the alleged futility and stupidity of their beliefs and actions, but – having shed the armour of condescending deconstructive and disenchanting hegemonic distancing that has been the main result of my professional training as a fieldworker in the 1960s – the liberating and healing existential interpersonal dynamics of both sameness and difference that is the vehicle of social interaction, of wisdom,⁷⁸ and of love – as well as the eye-opening experience of allowing myself to live in a world culturally constructed on a different footing than what I was taught in childhood, and yet validly known and effectively handled also within that other culture.

I realised that the epistemology of condescending objectification on which also my own anthropology of religion had been based for its first twenty years, and that had a million counterparts in North Atlantic texts and their echoes in the South, in itself created and imposed the modern stalemate as a hegemonic artefact, whereas a worldview that (against the self-evidences of the global geopolitics of identity difference) could assert historical continuity and recent difference at the same time, might go a considerable way towards solving that dilemma. The approach had to be empirical, scientific in a state-of-the-art way, not only because of Foucault's insight it is science which is the main legitimating force in the modern world, but also because the collective representations of difference had become so entrenched (by the political economy of imperialism, colonialism, and post-colonial North Atlantic military, political and economic hegemony) that they had wormed their way into the very paradigms and concepts much of modern philosophy is made of.

To do justice to the closeness I had always been experiencing with my African friends and relatives – a closeness that had fed my poetry and that I gradually learned *not* to betray in my academic writing,⁷⁹ it was not enough to argue our closeness theoretically, existentially, even poetically – I had to try and prove it scientifically. This is the background of what brought me to philosophise with my left hand only, within a few years after having secured one of the world's few chairs of intercultural philosophy, plunging myself, with my right hand, with the greatest possible passion into the retrieval of humanity's past, mobilising all the empirical means I could muster. This conference is one of the steps in that attempt, and hopefully not the final one.

⁷⁸ van Binsbergen 2009.

⁷⁹ Although, for the scholar, there may be no way out of the dilemma that all writing is violence and imposition upon those one writes about – unless they can be persuaded to be co-authors (as I tried to do in the case of my book *Tears of Rain*, 1992, with some success).

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Chapter 3

Notions of Africanity

by Sanya Osha

3.1. Introduction

The question of how Africa can be described is truly many-sided and undulates through a discursive landscape spanning several centuries. Similarly, the question of who are Africans is also multi-faceted and equally complex. Nonetheless, it is often the case that these complex questions are forced into reductionist filters to strip them of their accompanying layers of complexity and in so doing, remarkable cultures and civilisations are shorn of their richness and variety and are in turn reduced to barely recognisable caricatures. But it is possible to rescue these two vital questions from the contemporary onslaught of common demagoguery and populist politicking and attempt a deeper understanding of how they may be approached as fundamental existential and intellectual conundrums? This vital project forms part of the philosophical and anthropological deliberations of Valentin Yves Mudimbe whose conclusions merely re-affirm that is isn't appropriate to dwell on an idea of Africa but rather it is necessary to understand there are many notions of Africanity inflected by multiple ideologies littered over several centuries, *epistemes* and histories of widespread sociopolitical debacles and horrors. Rather than adopting the customary reductionist route, Mudimbe's project forces upon us an urgent need for the appreciation of rigorous historiography, issues of scale and complexity and finally, a re-consideration of the scintillating kaleidoscope the idea of Africa unveils.

Apart from trailing traces of Africanity within a variety of historical archives, Mudimbe

also uncovers concealed tracks of African identities that are largely defined by external constraints such as colonisation. The latter part of this effort immediately arouses some philosophical interest in his work. But there is a vigorous transdisciplinarity at play as well which eventually overtakes the initial philosophical tendency. The constant tension between transdisciplinarity and African philosophical tendencies undoubtedly endows his project with a certain uncommon energy, texture and tonality which in the final analysis is unique in the whole of African intellectual production. But oftentimes, it is difficult to identify Mudimbe's ultimate objective as an African scholar as he spends an inordinate amount of time investigating the often disturbing contents of the Colonial Library in relation to Africa. Is it possible to carry out an examination of the ideological consequences of this single-minded immersion in the Library? What does it entail to be unable to advance alternative internally generated accounts of Africa by Africans themselves? Mudimbe never appears to consider these intellectual angles but nonetheless there is still lot worthy of consideration in his project in spite of his overwhelming preoccupation with Western archives.

In the preface to *The Idea of Africa*, Mudimbe claims he is face with the task of coming up with 'stories' of Africa meant for his 'two Americanized children'.⁸⁰ This comment comes across as somewhat preposterous when viewed in relation to the scale and complexity of the intellectual excursion he is about to embark upon. It is more accurate to adopt this description of his project:

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, focusing on some of their past and present constellations involving myself as reader.⁸¹

Shortly afterwards, Mudimbe speaks even more objectively about his undertaking:

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 to a totality different from those of, say, Asia and Europe'.⁸²

Indeed the quest to discover ways of speaking and writing accurately about Africa involves global dimensions especially after Europe took it upon itself to remake the world in its own image. In so doing, unspeakable atrocities were committed involving the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, imperialism and elaborate processes of colonisation. These important events and histories are all central to the construction of various knowledge formations regarding the so-called essence(s) of Africa. But Mudimbe argues that the naming and description of Africa dates even further back to the Greco-Roman period. Indeed ancient cross-civilisational currents have always played a vital role in the formation of paradigmatic notions regarding understandings of Africa. What Mudimbe seems to suggest is that in order to appreciate the polysemy of meanings ascribed to Africa, the

⁸⁰ V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Idea of Africa*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, p.xi

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.xv

⁸² *Ibid.*

continent's multiple interactions with other cultures and civilisations and continents over vast and sometimes concealed tracts of history are all necessary to unveiling the constantly changing features of Africa. In other words, Africa has always been defined by external forces, actors and cultures just as internal processes of self-naming and dialogue have been part of what makes the continent an almost indescribably varied site of inquiry. Accordingly, it is often claimed that

“Africa was discovered in the fifteenth century”.⁸³

Indeed this is a dominant view propagated by European circles on a global scale. As such, it ought to be considered as precisely what it is, which is, a European viewpoint.

At the centre of the task of find ways of speaking appropriately about Africa is a tussle between external and internal models of explanation and perception. Due to Africa's suppression by the slave trade, colonialism and imperialism, its internally fashioned mechanisms of speaking about itself have always been marginalised when not completely ignored. And because Africa's stories regarding itself had never attained prominent circulation and dissemination, it fell upon external forces and actors to fill what has always seemed like an inviting discursive space. A silencing of Africa's speech with the rest of the world occurred and it became incumbent for others to speak for her even when it was not always in her best interest. In time, a dense cacophony of languages and vocabularies further drowned Africa's already muted internal voice.

3.2. Pre-Greek and Greco-Roman paradigms

Mudimbe begins his explorations of Africa's description by non-Africans with a reading of Flavius Philostratus's *Icones* which is about Hercules experience with the Pygmies of Libya. Hercules is attacked by the Pygmies in his sleep but was still able to ward them off due to his vastly larger size. From this historic encounter, a variety of tropes regarding Africa begin to take shape and which have resonated across several historical epochs. First of all, the Pygmies are described as 'an army of black ants'.⁸⁴ This undifferentiated mass of creatures fits a common stereotype of Africa which finds its most dramatic illustration in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Another racist trope refers to the psychological constitution of the Pygmies who are deemed to lacking in self-awareness while Hercules on the other hand is presented as a model of physical strength, emotional maturity and spiritual endowment. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the Pygmies are seen to be plagued by congenital infantilism. At this stage, the outlines of oppositional system of differentiation had started to emerge but had yet to be fully concretised.

Mudimbe also dwells on Robert Burton's 1621 text, *Anatomy of Melancholy*. In this work,

⁸³ Ibid.p.16

⁸⁴ Ibid. p.1

a stark picture of denigration emerges in which Africa is depicted as a place filled with wretchedness and horror to the point of ludicrousness. In other words, Africa was 'a place where madness and melancholia reign supreme'.⁸⁵ Apart from being exoticised, Africa is perceived as a site of extreme squalor, fetid superstitions, tropical delirium, chaos and pure evil. Here, an unobvious pathologisation of the continent is already evident. Within the context of the Greek scheme of classification dividing peoples and cultures, there was a clear line between civilisation and barbarity. Beings who existed beyond the Greek confines of civilisation were simply regarded as savages and where considered to be devoid of moral sense, intelligence, in short, basic decency:

"The "savage" (*Silvaticus*) is the one living in the bush, in the forest, indeed away from the *polis*, the *urbs*; and, by extension, "savage" can designate any marginal being, foreigner, the unknown, whoever is different and who as such becomes the unthinkable whose symbolic or real presence in the *polis* or *urbs* appears in itself as a cultural event".⁸⁶

Mudimbe reaches into sources in prehistory a few times in unearthing traces of Africanity. For instance, he draws attention to texts such as the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* which is deemed to have been written between 130 and 95 B.C. by an anonymous author.⁸⁷ The text mentions places such as the coast of Azania which is part of Tanzania today also stating that products such as 'cinnamon, fragrant gums in general, incense, ivory, rhinoceros horn, and tortoiseshell' were exported.⁸⁸ Textual sources from prehistory also mention 'circumcision, as still practiced, by the Nandi and Masai; burying the dead by covering the body with stones, as is the custom among the Galla (Ethiopia), the Masai (Kenya), and the Zande (Congo-Sudan); and, more remarkable still, [...] 'the custom of laughing at a funeral'.⁸⁹

Interesting even before Cheikh Anta Diop, Eugene Guernier in his work, *L'apport de l'Afrique a la pensee humaine* (1952) had elaborated a novel method of evaluating ancient African history in which he argued that Africa was the origin of human civilisation and had provided the foundation for the beginnings of Western canons of rationality and knowledge systems. Diop subsequently developed this line of argument in the following books, *Nations negres et culture* (1955) and *Anteriorite' des civilisations negres* (1967) in which he established his major theses regarding the concept of Egyptology.⁹⁰ Joseph Ki-Zerbo also disseminated these ideas in *Historie de l'Afrique* (1972). Subsequently, Martin Bernal, in the volumes of his *Black Athena* (1987 and 1991) rather than ascribing the origins of Greco-Roman civilisation to Africa alone, argues that they can be traced to 'Afroasiatic roots'.⁹¹ The efforts of scholars such as Cheikh Anta Diop and Joseph Ki-

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.p.15

⁸⁷ Ibid.p.18

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.pp23-24

⁹¹ Ibid.

Zerbo have instigated a massive search of varying degrees of skill and accomplishment by a wide spectrum of Africanist scholars to locate the supposed African origins of the entire human civilisation. Mudimbe mentions four accomplished texts that ought to be consulted to learn more about this intellectual pursuit namely, Drusilla Dunjee Houston's *Wonderful Ethiopians of the Ancient Cushite Empire* (1926), Grace Hadley Beadley's *The Negro in Greek and Roman Civilisation: A Study of the Ethiopian Type* (1926), Frank Snowden Jr.'s *Blacks in Antiquity* (1970) and Engelbert Mveng's *Les Sources grecques de l'histoire negro-africaine depuis Homere jusqu'à Strabon* (1972).

Mudimbe agrees that Martin Bernal's *Black Athena* constitutes an event and states that 'Bernal's thesis is based painstakingly on the hypothesis of two conflicting models about Greek origins: an Ancient one, and its reversal, an Aryan one'.⁹² Under the Ancient one, it was believed that Greece was inhabited by Pelasgian and other primitive peoples who had been civilised by Egyptians and Phoenicians. The Aryan Model which gained ascendancy at the end of the eighteenth century attributes the Greek civilisation to the conquest of earlier Pre-Hellenic peoples by Indo-European speaking Greeks.⁹³ Thucydides provides arguments in support of the Ancient Model and his contemporary Plato, visited Egypt to study Egyptian culture just as 'Aristotle was fascinated by Egypt and by the power of her priests, the inventors of *mathematikai technai*, or the mathematical arts'.⁹⁴ Two destructive incidents marked the beginning of a shift from Egypto-Paganism and also the commencement of the Christian Dark Ages notably, the destruction of the great library of Alexandria and horrific murder of the philosopher and mathematician, Hypatia by a posse of monks acting with the backing of St. Cyril. In spite of these two debilitating setbacks, the Egyptian influence thrived through the Renaissance and during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as the existence of Hermeticism, Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry reinforced the dominance of the Ancient Model.

The shift away from the Ancient Model to the Aryan Model occurred after Napoleon's expedition to Egypt in 1798 as Bernal tries to demonstrate. With the diminution of the influence of the Ancient Model, the combination of anti-Semitism, racism and Romanticism ushered in the era of the Aryan Model. Mudimbe reminds us that notions pertaining to 'racial inferiority' and 'slavish disposition' had been employed far back in history beginning with Aristotle. Indeed Western thinkers such as 'Locke, Hume, Kant Hegel'⁹⁵ and a several others all sought to provide intellectual justification for racism. Mudimbe points out that there is a distinction between 'race-thinking' and 'racism' and if this difference is sustained, it could have significant consequences for Bernal's central theses. Mudimbe claims that Arthur de Gobineau, a French count with the publication of his work, *Essai sur l'inegalite des races* (1853) inaugurated the transition from 'race-

⁹² Ibid.p.93

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.p.96

⁹⁵ Ibid.p.99

thinking' to 'racism'.⁹⁶ The strand of racism introduced by de Gobineau by attempting to proffer a scientific rationale for such thinking ended up making it a part of a culture and civilisation.⁹⁷ As such, a supposedly scientific endeavour is transformed into a political one with far-reaching implications.

Bernal is also charged of not fully addressing the potentialities and consequences of Cheikh Anta Diop's work thereby missing other crucial perspectives regarding the Ancient Model. On the fundamental distinction in the work of the two scholars, Mudimbe points out that while 'Bernal's project considers diffusionist patterns that originated from Egypt toward the north, the west, and the east [...], Diop was more concerned with the interactions between the south and the north'.⁹⁸ Mudimbe expresses a few crucial reservations concerning Bernal's work even though he admits it is in many respects significant. He is bothered about misguided or ill-intentioned readers of the work misusing it for purposes other than the quest for truth and enlightenment.

I mentioned earlier that the task of naming what Africa is and who are Africans is very much an effort external actors took upon themselves and the meanings of Africa and its peoples have accordingly shifted many times over the course of history. At a stage, 'the land or the continent is called *Aethiopia* because of- and here it is a textual confusion that raises an image- the heat (*calore*) or the color (*colore*) of the people living near the sun that burns them'.⁹⁹ However, the employment of *Aethiopia* to designate the continent waned with the incursions of Europeans into the continent in the fifteenth century. Mudimbe informs us, *Nigritia* became a name for the continent; *Nigritia*, from the Latin *niger*, was already known to ancient geographers, and its inhabitants were called *Nigriti*. The Latin *niger* corresponds to the Greek *melas* and, insofar as the color of human beings might be concerned, it strictly translates the Greek *Aithiops*, that is, a face burnt by the sun'.¹⁰⁰ In the first century, after Caesar defeated Pompeius's troops at Thapsus in 46 B.C., Carthage's geographical region was known as Africa. To the east of it was Cyrenaica and in the west, was the two Mauritaniae. In 27 B.C. an official statute amalgamated *Africa Nova* (Numidia) and *Africa Antiqua* creating three central regions in the process namely, the *dioecesis Hipponiensis*, the *dioecesis Numidica* and the *dioecesis Hadrumentia*. The first two regions fell under the administration of a *legatus* while the third was administered by a *procurator*. Much of the information on Africa from Greco-roman texts is drawn from the texts of Diodorus Siculus, Herodotus and Pliny. Herodotus writes that Libyans can be categorised into two main groups who were located at the East and West of Triton. The first region was bordered by Egypt and was 'low-lying and sandy'.¹⁰¹ It was also inhabited by different kinds of animals such as 'ga-

⁹⁶ Ibid.p.100

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.p.102

⁹⁹ Ibid.p.27

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. p.75

zelles, horned asses, antelopes the size of oxen, foxes, hyenas, porcupines, wild rams, jackals, panthers, land crocodiles, one-horned serpents etc.¹⁰² Mudimbe ascribes such extraordinary narrative twists to 'a search for marvels and to a love of the bizarre'.¹⁰³

Some of the accounts of both Herodotus and Pliny are obviously extraordinary if not preposterous. Herodotus claims that regions of Africa are inhabited by 'dog-headed and headless peoples' while Pliny on his part, writes that in parts of Africa, people exist without names, cave-dwelling denizens live on snakes, the Garamantes have not concept of matrimony, the Blemmyae are headless as Herodotus claims and also have their eyes and mouths lodged within their chests. Both Herodotus and Pliny are unable to provide reliable accounts of Ethiopia. Diodorus, on the other hand, is far more forthcoming. In general, Greek historical authorities assert that the Ethiopians were in fact 'the first humans' and sent out colonists to Egypt before it became what it was and also founded the custom of divine worship.

In the Greco-roman conceptual paradigm, there emerged an oppositional system of classification for human cultures and societies conceived of in the following terms; civilisation versus barbarism, centrality versus marginality and visibility versus invisibility. This classificatory schema also applied to their own societies in terms of hierarchy. For instance, 'in Grete, young men were called *skotioi* because, by age-status, they belonged to the world of women, living 'inside' their quarters, and were thus defined as members of an 'inside' world as opposed to the 'open' world of adult citizens'.¹⁰⁴ By living within the confines of the *polis* people are able to acquire qualities of gentleness (*emeron*) and civility (*politikon*). The Greeks built their society on the rule of men in which women and slaves were exempted from the benefits of full citizenship. In effect, 'women are to men as slave are to citizens; a gynecocracy is to the *polis/urbs* as barbarism or savagery is the *politikon*'.¹⁰⁵

Eventually, the opposition between inside and outside would come to play a vital role in how human societies operate in the more graphic dichotomies between internal and external and citizen/subject and alien. In the Greek case, this dichotomy expressed itself in an opposition between *oikos* (inside, feminine) and *polis* (outside, masculine), the latter, serving as a basis for the sustenance and reproduction of the *politeia*. Herodotus explores this particular social theme by addressing of the phenomenon of the *Amazons*, a war-mongering society of women who burnt off one of their breasts in order to string their bows properly. The Amazons were able to create a gynecocratic society one of which guiding tenets was that no virgin was to marry until she had killed a male enemy in battle. Called *Oiorpata* by Herodotus, the Amazons established a *thelukrates*, collective governance by women. The Scythians are alerted by this unconventional society and send out young men (*neotatoi*) to study the gynecocratic society with the intent of

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.p.80

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. p.90

marrying the women therein. The young men are instructed not to offend the women and to run away if they called to do battle. They were to continue to dwell on the margins the *thelukrates* until they had won the confidence of the women after which they were to seek their hands in marriage. The young men eventually succeed in the plan at the expense of the reversal of the sexual and social order they had known previously, meaning the triumph of the *thelukrates* as opposed to the *politeia*. In other words, a complete reversal of the mode of civilisation to which they had been acculturated occurred. The Amazons, in Greek terms, choose barbarism over civilisation by existing on the margins of the *oikoumene*. On the other hand, Diodorus's narrative on the Amazons takes the opposite route from Herodotus's in the sense that Myrina, the leader of the Amazons 'through friendship, diplomacy or war, dominates Egypt, Arabia, Syria, Cilicia, Phrygia, etc.; then she attacks and colonizes Lesbos (founding Mitylene, named after her warrior sister) and, finally, retires, as she has wished, in Cybele, or 'the Mother of the Gods,' and gives the island the name Samothrace, which means, when translated into Greek, 'sacred island'.¹⁰⁶

3.3. Modern metaphors

The actual demonisation of Africa as place of primitivity and savagery gained momentum in Europe during the eighteenth century. Interestingly, the word 'savage' has a noteworthy etymology. It stems from the Latin *silviaticus* and connotes marginality and lack of development or refinement. In the French context on the other hand, from the medieval epoch until the seventeenth century it meant 'stranger' and 'asocial' which is a far cry from the extreme racist connotations the term eventually assumed. Cultural anthropology, which quickly became a colonially sanctioned (pseudo)science of racial and cultural difference, was instrumental in establishing the powerful racist connotations between civilisation and barbarity and also maintaining a scale of oppositions between races, peoples, cultures and scientific advancement. More crucially, cultural anthropology was quite significant in the modern invention of Africa, which, in this case, also meant being an important contributory factor for legitimating the welter of meanings and metaphorical attributes to which Africa became associated.

The combination of Christianity and colonialism was even more potent in imposing a way of viewing Africa in the sense that both undertook the task of physically carving up the continent. Thus for both Christianity and colonialism, the interaction with Africa was not merely confined with finding the metaphors to describe her, it also became a fervent quest to acquire a secure dominance of her physical space. Since it had become acceptable to classify the African continent as a savage and primitive place, it also became acceptable to embark on elaborate schemes to bring it into civilisation. Christianity otherised Africa viewing her land as a *terra nullius* (a no-man's land) which had to be cultivated and employed in a manner approved by Christian morality and civilisation. In

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.p.88

other words, peoples who had not accepted the Christian faith were not only fully excluded from the kingdom of God but also lived on their lands by proxy and it was the eternal duty of the soldiers of Christ to dispossess them of those lands. Nicolas, the Roman Pontiff issued an official directive granting 'the King of Portugal and his successors the right not only to colonize but also to convert forcibly to Christianity and enslave 'Saracenos ac paganos' (Saracens and pagans) in perpetuity'.¹⁰⁷ Mudimbe continues:

The concept of *terra nullius* resides in the right to dispossess all Saracens and other non-Christians of all their goods (mobile and immobile), the right to invade and conquer these peoples' lands, to expel them from it, and, when necessary, to fight them and subjugate them in a perpetual servitude (*debellandi et subjugandi illorumque personas in perpetuam servitute*), and to expropriate all their possessions.¹⁰⁸

This concept gave Europeans, in this case, Spanish and Portuguese the right to invade the lands of non-Christians (natives) to be instructed on the Christian interpretation of the world based on biblical sources and urged to convert to the Christian faith. If the natives disagreed, it was incumbent upon the European mercenaries or delegates as the case may be to take to arms with the aim of wiping out the non-believers.

In the sixteenth century, Britain commenced the policy of attempting to seize foreign lands in the name of the monarch symbolised by three main procedures: 'the erection of a symbolic sign, a formal declaration proclaiming that the land was under English sovereignty, and the promulgation of a set of laws'.¹⁰⁹ In essence, the *Romanus Pontifex* concept was characterised by two central features: the supremacy of the papal authority over secular power and the prerogative of even forceful colonisation.

So far, we have noted two main regimes marking the West's treatment of racialised Others namely, the Greco-Roman paradigm and the *Roman Pontifex* philosophy. At certain instances, the defining features of these two paradigms overlap when they lose their sharpest characteristics or when they appear to be in transition. Certainly the *Roman Pontifex* concept is unequivocal in its attitudes towards natives regarding the possible extermination of non-believers and the seizure of their lands and possessions. The Greco-Roman paradigm never seems to be as explicit and violent in its attitude towards non-Greeks. Rather, it simply regarded those living outside the influence of Greek civilisation to be uncivilised but it doesn't go as far as aiming to wreak untold violence on them.

Afterwards, the 'scientific' legitimization of the colonial enterprise was provided by the academic discipline of anthropology. In conducting the work of such academic legitimization, anthropology preoccupied itself with establishing all kinds of knowledge and myths regarding Africa and which gave rise to the sub-discipline of Africanism, defined

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.p.32

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.p.33

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.p.36

as 'the body of discourses on and about Africa'.¹¹⁰ Nonetheless, the discourse of Africanism has struggled with 'the dichotomy between rudimentary and scientific knowledge, illusion and truth'.¹¹¹ Melville Herskovits, the pioneer of African Studies in the United States attempted to grapple with the problems of this dichotomy even as he claimed that not much is known of the type of man who existed at the advent of pre-history. Herskovits also averred that '*Man of (the) pre-Chellean epoch* had little in the way of civilization, yet it must have taken hundreds of generations to have brought him to this stage'; also, '*Paleolithic man* lived in Africa' and 'the greatest contribution of *Neolithic* man to human civilization was the fact that he learned how to tame plants and animals'.¹¹²

On the dawn of independence for African nations after decades of colonialism, an attempt was made to imbue Africanism with an added dimension: Marxism as understood by African themselves. In other words, 'political men of action in Africa, sensitive to this power of conversion of Marxist thought and seduced by the metaphors of an egalitarian society organized on the basis of economic registers in the service of the betterment of people, of all people, conceived the political liberation of new African countries in terms of Marxist revolution'.¹¹³ Mudimbe is unsparing in his criticisms of African socialisms:

Often formally brilliant, these socialisms, generally speaking, functioned and lived as texts marked by fantasies of an illusory new beginning of history. Within their concrete articulations in social formations, over the years they reveal themselves to be nothing other than deviations of the Marxist projects they were claiming to establish. The rigor of the materialist discourse of Nkrumah was matched by one of the most mediocre political dictatorships; the socialist test of Sekou Toure turned out to be, across the years, only an autocratic order whose effort, in the final analysis, jumbled all investments and Marxist figures that it had initially justified; the *Ujaama* of Nyerere unveiled nothing but the contradictions of bureaucratic mechanisms that asphyxiated the disfranchised classes whose State socialism was supposed to improve; finally, the elegance of Senghor's readings of Marx and Engels is, following the examples of Althusser or Jean-Yves Calvez, a simple object of scholarly exegeses for erudites.¹¹⁴

In another equally critical passage Mudimbe posits:

The remarkable failure of the Marxian paradigm can be explained. The body of the innovating discourses was a vague object, unsettled, proposed but never really named; indicated but always absent; dramatized but, at every turn, covered by confusing adjectives that kept it veiled. There is something here that sounds simply like a mystification. Granted, some African political leaders could have been led astray or, more precisely, they could have believed that the arrangement of the grids of racial otherness might, just as it stands, be a Marxist claim and bring about a socialist society on the level of the organization of power and production. I find it hard to believe that the

¹¹⁰ Ibid.p.39

¹¹¹ Ibid.p.40

¹¹² Ibid.p.49

¹¹³ Ibid.p.42

¹¹⁴ Ibid.pp.42-43

majority of Africanists- African as well as Western- would have fallen into that obtruseness.¹¹⁵

Even more damagingly, Mudimbe accuses of African socialists of bad faith for advancing an order of alterity within the context of supposedly scientific discourse. He obviously included the passages on African socialism in his work to demonstrate the conceptual agency of Africans and also to indicate that Africans have also been involved in contributing to the discourse of Africanism. So at a certain level, the otherisation of Africans isn't the preserve of Westerners alone. Africans themselves have also participated in providing supposedly authentic markers of identity for themselves whenever it suited them even when these markers are superimposed on apparently academic disciplines or sub-disciplines such as Marxism. As such, the discourse of Africanism has been shaped over time by non-Africans and Africans alike and by a quite disparate range of intellectual persuasions, pursuits and misleading ideologies.

So far, Africans have only made contributions to their own self-making within the context of liberation era African socialisms after centuries of colonisation and all forms of imperial abuse and violence. Mudimbe's research has been largely limited to intellectual constellations provided by the Colonial Library. Ultimately, as suggested at some point previously, it would be interesting to examine the implications of this discursive trajectory.

Next, Mudimbe addresses how notions of Africanity have been constructed through the instrumentality of primitive art. He points out the anomaly between opinions drawn from primitive art and views describing broad swathes of contemporary African existence and realities. Some claim the notion of the artist as a creator is European but this understanding becomes problematic given the fact that several European artists drew directly or were inspired by so-called primitive art, namely, Constantin Brancusi, Franz Marc, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Andre Derain, Maurice de Vlaminck and some others.¹¹⁶ It is remarkable that the artists mentioned had been inspired by the work of people who did not possess advanced technological skills, had no concept of textuality and emerged from societies that were more or less homogenous in terms of class stratification. Paul Gauguin was unduly expressive about the virtues of primitive art which he claimed provided more creative nourishment than Greek art. Initially, there was a slight confusion regarding how primitive art was to be represented within the metropolitan space. Such productions were first kept in an ethnographical locus to serve as an impetus for the colonial enterprise which required considerable resources to further the aims of empire. Thus the agents of machinery of colonialism together with ethnology employed primitive art in fabricating notions- however rudimentary or inaccurate- about Africa. Colonialism and ethnology attempted to locate and freeze primitive art in an exotic ethnographical museum and not a conventional art gallery. On the other hand, European artists such as Picasso and especially Gauguin proclaimed the highest virtues of such art forms thereby bypassing the spatial and conceptual location to which colonialism and ethnology had situated them and viewing them through a contrary percep-

¹¹⁵ Ibid.p.44

¹¹⁶ Ibid.p.56

tual lens. The difference between the approaches of European artists and ethnologists is captured in the passage: 'For which memories are these exhibited productions witnesses? They seem to be remnants, as some say, of absolute beginnings. Yet they have obsessed some of the most creative artists of the last one hundred and fifty years. In this specific case, are we dealing with a conscious will for reapprehending a lost past, a will which would want to reactivate prehistoric achievements?'¹¹⁷ The passage cited reveals a conflict between a mindset framed by academicism and one motivated by a primal creative impulse. The latter, captivated by productions defined as primitive art responds powerfully without the bulwark of a preconceived set of cultural notions regarding classification or grids. The former, guided by a will to power, is compelled to define and compartmentalise primitive art to aid the project of colonisation. Mudimbe provides three main criteria for assessing productions deemed to be primitive art:

The first, the sociocultural milieu, would identify the worked objects according to their producers: were or they made by gatherers, fishermen, cattle herders, agriculturalists? The second, the criterion of social relations of production, may within the same culture separate or allow a complementary analysis of palace art and that of, say, blacksmiths, healers, hunters, members of secret societies, women, etc. The third, the criterion of function, could classify these objects according to their use: divination, funerary, entertainment, everyday life, religious, magic, etc. Such a three-pronged approach would account for the objects in the context of their own real background and transcend the shortcomings of anthropologists' ethnologization and anesthetization of the objects.¹¹⁸

Mudimbe's focus on primitive African art somewhat underlines the trope of otherisation which African cultures generally have experienced. When European ethnologists attempt to brand and classify those productions, it is done within a curious grid of exoticisation. Mudimbe's main contribution to dispelling the prevailing conceptual confusion is to posit another explanation regarding how primitive African art may be understood and the terms of its functionality in the societies that produced them:

One does not simply decide to become an art worker. Similarly, in a number of West African societies, the profession of blacksmith is determined by birth. Another example: my ancestors, the Songye, fearing the possibility of losing a bulk of knowledge through endemic diseases, war, or natural catastrophes, instead of establishing familial genealogies and thus counting on individuals for the preservation of memories, specialized entire villages: one in the esoteric knowledge group, another in carving, a third in something else, and so on.¹¹⁹

The above explanation does what Mudimbe had proposed which is to understand the cultural and historical contexts in which such productions were made. Within those contexts, their existence made perfect sense rather than the anomalous or misrepresentative space they occupied in the ethnographical museums of Europe which failed to provide the accompanying conceptual tools to justify their existence and function. An appropriate background clearly needed to be provided in relation to the violence of Eurocentric misappropriation.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.p.64

¹¹⁸ Ibid.p.67

¹¹⁹ Ibid.p.69

However, Mudimbe is also interested in the broader Belgian colonial impulse and enterprise or what is termed *oeuvre civilisatrice* as they affect Central Africa which Leopold II undertook with explicit papal approval. This ambitious enterprise entailed ‘a will to convert, to transform, to change radically a space and its inhabitants. In the name of faith (Catholicism) and a nationalist call (to expand Belgium), young Belgians men and women moved to Central Africa convinced that they could engineer a historical rupture in the consciousness and the space of Africans’.¹²⁰ African bodies and land were viewed as docile objects on which were to be inscribed the mission and objectives of European civilisation and never as active participants in this obviously world-changing process. Accordingly, once they were placed under the umbrella of the Christian church, Africans were not supposed to be treated equally with Europeans. Instead, they were always to be kept in a subservient space where their evolution on the treadmill of Euromodernity was to continue in perpetuity. This strangle-hold of subservience applied to the ‘Clergé Indigène’ whose members were to be all black, ‘united under sponsorship of their educators and dependent, in principle for centuries to come, upon white superiors and a foreign *magisterium* bearing responsibility for their conversion and guaranteeing their orthodoxy’.¹²¹ In pursuing an extensive policy of conversion from a primitive culture to a supposedly universal civilisation, ‘a new idea of Africa’¹²² was to emerge that was to constitute a rupture from the past while inaugurating the advent of a future that underlined the break from the African past. It was necessary to effect a rupture from the African past because it signified nothing exemplary in the area of culture and civilisation as the black person was generally deemed to be ‘a being immersed in nature, bad by essence, lazy, impulsive, superstitious, submitted to passions, incapable of reasoning, whose *ultima ratio rerum* would be the habit as both custom and nature’.¹²³ As pointed out earlier, the fabrication of ideas regarding Africa has never been the sole preserve of Africans alone, as non-Africans seemed even more persistent to discover the idea or even ideas of Africa. A major part of the European civilisational effort to invent a new idea of Africa entailed the creation of new collective memories merging colonial and African elements.

In the case of the Belgian Congo, a concerted effort was made to invent ‘a new cohesive culture’ based on three main approaches: ‘First, patrilineal succession was imposed *de facto* as the one model and project of obedient to colonial norms. Christian marriages and patrilineal succession symbolized integration within the colonial order. Next, languages became arranged hierarchically. French, the language of the ‘master,’ was at the top of the pyramid.’¹²⁴ Blacks undergoing the process of conversion under this elaborate policy of cultural transformation from African primitivity to Euromodernity were termed *evolues*. The model *evolue* sought to understand and participate in the rationali-

¹²⁰ Ibid.p.107

¹²¹ Ibid.p.120

¹²² Ibid.p.126

¹²³ Ibid.p.128

¹²⁴ Ibid.p131

ties of the emerging marketplace in order to be deemed a worthy economic asset. He also attempted to repress his ethnic memory and replace it with the new colonial memory as demanded by his masters. He, in effect, expected himself to undergo a swift metamorphosis of consciousness.

The colonial policy of conversion involving the reconstruction of geographical space, the colonised body and its consciousness and memory was not without equally vehement reprisals.¹²⁵ Indeed such colonial violence cannot be expected to remain unchallenged as evidenced in the emergence of contrary ideological movements such as Pan-Africanism, Negritude and consciencism. These African responses to the ideological and psychic repression of colonialism often tried to combine elements of modernity with an uncertain recovery of submerged African identities. The collision between colonial memories and traditional African memories in the epoch of postcoloniality continues to gain momentum and relevance perhaps due to the fact that touches upon what it means to be African in an often crass ideological manner. For instance, the traditional names of African towns and cities are in a constant tussle with the ones imposed by colonial regimes creating the impression that contained in this kind of struggle, was the nucleus of Africanity. In intending to create a new set of identities for Africans, the colonial authorities also embarked on an extensive reconstruction of spatial memory, a process termed debaptism:

New names transformed African locations into signs of monarchist allegiance. Albertine replaced Kalemie, Baudoinville replace Moba, and Leopoldville replaced Kinshasa. Other names offered a recital of living memory of the period of exploration, as was the case for Bainingville (Bandundu), Conquihatville (Mbandaka), and Stanleyville (Kisangani). Still others acted as duplicates or stand-ins of European localities. The post of Kwilu-Ngongo become Moerbeke.¹²⁶

In the post-independence era, these spatial re-memorialisations have not been left unaddressed by new governmental administrations. Mudimbe dwells extensively on the part of Mobutuism which attempts a reconstruction of the postcolonial present based on notions pointing to a pre-colonial ethnic memory and identity, a collective exercise called 'Zaireanization' which in Mudimbe's view resulted in 'structural madness'.¹²⁷ The Beninise philosopher, Paulin Hountondji has also pointed out a similar occurrence in his native Benin.¹²⁸ These attempts at reversing the impositions of colonialism on the one hand, and re-capturing the idea of an unsullied ethnic essence on the other, are also evident in contemporary post-apartheid South Africa where towns, cities and landmark monuments are being re-named according to their supposedly pre-apartheid designa-

¹²⁵ See John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, Vol 1, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991; and *Of Revelation and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*, Vol.2, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* p.134

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* p.145

¹²⁸ See his *The Struggle for Meaning: Reflections on Philosophy, Culture and Democracy in Africa*, Ohio: Center for International Studies, Ohio State University, 2002

tions. Mudimbe avers that this general postcolonial effort of identitarian and cultural retrieval is motivated by two overriding tendencies namely ‘a principle of discontinuity and a principle of interiority’.¹²⁹ Mobutuism, Mudimbe argues, manipulated collective memories playing off their ideological connotations against each other not with the aim of effecting a well-intentioned programme of sociopolitical transformation but as it turned out to be, for more devious and self-serving gains. The place of memories came to be construed as a malleable site on which to manipulate the essence and contours of consciousness by both colonial and postcolonial authorities.

In confronting the pervasive postcolonial conundrum of tackling the conflictual nexus of memories bequeathed by the colonial encounter and the subsequent postcolonial attempt to create new African identities, Mudimbe introduces a concept, *reprendre*, which entails, ‘taking up an interrupted tradition, not out of a desire for purity, which would testify only to the imaginations of dead ancestors, but in a way that reflects the conditions of today’.¹³⁰ To be sure, Mudimbe employs this concept in analysing the field of contemporary Africa art but it also applies to the broader question of what the notion of Africinity means today.

The evolution of African art has undergone several major historical transformations, shifts and discontinuities which make the task of speaking homogeneously about it almost futile. Mudimbe mentions the efforts of European mentors of African artists who believed there existed precolonial African artistic traditions and impulses that could be recouped and harnessed for the contemporary gaze and appreciation. One of such European mentors was Pierre Romain-Desfosses. Interesting this view connects with the drive of some Africans to re-capture pre-modern African cosmologies for the modern palette. It also connects with the principle of discontinuity and the principle of interiority which the apostles of authenticity try to promote in the sociopolitical and cultural fields. This kind of approach obviously does not do justice to the diversity, energy and current tendencies in African art. On his part proposes another approach for apprehending current developments in African arts:

Two sets of criteria – internal (the artwork’s style, motifs, theme, and content) and external (the context of its creation, that context’s cultural history, the sociological milieu, and he artist’s purpose)- should permit the distinction of three main currents (not categories) in contemporary African arts. There is a tradition-inspired trend, a modernist trend, and a popular art.¹³¹

However, in spite of the attempts to establish ways of speaking of, and categorising African arts employing a rather reductive scheme of interpretation, a trend eventually emerged that indicated an altogether new development. Accordingly, ‘artists such as the traditional Yoruba brass-caster Yemi Bisiri, the Benin wood-carver Ovia Idah, and the Muslim carver Lamidi Fakeye’ and other such as ‘Twins Seven-Seven, Muraina Oyelami, Adebisi Fabunmi, Jacob Afolabi, Rufus Ogunde, and others of the Oshogbo school’

¹²⁹ Ibid.p.148

¹³⁰ Ibid.p.154

¹³¹ Ibid.p.161

developed forms of art which drew from, and yet moved beyond, the strictures of traditional aesthetics, the profound ruptures of colonial culture and eventually settled upon a fresh field of creative synthesis. This creative synthesis endows contemporary artistic productions with a depth and complexity that easily escape and confound reductive schemes of analysis. In attempting critique the work of a challenging contemporary artist, it is therefore necessary to pay attention to the 'artist's individuality: the morphological forms, geometric features, chromatic techniques, and symbolisms particular to his or her vocabulary'.¹³²

Mudimbe unveiling of the complexities that face commentators on African arts, in the final analysis, is directed at an even larger question: the ways of speaking of the contemporary African subject who in an apparently simplistic manner straddles the tradition/modernity divide. The often politically motivated search for the kernel of authenticity based on the principle of discontinuity and the principle of interiority usually fails to explain the multiple realities of the subject just the populist, media-fuelled mantra of Afropolitanism only serves to dilute the power of, or at least, conceal, the deeper realities unfolding. The realities and complexities certainly invite deeper and more careful analytic re-appraisals.

Mudimbe turns next to the dilemmas facing the modern African intellectual which can be by turns fruitful or counter-productive as the case may be. Edouard Glissant, the Caribbean author was confronted by an all-to-common intellectual obstacle. How was he supposed to function as credible and productive intellectual when the materiality of history not only silences, but also excludes him? How was he supposed to employ the use of a language to which he has, at best, a fraught relationship? How was he expected to productively escape the looming tyranny of a false father? Chinua Achebe, the Nigerian author was faced with this same dilemma which he solved by resorting to the same kind of complexity that is necessary when attempting to speaking of contemporary African arts. His original response involved both a rejection and an affirmation of cultures of traditionalism, modernity and hybridity simultaneously.

Kwasi Wiredu, the Ghanaian philosopher, attempts to bypass the repression of the false philosophical father by re-establishing his epistemic links to indigenous Akan traditions for two main reasons, namely to connect with an inclusive tradition of history and to found a viable African philosophical practice. His major philosophical practice involves what he has termed conceptual decolonisation. However, Mudimbe faults Wiredu's work on the grounds of its excessive empiricism and also in failing to identify a crucial 'existential locality'.¹³³ Mudimbe also condemns the branch of African philosophy known as ethnophilosophy as being party to 'a lazy but sincere cult of difference'.¹³⁴ On his part, Mudimbe recommends that new philosophical practice ought to be founded on the following considerations; intellectual and ideological problems involving a dis-

¹³² *Ibid.* p.172

¹³³ *Ibid.* p.200

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* p.202

inction between *saviors* (knowledge in general) and *connaissances* (disciplined and well-defined knowledge). The second major criterion for establishing a philosophical practice addresses problems of history and epistemology.¹³⁵

Finally, Mudimbe concludes by subscribing to ‘a polysemic ‘idea’ of Africa’ which tries to capture and present the evolving and ever-changing dynamics of the continent in all their complexities. In order to underline these complexities, he points out, ‘this idea presents itself as a statement of a project born from the conjunction of different and often contradictory elements such as African traditions, Islam, colonization, and Christianity’.¹³⁶

3.4. Mudimbe’s intellectual project

Mudimbe raises important issues about Africinity that traverse several centuries such as how is Africanism as a discipline to be framed in which the empirical and theoretical truths of the continent are revealed? And how has Africinity been perceived in contemporary times through, for instance, the discourse of Marxism? The meanings of Africinity have shifted over temporal frameworks and disciplinary enclaves; the Greek and Roman epochs, the European intervention, the Church, the modern disciplines of anthropology and art criticism.

Mudimbe’s excavations of notions and perceptions of Africinity, to be sure, are non-linear. As such, images of the continent that emerge from these efforts may appear random but Mudimbe’s approach restores an authenticity to fundamental existential issues and erects a stance against the excesses of structuralist analysis which his work undermines.

He often terms his project as storytelling; tales he would be able to tell his Americanised children. This classification is both understandable and baffling. Understandable because of the polysemic idea of Africa can only be rendered from multiple perspectives and viewed as one ought to regard Chinua Achebe’s masquerade. On the other hand, such stunning scholarship and rigour of analyses elide the term storytelling. Undoubtedly, the perspectives by which Mudimbe has tried to describe Africa are far from exhaustive. Their multiplicity attests to a singular truth; the polysemic idea of Africa which is in a constant and often problematic conversation with its past and always open to the sudden turns and surprises of the future.

Mudimbe’s thought and writing defy neat compartmentalisation; historiography, anthropology, philology, sociology, philosophy, literary and art criticism. This bewildering immersion in numerous academic disciplines is marshaled to serve and over-riding purpose; to present the African continent in its full awesomeness, to extricate its partially concealed visage from the strictures of dogmatic reductionisms, fuzzy thinking

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

and lazy intellectual labour. Africa, in a sense, is a tantalising masquerade and in order to appreciate its grace, beauty and shortcomings, many levels of perception are required.

Mudimbe makes some damaging remarks regarding Kwasi Wiredu's project of conceptual decolonisation in which he employs a Western methodological model. If we are to agree with his criticism then the practice of African philosophy which Wiredu seeks to invent fails. But Mudimbe does not appear willing or even able to move beyond Wiredu's alleged shortcoming. Indeed Mudimbe's entire project has been entrapped in the Colonial Library in which the overarching aim is to trace different manifestations of Africanity. It is possible to raise an issue with the entrapment in the Colonial Library. It is also possible to question its scope of ambition as a valid philosophical project.

Mudimbe in seeking to launch a major philosophical project based on a Western conceptual model seems not only to forget, but also to walk away from the significance of his own project which is to trace the otherisation and genealogies of violence visited upon the figure of the black subject within the Western archive. Unwittingly, perhaps, Mudimbe's project has been a vast effort of epistemic recovery, a rigorous imploration for intellectual reparations. Limited as it may appear to be as a credible epistemological enterprise, it is indeed a worthy one as it addresses numerous unspeakable excesses of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and other forms of colonial violence. It seeks, in this sense, to restore the humanity of an entire race, and become even more important than a mere philosophical project couched in an already discredited Western vocabulary. In seeming to abandon his initial project of tracing the histories of violence unleashed upon the black subject, two unintended consequences result; a newly varnished but morally suspect Western epistemological model is re-established and the re-inscription of what fundamentally is a conceptual dead-end in contemporary African philosophy.

Ultimately, the almost limitless reach of his intellectual ambitions undermines the philosophical aspect of his work as an alternative conceptual model; as such, a mode of analysis is re-introduced that does profound violence to his history as a black subject. Clearly, a level of selectivity in relation to that model is required and this is a type of selectivity even Mudimbe himself employs whenever it is convenient.

Mudimbe in his careful exploration of notions of Africanity through the following contexts, the Greco-roman paradigm, the slave trade, colonialism and the Colonial Library confronts a crucial *problématique* in African philosophy which centres on identity. Here, his transdisciplinarity (and also multidisciplinary) rather than constituting an unambiguous advantage serves as an impediment. In the final analysis, his prodigious multidisciplinary exertions are not what is exactly needed to establish a modern African philosophical practice as they freeze him within the same conceptual location Paulin J. Hountondji pondered upon as he embarked on his critiques of ethnophilosophy or even Wiredu before he had fully theorised what eventually became conceptual decolonisation.

In all probability, Mudimbe intends to rupture the dominance, and mitigate the effects of the Colonial Library's constructs of Africanity by rendering clearly visible its fundamental violence. But is this enough to establish a viable African philosophical practice?

Obviously not for the reasons that he has not devised a feasible vocabulary that can stand without the intrusive and corrupting violence of the Colonial Library itself. His employment of the contents of the Library to present traces of Africanity in various archival contexts often does not constitute a rupture within the Library's hegemony and in many respects may even be regarded as an integral part of it.

In a sense, Mudimbe is also guilty of the charge he puts before Africanists who thrive on the politics and dynamics of otherness. Otherness is a central part of his deliberations but it is a history and excavation of otherness rendered wholly intelligible within the language and categories of sameness. This produces a curious admixture that profits from both ideological categories without indicating the slightest willingness to take responsibility for either. As such, in conditions that demand absolute clarity, it is a discourse that produces a highly unsatisfying effect of being neither here nor there, a state of suspense that generates its own internal audience for its own idiosyncratic self-congratulatory applause.

As mentioned earlier, Mudimbe does not attempt to present Africa through a linear or logical disciplinary narrative probably because the events of history that mark the continent are rather haphazard and unpredictable as are war and chaos. If this befuddles academic expectations and the prerequisites of logical organisation, this cannot be said of existential reality which often is similarly marked by pronounced randomness. As such, Mudimbe is sometimes on the verge of creating an academic genre of his own as evident by his wide-ranging critiques and uses of Herodotus, Pliny, Diodorus and of course his detailed readings of Martin Bernal and the auxiliary bodies of work on him. Mudimbe is merely indicating the complexities of approaching Africanity from a single discursive perspective. In this way, Africanity encompasses many cross-cultural and cross-civilisational trends, multiple collapses and rejuvenations of societies, and also numerous ideological upheavals and struggles for intellectual legitimation.

African consciousness and space have never been uncontested terrains beginning from proto-history. Accordingly, African identities have always been mediated by a multiplicity of factors and influences as well as by different ideologies, paradigms, hegemonic constellations, cultures and civilizations. So rather than positing a sole idea about Africa, the continent has always been the domain of multiple civilisational currents, discourses and structures of power and finally, racial actors of different hues. As such, it is possible to trace different genealogies of the idea of Africa starting from Greek and Roman times through the Christian Dark Ages, the Renaissance, incipient European imperialism, slavery, colonisation and finally the age of Enlightenment. The idea of Africa has been inextricably enmeshed in these various developments and histories such that it isn't really possible or even appropriate to dwell rigidly on an idea of Africa. Rather, the ideas of Africa, which attest to an almost limitless heterogeneity in all forms, is more befitting.

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Chapter 4

Buddhism – and Nigeria’s classical arts

by Robert Dick-Read¹³⁷

4.1. The argument

Any attempt to explain my title must rely upon a viable historical framework. Looking back into a past where there are remarkably few records – reliable or otherwise – is fraught with problems, so some people are bound to find any such framework questionable - but this is an inevitable hazard of the game.

So here goes....

Three and a half thousand years ago, Austronesian-speaking seamen whom we know as the ‘Lapita’ people, started on their voyages of exploration eastward into the Pacific Ocean.¹³⁸ But it is not unreasonable to assume that, at about the same time, they may also have begun

¹³⁷ EDITOR’S NOTE: Much to our regret, critical personal circumstances prevented Robert Dick-Read from attending the Leiden 2012 conference. However, his pioneering book *The Phantom Voyagers: Evidence of Indonesian Settlement in Africa in Ancient Times* (2005) has been a seminal recent statement of Africa’s transcontinental continuities on which the present volume focuses. Therefore the provisional paper Robert prepared for the conference, could not be missed from these Proceedings. The bibliography was compiled by the Editor, who also restyled the footnotes accordingly.

¹³⁸ Bellwood 1997, 1980.

to explore the islands and sea lanes to the west as well as those of the Pacific.

Though signs of their westward movements are not as clear-cut as those for the Pacific, where there was a virgin canvas of uncorrupted islands, there is nevertheless solid evidence of contemporary maritime activity within the western islands, and beyond into the Indian Ocean. Remnants of cloves, which at that time can only have come from the Moluccas, have been found in a pot at Terqa in Syria, dated to the first half of the second millennium BCE.¹³⁹ In the other direction, the remains of sheep or goats – animals of Middle Eastern origin – have been found in Timor, in a site dated to 1,500 BCE.¹⁴⁰ By 1,000 BCE obsidian from a single source was being traded across a distance of more than 4000 miles from Borneo to Fiji.¹⁴¹ In 1920, James Hornell wrote an article asserting that *Polynesians* – in single outrigger canoes - had become established in southern India in pre-Dravidian times, at the latest by 500 BC.¹⁴² And there is evidence that the Indonesian blowgun was also used in Southern India very early on. In short, there is little reason to doubt that at least 3,000 years ago Indonesian mariners were as active in the polyglot Indian Ocean as they were in the virgin Pacific.

Long before the end of the first millennium BCE, regular sea-trade had developed between Greece, Rome, and India. By 500 BCE rich Greeks had Indian peacocks in their gardens. Pepper and other spices; aromatics; drugs and dyes; slaves;¹⁴³ and even ivory carvings¹⁴⁴, were increasingly in demand among the Roman upper classes. Wealthy Romans were wearing Chinese silks and Indian cottons.¹⁴⁵ In the conveyance of articles from China it is likely that Indonesian merchantmen were involved.

The sea routes extended across the Bay of Bengal to the Strait of Malacca ... and on to China. Though Indians had coastal vessels, there is no evidence whatsoever that *Indian* ships were involved in long-distance trade across the ocean in those days. Far eastern cargoes were mostly carried in Indonesian vessels, probably the *kolandiaphonta*, (a.k.a. the Chinese *kun-lun-po* or 'Indonesian ships'), while virtually all the maritime traffic from India to the Mediterranean seems to have been carried in Greek and Roman ships. There was, however, one grey area: the top grade cinnamon that seems to have come – not via India or Sri Lanka - but probably on multi-hulls from Indonesia direct – on journeys which Pliny the Elder described dramatically - if enigmatically¹⁴⁶:-

...(they) bring it over vast seas on rafts which have no rudders to steer them, no oars to push them, no sails to propel them, indeed no motive power at all but man alone and his courage. ... They say that their traders take almost five years there and back, and that many die. On the return journey

¹³⁹ Buccellati, Giorgio, personal communication.

¹⁴⁰ Reade 1996.

¹⁴¹ Bellwood. P. *ibid*

¹⁴² Hornell 1920, 1928, 1934.

¹⁴³ Warmington n.d.

¹⁴⁴ Glover 1993

¹⁴⁵ Hall 1985: 27-36 and 59

¹⁴⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Historia Naturalis*.

they take glassware and bronzeware, clothing, brooches, bracelets and necklaces.'

It is quite possible that the curious vessels described by Pliny were Indonesian multi-hulls along the lines of Hawaiian or Tongan multihulls of the 18th century, or Indonesia's rapid *Kora-Kora* fighting outriggers of the same period.¹⁴⁷

Archaeologist Ian Glover once commented that this period '...when the Classical civilisations of the Mediterranean encountered Buddhist India and Han China' should be looked upon as the beginning of the 'World System'.¹⁴⁸ But in many ways it seems to have been more – for it seems to have been a period when the people of maritime Southeast Asia began to wake up to their place in this new world order and the commercial opportunities it presented.

The standard sea route for goods going to, and coming from China at that time involved overland portage across the Isthmus of Kra, then – on its eastward leg – on by sea to a commercial centre at Oc Eo in the Mekong delta. It was on the strength of this traffic that early in the first century CE the prosperous State of Funan was founded. Presumably encouraged by the success of Funan, other states in the Indonesian islands sought to share in the profitable trade. By the second century CE sturdy ships were plying the Malacca Strait¹⁴⁹ thus avoiding the portage across Kra, and before long there was a plethora of Island states negotiating with Han China for preferential trade agreements.

Perhaps inevitably it was the states that could control traffic through the Malacca and Sunda Straits that eventually held the reins of power. First it was Ko-ying in the 2nd century about which not a lot is known; then it was Kan-to-li, founded in the early part of the 5th century, which O.W. Wolters described as 'the most important of the trading kingdoms before the rise of Srivijaya.'

Despite a gap in the records of over eighty years, it is likely that Kan-to-li was the immediate predecessor of Srivijaya, the powerful state which eventually held sway over the vast region from central Java in the south, to Kedah on the Malay peninsula in the north, thus commanding both the main seaways from the Indian Ocean to the far east. Srivijaya's power lay in both the military and naval forces that enabled it to weld its numerous semi-autonomous valley societies into a strong cohesive polity ruled from its capital Palembang in southern Sumatra.

In all probability Srivijaya's navy was drawn from the main groups of *orang laut*, whose homelands were originally in southwest Sulawesi, but many of whom had outposts in Bangka Island off the southeast coast of Sumatra¹⁵⁰. These were the Makassar, the Mandar, the Bajo and the Bugis. Of these the Bajo (or Bajau) seem to have been the most ubiquitous. Bajo toponyms crop up from Nias to the Philippines 3000 kms to the east¹⁵¹.

¹⁴⁷ Horridge 1981; Dick-Read 2005: chaps 3 and 5.

¹⁴⁸ Glover 1996: 77.

¹⁴⁹ Manguin 1993, 1994, 1980.

¹⁵⁰ Adelaar 1996: 492

¹⁵¹ Sopher 1965 / 1977.

From all reports, however, it was the Bugis who are likely to have been the leading lights in subsequent voyages of conquest, trade and exploration. Apart from being superb seamen the Bugis had a reputation for being adventurous traders and courageous, if sometimes cruel, warriors; traits that probably extended way back in their history. If any ruler of a state such as Srivijaya wanted to form a powerful navy, these are the people he is most likely to have drawn upon.

It should be noted that Kan-to-li and Srivijaya were both dedicated Mahayana Buddhist states¹⁵².



Over on the African coast were the people we know as the Zanj. Back in Roman times Pliny the Elder had written of a land called Azania, and the people associated with it, the Zanganae, referred to also as the, Zingis, the Zand or the Zanj. The Zanj were prominent in the region for well over a thousand years: and there is every reason to believe they were the mixed-race progeny of Southeast Asian sailors who had begun crossing the northern Indian Ocean to Africa several centuries BCE. The reasons for saying that the Zanj had Indonesian affiliations can be encapsulated as follows:

The East African outrigger canoe, the *ngalawa*, has Indonesian origins. Several bits of outrigger terminology directly link it with the four most important groups of mariners in Indonesia who would have been in the employ of the states of Srivijaya – and possibly Kan-to-li beforehand. In East Africa, the Kiswahili term for the outrigger boom is *tengo*; *tengotengo*; or *rengo*. In Buginese, Makassarese and Mandar it is *baratāng* (in Malagasy 'bara' or the interchangeable 'vala', as in 'vala-bè' the great enclosure of the Tromba cult, or 'valamena', the Royal enclosure, denotes an enclosure made up of wooden poles). The outrigger-connector of a Makassarese boat is *tenko*: in Bajo, *tētēnkona*.¹⁵³ A double-outrigger canoe in eastern Indonesia is *tango*.¹⁵⁴ These unequivocally indicate Bajo, Mandar, Buginese, and Makassarese connections with East Africa.

The Zanj appear to have employed fishing techniques similar to those used in Malaya and Indonesia.¹⁵⁵

The Zanj of Azania, from which Zanzibar and Tanzania take their names, seem to have been recognised as a demographically distinct people before any large numbers of Bantu-speaking people arrived in eastern Africa, and before the arrival of Arabs on the coast.

They were obviously seamen as they occupied some of the off-shore islands. The Indian Ocean off the African coast was later known to Arab chroniclers as the *Bahr az Zanj*.¹⁵⁶

In addition to the 'Zanj' toponyms ('Azania', 'Zanzibar') it can be argued that the Bajo

¹⁵² Wolters 1967.

¹⁵³ Horridge 1981: 88-89, Table 1.

¹⁵⁴ Parry 2000.

¹⁵⁵ *Periplus Maris Erythraei...*: (Casson 1989)

¹⁵⁶ Trimmingham 1975.

gave their name to the Bajun Islands and that Manda Island took its name from the Mandar. Likewise, Buki the Swahili name for Madagascar, is almost certainly derived from the Bugis of Indonesia; while 'Madagascar' itself is most likely derived from 'Makassar'.¹⁵⁷

The Zanj did not speak Arabic. When, in the 9th century, many of them were enslaved by Sassanians from southern Persia to drain the Euphrates marshes they needed Arabic interpreters. (For the most comprehensive research on the Zanj see works by Marina Tolmacheva¹⁵⁸, and my chapter on the Zanj¹⁵⁹)

Arab chroniclers recognised the Zanj as '*different people*', neither Arabs, nor Africans. The 13th century chronicler Ibn Said even described them as '*brothers of the Chinese*'.

The Zanj exported goods to China, via South-east Asia. Early in the 7th century, long before Arabs started building settlements along the East African coast, ambergris was being shipped to China, soon followed by rhino horn, ivory, frankincense, and ebony.

Later, a Chinese writer referred to the people whose land these commodities came from as Kuen-luen Tseng-kji. Kuen-luen, or Kun- Lun, was the term used by the Chinese for the dark-skinned people of the tropical islands of South-east Asia; and Tseng-kji equals 'Zanj'.

The Zanj were pagans, and their conversion to Islam was very slow. In the 10th century, Zanj rulers were still referred to by Arab chroniclers as 'Kings'. Not until the 13th century were they referred to as 'Sheiks' and 'Sultans'.

The well known British orientalist, Anthony Christie, thought the name 'Zanj' might be 'a Southeast Asian word'¹⁶⁰.

Al-Idrisi not only describes the coast but mentions vessels that came from the *Zabaj* islands to trade with the Zanj. *Zabaj* or *Zanaj* was the name by which Arabs referred to Sumatra and Java -. 'The people of the Zabaj islands', wrote al-Idrisi, 'travel to the Zanj in both small and large ships and engage in trafficking in their goods because *they understand each others' language*'.

Finally, the 11th c. Arab chronicler, Al-Biruni, went further when he wrote that the Zanj [of Africa] and the Zabaj of Sumatra were actually one and the same people, adding that they were very tricky to deal with! (See Spencer Trimingham's invaluable chapter 'The Arab Geographers'¹⁶¹).

It must have been Afro-Indonesian Zanj people who - perhaps under increasing pressure from migrating Bantu, and Islamists filtering down the coast from the north - began to cross the channel in the sixth or seventh century CE to the unsettled island of Madagascar¹⁶². This is about the only way we can account for the fact that Madagascar's

¹⁵⁷ Dick-Read 2005: ch. 10

¹⁵⁸ Tolmacheva, 1975, 1976, 1986, 1989: 738-740, 1997: 89

¹⁵⁹ Dick-Read 2005: 68 f.

¹⁶⁰ Christie 1959.

¹⁶¹ 1975

¹⁶² Adelaar 1996; Dahl 1991; Deschamps 1972.

language is basically Austronesian, with a heavy admixture of Bantu vocabulary. It would also account for the diversity of Malagasy tribes – agriculturalists, cattle herders, fishermen and so on, some with strong African elements, others more noticeably Indonesian. But Raymond Kent, in his *Early Kingdoms in Madagascar*,¹⁶³ went further when he wrote ...

'...there must have been a vast and fairly gradual human movement from the general direction of Indonesia in the early centuries of the first millennium of our era, a movement one could call by an old Malagasy term *lakato* (or true outrigger people) because they did not belong to a single ethnicity. Moreover, these *lakato* must have spread considerably into the interior of east-central and southeast-central Africa, along the waterways and lakes, *before* the Bantu speakers left their core area ... Long before the Bantu reached coastal east Africa ... they met the *lakato* in the interior.' He went on: 'To put it in the simplest form of statement, there *must* have been in the first millennium of our era an *Afro-Malagasy race* inhabiting both sides of the Mozambique channel, which was *then* not a barrier but a duct for the movement of peoples. ... And, this *race* had its African and Indonesian extremes with all sorts of admixture in-between.'

Surely the Zanj and Kent's *lakato* were one and the same. And surely Kent was also correct in concluding that there were all sorts of admixtures of people: Africans of differing ethnic backgrounds; Indonesians, and Indians from Srivijaya, among whom would have been specialist miners and metallurgists of different religious persuasion ... Hindus and Buddhists among them¹⁶⁴. It was this admixture that must have been responsible for most of the 'enigmas' that recent historians have found so baffling.

The Great Zimbabwe, at the centre of the culture we know by that name, was not a purely African affair. With its many links to Madagascar it has to be seen as a multi-cultural creation. Quoting Kent again:- '... the traditional past of Madagascar makes absolutely no sense without Africa'. To which one might add that the traditional past of Zimbabwe is inescapably linked with that of the Austronesian world of Madagascar – and people from the other side of the Indian Ocean¹⁶⁵.



Though proof, as always, is illusive, it is likely that it was Raymond Kent's 'lakato' who spread far and wide across south central Africa, with prospectors amongst them who opened up iron workings in the Transvaal as early as the 1st or 2nd century CE¹⁶⁶, copper mines in Zambia in the 4th century¹⁶⁷, and, late in the 6th century, approximately 4000 gold workings in the hills of Zimbabwe.¹⁶⁸ Most of the production from all these mines is likely to have been exported to the Indonesian islands by ships under the control of Ko-ying, Kan-

¹⁶³ Kent 1970.

¹⁶⁴ Hromnik 1981.

¹⁶⁵ Dick-Read. 2005; Chs 10-12.

¹⁶⁶ Mason 1974.

¹⁶⁷ Herbert 1984.

¹⁶⁸ Summers 1969.

to-li and Srivijaya, from ports such as Chibuene¹⁶⁹ on the East African coast. And it is probable that people of the same ilk are those who, since the 5th century CE, occupied the Upemba depression near the headwaters of the Congo river, and who may indeed have explored the great river to the Atlantic ocean... though this is conjecture.

The big question then is: did these intrepid explorers also find their way to the southern tip of Africa, round Cape Agulhas, and up the west coast to the Niger delta and beyond?

Though the answer to this is almost certainly 'Yes', it is complicated by the fact that there seems to have been a wave of exploration up the west coast at a much earlier date than the main focus of this paper. Without going into too much detail here, this earlier period of exploration can best be exemplified by the apparent arrival of bananas – Indonesian fruits – in the Cameroons by the 5th century BCE¹⁷⁰; by the appearance of the Southeast Asian disease, *elephantiasis*,¹⁷¹ in the Nok region¹⁷² of Nigeria at about the same time; and the strong possibility – based on the locations and dates of 5th/6th century BCE workings near the coast of Gabon¹⁷³, and near tributaries of the Niger/Benue complex in Nigeria (e.g. at Taruga near Nok) – that iron smelting technology may have also been introduced from Southeast Asia. We have already seen how Indonesian spices (cloves), came to Asia minor thousands of years ago; and how Middle Eastern animals (sheep or goats) were introduced to the Indonesian islands at an even earlier date. Early explorations of West Africa may have been part of the same wave of maritime activity – the western arm of the more easily definable exploration of the Pacific in the east.



When the Chinese monk I Tsing visited Srivijaya in AD 671 he wrote of an international community of a thousand Buddhist monks studying at Palembang.¹⁷⁴ From the 7th to the 10th century, noted the author Kenneth Hall, the royal capital 'became a major pilgrimage centre and the Srivijaya ruler and his representative became participants in Buddhism's international intellectual dialogue...'.¹⁷⁵ Other writers have expanded on this theme: O.W. Wolters noted that Srivijaya was recommended as a centre for Buddhist students before they went on to India.¹⁷⁶ And G. Coedès noted that 'Only one thing is certain: the coming of the Sailendras (late 8th c.Srivijaya) was marked by an abrupt rise of Mahayana Buddhism'.¹⁷⁷ Furthermore: '... an inscription from Nakhon Si Thammarat attests that the Srivijaya kings were enthusiastic sponsors of Mahayana

¹⁶⁹ Sinclair 1982.

¹⁷⁰ Vrydaghs *et al.* 1996; De Langhe, personal communication.

¹⁷¹ Laurence 1968 and personal communication.

¹⁷² Fagg 1977.

¹⁷³ Vansina 1990.

¹⁷⁴ Hall 1985: 37.

¹⁷⁵ Hall 1985: 101.

¹⁷⁶ Wolters 1967: 253.

¹⁷⁷ Coedès 1963: 89.

Buddhism and did not confine their patronage to Sumatra.¹⁷⁸ ... suggesting that if voyages of exploration and commerce were taking place, they went hand in hand with the proselytizing of Mahayana doctrine.

Mahayana Buddhists, viewed commerce and travel more positively than either the Hinayana sect, or Hindus whose Brahmins harboured serious misgivings about sailing far from land. It is thought Mahayana Buddhist monks may even have travelled to Egypt with Alexander the Great more than two thousand years ago, possibly influencing the foundation of such sects as the *Therapeuts*, the *Essenes*, and the *Nazarenes* of Biblical note¹⁷⁹. With Mahayana Buddhism of such importance in Srivijaya, we are constrained to ask:- Did Southeast Asian evangelists take Mahayana Buddhism from the Indonesian islands, to sub-Saharan Africa? ... and in what ways are they likely to have left their mark?

Bearing in mind that any Indonesian influence in Africa, East or West, would have come from the Mahayana Buddhist state of Srivijaya, we should keep our eyes sharpened for any evidence of Buddhist influence there might be from that area. Though proof may be illusive, it is surprising how many pointers can be observed.

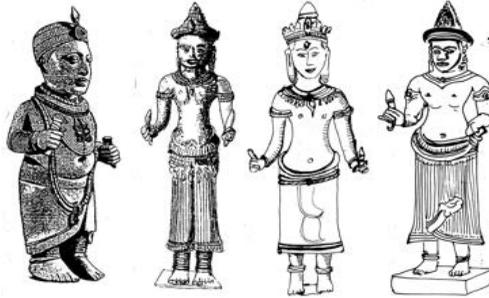


Fig. 4.1. Bronze of Oni of Ife Khmer Uma figurine (Jones): With another 12th c. Khmer Uma and Pratanparamita

In his book *Africa and Indonesia*, A.M. Jones compared the 12th c. Nigerian Oni figure on the left (above) with a roughly contemporary Khmer sculpture, when Mahayana Buddhism was still *de rigueur* in Cambodia. A connection between Khmer and Srivijayan art need not come as a surprise. The vassalage of Cambodia to Java in the Sailendra period was discussed by G. Coedès¹⁸⁰ who illustrated this relationship with an incident in Cambodia, related by the Arab author Abu Zayd Hasan, at the end of the 9th century. When the Khmer king's secret demand for the head of the Srivijayan Maharaja became public knowledge, the plot was foiled, and '... From that moment the Khmer kings, every morning upon rising, turned their faces in the direction of the country of Zabag (Java), bowed down to the ground, and

¹⁷⁸ Hall 1985: 288 n 79.

¹⁷⁹ Kersten 1994.

¹⁸⁰ Coedès 1963: 93.

humbled themselves before the maharaja to render him homage’.

There are many obvious similarities between the figures that Jones showed, and the other two (above): beaded collars with pectoral insignia; hands in like positions holding similar emblems; ‘skirts’ wrapped around their bodies; and bangles on their ankles. But there may be a problem! Jones’ Khmer sculpture probably represents Uma, the Indian Mother Goddess who was Shiva’s consort; or possibly even Prātnaparamita, one of the ‘mothers of all Buddha’s’. Though both would be holding a lotus in their hands, their headdresses would be adorned with a miniature Buddha, not a lotus bud. Compounding the problem, Uma, apparently, is occasionally confused with the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (‘The Lord who Looks Down’) – sometimes known as Padmapani (‘The Holder of the Lotus’) who embodied the compassion of all Buddhas, and who plays a more important role in Mahayana thought than any other Bodhisattva¹⁸¹. Confusingly, Avalokitesvara was sometimes depicted as a female. Even if the Ife figure is male and the Khmer figures are female the fundamental similarities ... the identical mode of manufacture; and the coincidental dates of the Ife and the Southeast Asian figures, are remarkable.

The use of bronze images in worship was common among Buddhists in mediaeval times. Though some of the finest bronze sculptures came from southern India, the great centres of bronze casting flourished under the patronage of the Pala kings, a Mahayana Buddhist dynasty from Bengal, who ruled a vast territory from AD 750 to 1174 and had close ties with the Mahayana Buddhists of Srivijaya. ‘Pala bronzes are so numerous’, wrote A.L. Basham¹⁸², ‘that there is no doubt that they were mass-produced.’ They were exported to South East Asia, where numerous images of Avalokitesvara, six or seven inches high, have been found – and are still being found – in 8th and 9th century contexts in Java and Sumatra. ‘Nearly all Indian bronzes were made by the ‘cire-perdue’ process’ continued Basham. ‘The figure was first designed in wax, which was covered with a coating of clay. The whole was then heated, so that the wax melted away, leaving a mould to be filled with molten metal.’ As the *cire perdue* bronze casting technology responsible for the 8th/9th c. Igbo Ukwu art works, was virtually certain to have been introduced to Nigeria from elsewhere, and as there is no evidence of contacts between the Niger delta region and North Africa or any of the Mediterranean countries, at that time, then – taking into account all the other factors that point to Indonesian legacies in western Africa¹⁸³, Buddhist voyagers from Southeast Asia are by far the most likely people to have introduced the techniques of bronze casting to West Africa.



In 2010 Wim van Binsbergen published an article on his website¹⁸⁴ exploring the possibility of Buddhist influences that covered numerous fields: kingship; musical instruments; ceramics; divination; ecstatic cults; boat cults; the use of sunshades; the lotus

¹⁸¹ Basham 1954: 276-277.

¹⁸² Basham, 1954: 374/5.

¹⁸³ Dick-Read 2005.

¹⁸⁴ van Binsbergen 2010 / 2012, meanwhile published as 2017.

flower; cowrie shells; bells; and the name 'Buddha'. Regarding the latter were figures he encountered throughout Southern West Africa, that he refers to as the Mbedzi/Mbutsi figure. 'In Southern Africa the name Mbedzi appears as the widespread honorific title of cult leaders, as the name of a clan with connotations of sacredness and the colour white ... I proposed (in 2003) that the reference is in the first place to Buddha, who in some East and South Asian contexts is referred to as *Butsi*, which in Bantu-speaking mouth would easily become Mbutzi'.¹⁸⁵

A page or two earlier Van Binsbergen recalled the first ecstatic cult that he studied in South Central Africa: 'Its founder, Shimbinga,' he said, 'hailed from Angola and propagated the veneration of the white waterlily, in other words of the lotus.'¹⁸⁶ Van Binsbergen linked this, maybe a bit shakily, with White Lotus cults in East Asia. But whether right or wrong, the eight-petalled lotus possibly features in other ways in West Africa, notably in the headdresses of some of the Ife sculptures. The figures wear tiered cloth caps with *aigrettes* rising in the front in the form of what appear to be lotus buds (in Buddhism a closed blossom signifies the *potential* for enlightenment while an open flower signifies *full* enlightenment).

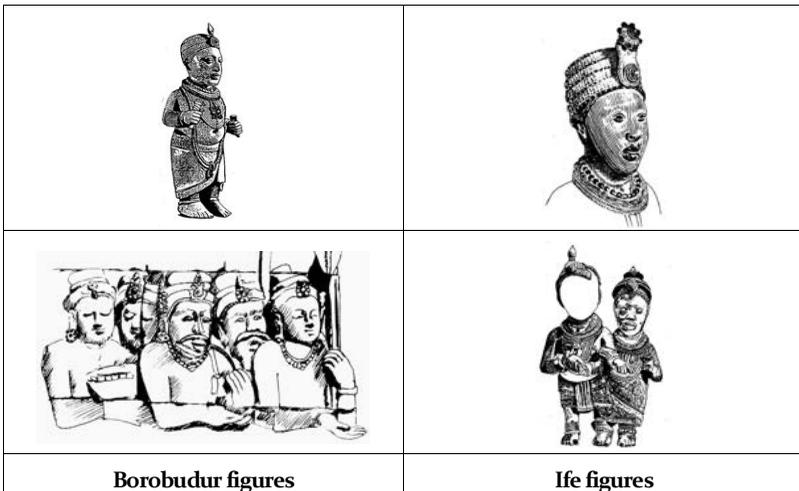


Fig. 4.2. A comparison of Borobudur figures from Java, Indonesia, and Ife figures from West Africa

The second figure from the left (above) is a mid-16th century Ife sculpture of an Oni wearing a unique, and enigmatic, plume on his headdress. These *aigrettes* have been

¹⁸⁵ van Binsbergen 2010 / 2012 / 2017: 44.

¹⁸⁶ van Binsbergen 2010 / 2012 / 2017: 41

interpreted as eight-petalled lotuses similar to many of those on the Borobudur friezes (centre, above): but this one could be seen as a wheel rather than a flower. We might conjecture that it represents the eight-spoked Dhama Wheel which symbolizes the turning of the Buddhist wheel of truth. But either as either Dhama wheel or Lotus flower it has a strong Buddhist aura.

In the Buddhist religion there are eight auspicious symbols revealing the progress along the path to enlightenment. The symbols (below) are: 1) The Victory Banner: Representing a victorious battle. 2) The Umbrella: Signifying Honour and Respect. 3) The Conch Shell: Representing the thoughts of the Buddha. 4) The Dharma Wheel: Representing knowledge. 5) The Knot of Eternity: Representing harmony. 6) The Vase: Representing inexhaustible treasure and wealth. 7) The Fish (Pair): Representing conjugal happiness and freedom. 8) The Lotus: Representing purity and enlightenment.

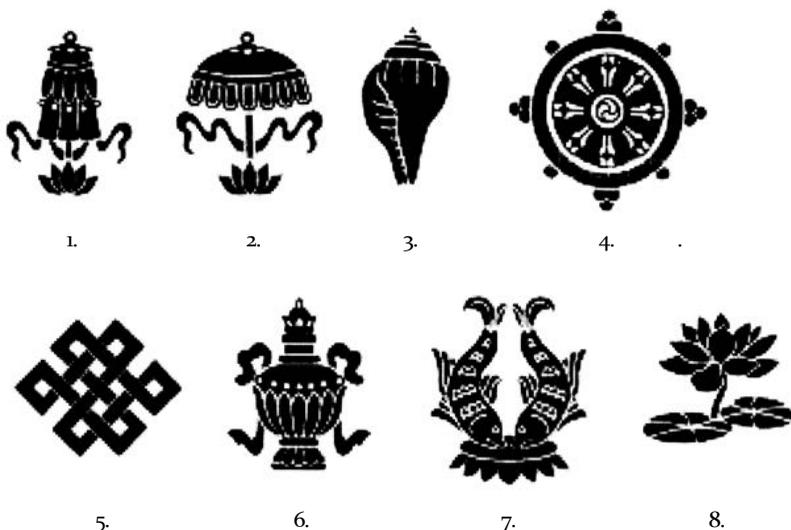


Fig. 4.3. Eight auspicious Buddhist symbols

Though there is always a possibility that some of these occur in Nigerian classical art by coincidence, it is noteworthy that all can be found in the cultures of Igbo Ukwu, Ife, or Benin. Numbers (4) and (8) – the Dharma wheel and the Lotus flower - have been mentioned above. Number (3), the Conch Shell, is an unusual feature of the bronzes found at Igbo Ukwu. In the Buddhist world it is decorated with ornate patterns and is topped with a bright bead, which is to represent good energy. One could conjecture that the lion atop the Igbo conch (below) had the same symbolic value. Number (6), the Vase (protectively bound by cord in the remarkable casting from Igbo Ukwu) is symbolic of inexhaustible treasure, and also the womb. Number (7), the Fish; or more pre-

cisely the Pairs of Fish that represent conjugal happiness, freedom and peace. The Pitt Rivers Museum website has this to say of fishes in Nigerian Court Art: 'There are many types of fish in Benin art. The mudfish is a symbol of peace, prosperity, and fertility.' In Nigeria fish appear in different contexts, but just as in Buddhist symbolism, they seem to be always in pairs. They are found on plaques; as the seat of stools; as the legs and feet of sculptures of the Oba; and in other forms. They were symbols of the king's divinity as well as peace.

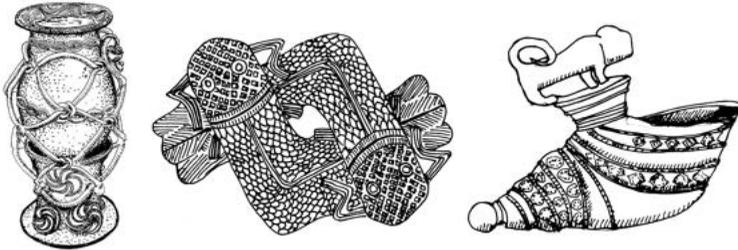


Fig. 4.4. Igbo Ukwu: Bound jar. Benin: top of Mudfish stool. Igbo Ukwu: Conch shell (with lion)

Concerning royal sunshades, there is a widely held hypothesis that their usage came to West Africa from Egypt. However, writing about Buddhist influences in Africa, Professor Wim van Binsbergen noted that: '...in view of their overwhelming prevalence in South and Southeast Asian royal and religious contexts, an equally plausible hypothesis is that they have reached West Africa as a cultural influence from Asia, via Cape of Good Hope.'¹⁸⁷ In this the professor received support from an American scholar, Stewart Gordon who, in an article entitled 'In the Shade of Royal Umbrellas'¹⁸⁸ wrote that ... 'In sub-Saharan West Africa, the royal umbrella frequently appears in both Islamic and non-Islamic kingdoms.' He accepted the possibility that the umbrella might have come south from Islamic Tunisia and Morocco, along the Saharan trade routes; and that it could even have been an 'indigenous invention'. But he finished by pointing out that: 'Sometime around 800 CE, the royal umbrella began to flourish in Southeast Asia, adopted by kings in Cambodia, Laos, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam and Java. The custom may have come from India or China, as both countries strongly influenced the region at the time.'

The last of the Buddhist symbols that appears repeatedly in Nigeria is the *shrivatsa*, the 'endless knot' which symbolizes how everything is interrelated and only exists as part of a web of *karma*. Used as a decorative motif on many objects in West Africa, it appears frequently, for instance, on the edge of the Ifa divining board, the *opon ifa*.

¹⁸⁷ van Binsbergen 2010 / 2012 / 2017: 49.

¹⁸⁸ Gordon 2011: 8-15.

Referring to divination, J.A. Waddell wrote in the Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics early in the 20th century¹⁸⁹:- 'Among 'Northern' or Mahayana Buddhists, divination is almost universal.' They used a system mainly similar to the Chinese method, I Ching: whereby ...'In arriving at the calculations an important part is played by the famous mystic Chinese trigram 'the eight Kwa' on which the mysterious 'Book of Changes', Yi-king, with its 64 hexagrams is built up.'

It raises the question:- If there was substantial Buddhist influence in the lower Niger region, could Ifa Divination have been derived *directly* from Indonesians of the Buddhist faith and not be, as some would have us believe, an introduction by Arab intermediaries?

Whereas there is no doubt about the Nigerian *Atimi* having been introduced by Arabs, there is considerable doubt about the far more complex *Ifa* which has apparent links with systems as far flung as the Caroline Islands in the Pacific.¹⁹⁰

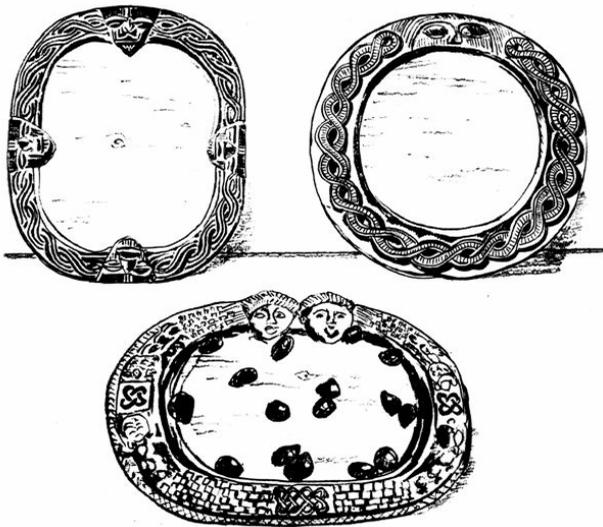


Fig. 4.5. Ipon-Ifa with endless knot designs



Borobudur was a Buddhist creation of the 8th/9th century. The most dramatic depictions of boats on any ancient Indonesian building were those on the walls of Borobudur in

¹⁸⁹ Waddell 1908-1927: 786-787.

¹⁹⁰ Lessa 1959. EDITOR'S NOTE. To propose Indonesian, rather than West Asian Islamic, antecedents for Ifa, while in line with the general Sunda influence upon West Africa, insufficiently takes into account the very extensive evidence of Arabic *'ilm al-ruml* geomantic divination, documented for Iraq toward the late 1st mill. CE; see above, pp. 65f.

which sailed the merchant Maitrakanyaka, son of a merchant-traveller from Benares, the great Indian centre of brasswork.¹⁹¹ Maitrakanyaka visited several romantic, far away, places that may appear to be mythical, but were surely based on reality. We cannot know where he and his men actually went; but as the seas of Southeast Asia and China were well known by then, the suspicion must be that it was a more distant destination that merited so much contemporary attention. With Srivijaya at the height of its power, Africa would make sense.

Maitrakanyaka's earliest business, so his story goes, was that of a perfume dealer: and where better to go for some of the essential ingredients of perfumes, ambergris and frankincense, than the east coast of Africa? Later he became a goldsmith – and the ancient goldfields of 'Zimbabwe' would surely have been of interest to him. Who knows, but perhaps for an intrepid voyager, his last destination, the mythical city of Ayomaya, was round the southern tip of Africa and up to the Niger delta where he was able to impart the metallurgical knowledge handed down from his father before ultimately meeting his fate and becoming a renowned Bodhisattva.

Many mysteries are yet to be solved; but it appears that influences in Africa from Buddhist Indonesia were once far greater than has hitherto been accepted.

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¹⁹¹ Valahassa Jataka, retold in Krom 1927. Cf. Miksic 1990: 91.

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Chapter 5

Resurrecting Diffusion

From Africa to Eurasia and Beyond

by Michael Rowlands

5.1. Introduction

In *The Theft of History* (2012) and *The Eurasian Miracle* (2010) Jack Goody has summarised his idea of alternations in centres of wealth accumulation and development, made over forty years or more of writing against ethnocentrism in World History. For what has become a familiar argument, Goody has maintained that throughout all the major societies of Eurasia, urban cultures represented a continuous development from the Bronze Age (Goody 2010). The 'big break' for Goody was from 'Neolithic Society' which he characterised in terms of agriculture (the hoe versus the plough, absence of irrigation, the role of intensification of food crops etc) and as a version of Lévi-Strauss 'logic of the concrete' - *i.e.* not two different stages in the human mind nor evolutionary stages (for Lévi Strauss we 'moderns' have elements of a logic of the concrete) but a different way of investigating the nature of the material world. The Bronze Age with the Urban Revolution (Childe 1939), literacy, trade and exchange, mercantilism, early state formation for Goody, meant the break through to logical rational thought. Long term history is then a matter of continuity from the Bronze Age to Modernity with a focus on alternation. Instead of privileging a Eurocentric continuity from Classical Antiquity to Feudalism and Capitalism in Europe, Goody argues for the presence of competing centres

of accumulation through out the prehistory of Eurasia.

Goody's writing is one element at present in a significant literature on global history that would agree on the overcoming of Eurocentrism or as Philippe Beaujard has maintained giving a crucial role to the non European world in the history of humanity (Beaujard 2009: 7). In his case this is not just about a focus on a wider Eurasia, but also Africa, the Indian Ocean and long-term interactions between continents as much as within them, and as much a focus on oceans as centres of interaction, as on land masses. He shares with a longer tradition of stressing interactionism to counter Huntington's *Clash of Civilisations* (1996) thesis 'During the greater part of the history of humanity, contacts between civilisations have been intermittent or non-existent'.

Continuity in the long term has also been emphasised by several global history writers – taking up the theme of 'capitalism' or 'globalisation' being around for 5000 years (Frank & Gills 1993). Goody's adoption from Gordon Childe of a focus on urbanism, writing, transport and trade as organised mercantilism, state and empire formation have all been adhered to in one form or another as central to understanding the dynamics of interaction and their mutual development over the long term. Queries about the nature of the social units involved and whether another ethnocentrism of the state as society hasn't also crept in have been made by several authors – (cf., e.g. Bentley 1998) and in line with more general writings on trans-nationalism and trans-culturalism (cf. Gupta & Ferguson 1992, 1997a, 1997b) a more rhizomic perspective exploring connectivity and flows of persons and things has come to dominate. However issues of centralisation and hierarchy, cosmological centring and nature of state and empires involved focus attention on long distance trade as organised mercantile operations on which long term accumulation of capital can be said to be based.

Of course this means that areas that don't display these urbanised 'civilisational' attributes tend to be marginalised. Africa is one of these massive lacunae. It is ironic that Goody's own anthropological speciality should be Africa and yet his general approach is to define it as 'other' to the main Bronze Age civilisations of Eurasia and their long term development. Within his schema, he attributes this historical marginality to 'technological features' related in particular to the control of wealth in people rather than things leading to inertia in acceptance of innovations or, as in the case of iron, it being developed within a limited and mainly magico-religious context. Africa for Goody remains 'firmly placed in the Neolithic, and not the Bronze Age' (Goody 2010: 45). I accept he doesn't mean this as evolutionary stage but more in Lévi Strauss's sense of the Neolithic as embedded in a 'science of the concrete' but still the bias is to leave it out of the equation of global history because it doesn't fit a more rational political economy view of what 'happened in history'.

It is somewhat ironic that much the same could be said of Europe in prehistory. Still to the present day, the idea of a politically unified Europe remains highly problematic. So Africa is not alone in not having histories of indigenous urbanism, literacy, states and empires on which a long term global history can be based. But it does provide us with an alternative pattern – not of deficiency – but how things have actually worked out that may suggest that the whole focus on Bronze Age urbanism/civilisations and continuities is actually quite misplaced.

5.2. The unity of Africa

So what makes Africa so different?. The historical experience of EuroAsian ‘empires’ did much to encourage thought on the ideal unity of empire and civilisation. The heritage of the Roman Empire remains a Western nostalgia that attempts to re-achieve unity (e.g. the ideal unity of *imperium* and *terra orbis*) which the Holy Roman Empire; the time of Napoleon and the idea of a thousand years of Hitler’s *Third Reich* have done little to dispel either as threat or aspiration. The concept of Empire, based on the writings of the European experience, emphasises unity as achieved ideologically through the imposition of some kind of universality even though the reality of the form this might took was adapted to the historical forces that dragged them into ever increasing differentiation. Max Weber’s ordering of political order around the concept of sovereignty remains an essential issue for recognising different philosophical notions of empire as a community of shared universality (e.g. after the conquests of Alexander the Great, the Stoic philosophers argued that Greek civilisation had a single mission, to create a shared *oikoumene* characterised by universal reason or it was believed in the Roman Empire that conquest would lead to the union of all civilised peoples witnessed in the standard architecture of the forum in all Roman colonial cities symbolising the peace, order and justice promised to all citizens cf. Folz 1969) By idealising the achievement of universality it was assumed that the fusing of empire with civilisation could be achieved.

I would argue that these ‘Western’ debates on Empire and Civilisation and their longue duree have been positively harmful for understanding the long term prehistory of Africa and need to be set aside. The most obvious instance of this harm is the thesis on African Civilisation associated mostly with pan Africanist writers, in particular Cheikh Anta Diop (1977). His remains a landmark work in restoring a sense of historical consciousness based on historical and linguistic factors and rejection of the Hamitic hypothesis. Yet we remain tied to a universal and ultimately Eurocentric concept of civilisation for Africa. Thabo Mbeki’s attempt in post Apartheid South Africa to revive this ideal as an African renaissance is perhaps no longer very influential, yet the influence this has had on developing a consciousness of Africa as unity (particularly outside ‘Africa’) is undeniable and of considerable importance. As the following quote shows from his famous ‘I am an African speech’ at his inauguration in 1998 as President of South Africa, the ideal is that Africa once had and will have again a monumental civilisation.

“To perpetuate their imperial domination over the people of Africa, the colonisers sought to enslave the African mind and to destroy the African soul. They sought to oblige us to accept that as Africans we had contributed nothing to human civilisation except as beasts of burden ... The beginning of the rebirth of our continent must be our own rediscovery of our soul, captured and made permanently available in the great works of creativity represented by the pyramids of Egypt, the stone buildings of Axum and the ruins of Carthage and Great Zimbabwe.” (Mbeki 1998: 299)

Mbeki’s call for a cultural renaissance in Africa was meant to revitalise the pan-africanism of Senghor, Nyerere and Nkrumah, in particular their belief that until a sense of cultural unity and identity was established, political change in and economic development of Africa would remain still-born. The essence of African authenticity would be

revived, they argued, only by a return to ancestral heritage to pursue the goal of economic modernity without the alienating materialism of the West. The past would unlock the door to the future but which past had to be very carefully selected.

What survives is the perception that if Africa has a distinctive civilisation or universality then it exists without a history of empire formation or the ideal fusion of *imperium* and *orbis terrarum*. Archaeologists, concerned with the development of 'complex societies', have been most explicit about this in describing the pre-colonial African context. Taking up an argument made by Carole Crumley who questioned (1987) whether hierarchy was a necessary feature of densely populated, urban settlements (in Early Iron Age Europe), the Macintoshes (2005, cf. 1980) excavating at Djenné Jené in Mali, a major medieval trans Saharan trading city in the Niger delta, described the 'Empire of Mali' as heterarchical rather than hierarchical *i.e.* a system 'where each element in a social system is either unranked relative to other elements or possess the potential for being ranked in a number of different ways' (cf. Stahl 2005: 335). The consideration that economic complexity may not be linked to political or religious hierarchies to have true 'complex societies' means that large population aggregates such as found in the 'Empire of Mali' had no detectable centre; settlement was a wide spread of coeval units of similar form, with evidence of increasing scale and of economic specialisation and a lack of obvious stratification or hierarchy. Dumont (1970), writing on caste hierarchy in India, would not find this surprising and for that matter it rings a lot of bells when you consider K.C. Chang's and others description of coeval settlement in Early Bronze Age Shang China although centralisation of power was to become the dominant feature of their political landscapes for later periods (cf. von Falkenhausen 2006). Africa, by comparison, is an enigma; a continent without a history of empire formation (except for the perhaps misnamed earlier cited example from Medieval Mali influenced by the Trans Saharan trade) and a civilisation lacking overall political centralisation and vertical forms of transcendence. If so, then not only may it be the necessary contrasting case to the universal argument derived from Europe but it may also help us create another theoretical language for understanding large spreads of apparent cultural similarity.

Since this needs to be specified in more empirical terms I will continue in a Jack-Goody sort of way and concentrate on food both as cuisine and the implications this has for perceptions of the body to suggest the existence of a cultural spread (in Maussian sense of civilisation cf. Schlanger 2006) that is distinctly African.

5.3. Culinary cosmologies

Summarising our current understanding of the beginnings of food domestication, a comparison across the Euroasian landmass to Africa reveals some clear patterns and boundaries. There are two areas in North Central Saharan Africa and in NE China and Japan where pottery develops much earlier than plant domestication, to create a boiling/steaming cooking regime producing soft paste foods from wild millets/barley and wild rice.

By the early first millennium BCE, we can detect a long-term cosmological unity in sub-Saharan Africa prior to the migration of Bantu speakers to much of Central–Eastern and Southern Africa. There are various archaeological indicators or traces for the beginnings of this distinctive unity. One of the earliest is a culinary practice based on boiling and fermenting wild cereals (millets/sorghum) and root crops to create the now widespread sub-saharan food style of porridge and beer (*cf.* Haaland 2007). Some of the earliest pottery anywhere in the world is found on southern and central Saharan sites that date from the 10th-9th millennia BCE (Fuller 2012). The pottery forms are round bodied types, of varying sizes and associated with the boiling and fermenting of aquatic resources, wild foods and vegetables. Sutton suggests that pottery in Africa was first developed as part of a dependence on a combination of fish stew and plant resources and this was independent of later domestication of cereals. However, later Bantu vocabulary relates the preparation of stiff porridge with the main component of meals in large parts of sub-Saharan Africa, and uses terms that differ from those used for the other widespread technique in West Africa, of pounding boiled starch foods into a similar kind of sticky consistency. The preparation of flour porridges from wild plants seems to have preceded by millennia the domestication of cereals, in particular the millets, and the culinary technique for making beer and porridge from wild resources was instrumental in the actual domestication process. Haaland summarises the evidence to say that the cooking and fermenting of grains goes back to the beginnings of pottery production in the 10th millennia BP and the combination into a porridge/beer complex involving domesticates of millets and sorghum is in evidence by the 6th millennium BP (Haaland 1992, 1996, 1999; Fuller 2013). What Haaland, Fuller and others describe as the beer and porridge complex being characteristic of all sub-Saharan African food systems, can be compared to food systems based on the roasting of meat and bread baking stretching from North Africa to the Middle East and North East India. Depending on grinding and baking technologies, bread and roasted meat food systems are linked to clay ovens as central features of 'house cultures' that can also be extended back, before first plant and animal domestication, into the Palaeolithic (Fuller & Rowlands 2009, 2011). Revealing in this context, is the association of meat roasting procedures with feasting and signalling the closeness of the relationship between kings and gods (for cuneiform sources on roasting for the Gods, see Bottéro 2004).

It is quite feasible to see long term continuities in culinary practice in terms of wider social and cosmological beliefs associated with the food complex. Culinary knowledge in much of sub Saharan Africa today is inseparable from cosmological imperatives that drive the nature of commensality. Haaland draws on a range of African ethnography, to conclude that in much of sub Saharan Africa the beer /porridge food complex is widely associated with expressions of social solidarity. In particular the beer pot and the food pot relate to the value of sharing in African food systems. The contrast with the roasting traditions of Western Asia that emphasise commensality of a limited group of initiates with the gods, lies in the stress on boiling and steaming (both of animal and plant foods) as a canonical mode of ritual commensality in which all share. The relation of feeding, in particular of mother-child, is related to the material metaphor of pots identified with the maternal breast and the white milky substance of millet and sorghum is

again widely metaphorically associated with breast milk (Douny 2011). Haaland calls these material metaphors 'family resemblances' and a number of authors have used more contemporary ethnographic sources to characterise a widespread common material metaphor of container /body /substance in both West and East Africa (e.g. Collett 1993; Douny 2011; Warnier 1993, 2007). Starting from a focus on culinary practice, then, it can be argued that a single cosmological unity extends throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Practices of pounding and grinding and the mixing of flour/water with fermentation and cooking extend to a much wider embodied cosmology of feeding/procreation and transmission of body substances.

5.4. Long-term flows and connectivities

Much attention has been focused on the river systems of the Nile Valley and Mesopotamia to explain the development of urbanism and early state formation. But if we look at the spread of food systems over the millennia before the late 3rd millennium Bronze Age 'civilisations', a very different pattern of interaction emerges. For example, the region extending from the Horn of Africa to the Arabian Sea, by the 6th-5th millennia BCE, shows a different and complex pattern of 'traditions' in pottery and material culture complementing the more well known spread of Ubaid culture in Mesopotamia (fig). Fuller and Boivin provides us with a more dynamic picture of the Indian Ocean in prehistory in which links were created between East Africa, Arabia, South Asia and South East Asia. Beginning in the Neolithic with the obsidian trade from Ethiopia to Yemen, the North Western part of the Indian ocean is by the 4th millennium the source of incense and other goods for the temple economies of Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. When Queen Hatshepsut of Egypt sent a 'diplomatic' expedition in the 12th century BC in search of incense and other exotica from the land of Punt, this was no doubt based on contacts that had been established from south to north over several millennia. Instead of organised mercantile/cum military trading expeditions, however, the flows of goods seem to have been in the hands of coastal fishing/foraging peoples from the Arabian Sea in contact with hunter-gatherer populations on the west coast of India.

What has been known for many years, is the spread of major domesticated crops from Africa to the drier regions of Central India came through the same coastal trading routes of the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. Sorghum, pearl millet and finger millet spread from Africa to central India and broomcorn millet originating in China c 2200BC had reached East Africa by 1700 BC (cf. Fuller and Boivin 2011). Zebu cattle moved from India to east Africa also by the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC. The domesticated millets originating in West Africa were transmitted west to east along the Sahelian corridors to become available on the N E African coasts to be used as food for the fishing/sailing crews of the boats going to the Red Sea and the Myakka coast. The connections from West Africa to India by the early 2nd millennium BC were therefore already established many centuries before this time. None of these movements involved Bronze Age urban centres. In fact the evidence now refutes previous assumptions about these

flows of primarily ritual substances and foods being the product of long distance trade between the urban centres of Mesopotamia and the late Harappa Civilisations. None of the Bronze Age centres of Egypt or Mesopotamia were involved nor did they have access to the culinary-cum-ritual traditions of Africa and the Indian ocean, instead remaining within the baking of bread and roasting meat traditions of Western Asia.

What is also clear is that the aims of the Indian Ocean trade and movements of people, boats and goods was not access to these foods per se. The seeds of these early domesticated cereals and pulses simply accompanied the boats as ship-board food and were opportunistically taken up as cultivable crops in different locations. The trade on which these movements were based depended it seems instead on the kind of ritual substances that later became more well known in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia as vital substances to feed the deities and provision the ritual banquets of city gods and the staff of temples/palaces of Bronze Age urban centres. The Arabian Sea corridor was in some way the precursor of the later pepper trade and spice trade of Classical and Medieval periods (Boivin & Fuller 2009). An early trace of the scale of the interaction and demand for spices, is the finding of black peppercorns used to fragrance the nostrils of the deceased Ramesses II (c 1200 BC) (Boivin & Fuller 2009) By the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC, the links between Africa, the Gulf region and India are limited to the Arabian Sea and appear to be in the hands of small coastal fishing groups and hunter gather populations on the coast of West India. But in the next millennia more systematic links are made throughout the Indian Ocean involving more direct sea travel, which is also the period into the 1st millennium when SE Asian cultivars are brought to India and subsequently to the moist tropical zones of central and west Africa (*i.e.* bananas, taro and larger yams). Archaeological evidence of wood charcoals in south India has produced a few specimens of mango and probably citrus as well, that had derived from northern South East Asia by 1400-1300 BC

In a World Systems perspective – these interactions and trade routes between Africa, the Gulf Region and India by end of 3rd or early 2nd millennium BC would be seen as either periphery or semi periphery to the urban centres of Mesopotamia and Egypt. But this seems to be the wrong perspective. There is increasing evidence of the independence of these networks –in origin their being no prior involvement in trade with the urban Bronze Age centres and it is the military expeditions of the latter that finally lead to the expansion of state and empire attempts to control these source regions of vital substances for feeding gods and other rituals. Although obviously different in scale, attempts were made, rather like later Portuguese and Dutch/English/French interventions in the Indian ocean trade, to use force to break into already established and historically well-developed small scale 'neolithic' community based trading networks. But as others have speculated – it requires some other perspective to know why what appears to be long distance exchanges between small scale agro- pastoral societies in the African Sahel linked to fishing/ seafaring communities on the Arabian Sea coasts and Indian coasts should encourage commitment to long distance movements and transport of probably high value exotic items outside of any complex urban based mercantile systems.

If we look at the Africa to Indian Ocean pattern in 3rd/2nd millennia BC in a wider Eurasian context, we can see that this situation of peripheral autonomy is not unique. Central Asian Steppe region extending to the Caucasus in the Early Bronze Age has now been reinterpreted in terms of autonomous development of bronze metalworking, the domesticated horse, wheeled transport (in particular chariots), and the whole question of relations between Mesopotamia and China to central Asia in terms of transmission of metallurgy and its links to the development of the Silk Road (cf. Wilkinson 2014). This suggests a parallel situation for Central Asia to that found for sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian Ocean – *i.e.* both as a matter of their autonomous development and that they do not depend for their development on some peripheral status to the band of 'urban based' civilisations from China, Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean basin. In fact in terms of scale, there are parts of the trans Caucasia region, in particular the Tripolye cultures, that have extensive settlements with populations estimated to be 20,000 plus without monumental architecture or sacred centres. But their autonomy in terms of metals in particular, is a problem leading first to reorganisation of trade in the 'core regions' of Mesopotamia and Anatolia and later to the pattern of violence to intervene and attempts to control them by later urban based empires which already begins in the Bronze Age.

So what is different about these zones that have such significance for our understanding of large scale interactions and movements of people and things in prehistory and yet because of their apparent non-urban, civilizational status, have been relegated to the periphery in global histories?

5.5. Expansion and ritual integration

In the case of Africa, Jack Goody although he perhaps hasn't quite realised it, has given us part of the answer. In his comparison between Africa and Eurasia he has consistently compared the kinship/marriage patterns of Eurasia as based on endogamy rules to exogamy rules in Africa. In fact this is not so clear cut and he has been criticised but the broad difference he wants to make links marriage in particular to property and inheritance. His description for African kinship rules has been developed in much greater detail by specialists such as Francois Hérítier on Omaha kinship rules in Africa (Hérítier 1976, 1981, 1990; de Coppet 1970). Omaha kinship rules involves generational merging of terms in the patriline and a corresponding cross cousin marriage rule leading to alternative generation preference not to take wives from the same groups as one's mother. The logic is expansionist to create new alliances in alternate generations and in many ways has been seen as compatible with mobile agro-pastoral societies needing access to water and pasture in remote locations. In a Sahelian context – perhaps particularly with the climatic changes of the mid and late Holocene – mobility would be an imperative and as we know from other studies, mobility remains a key economic value in Africa today (cf. Nyamnjoh 2013). In the context of movement in the Sahel to the Sahara this would more likely take the form of oasis contacts with cattle as a major resource being herded

over long distances. An example of what this meant for connectivity was described by Herodotus for the Garamantes in the central Sahara from the 6th century BC who controlled Sahara trade networks from Carthage and the Roman world to either or both Bornu and the Niger Bend. The network was based on oasis trade and the Garamantes control of water and the provision of irrigated food stuffs for the caravan trade as recent excavations by Maitland has demonstrated (also cf. Liverani 1987, 2000a, 200b). However, before the Classical to Medieval north-south links of West Africa to the Mediterranean world came to dominate, it is the west to east mobility patterns linking the Western Sahel to Ethiopia and the coast of Horn of Africa that was emphasised. But this alignment that associates Africa with the Indian Ocean and beyond, is also the period for the beginning of the Bantu expansion which in its western phase –is primarily through the moist tropical coastal and forest zones of west to central Africa whilst the eastern phases, in terms of linguistic content of food terms, acquires the Sudanic cereal and beer complex as part of adapting to drier eastern and southern Africa.

Coming back to a repetitive theme of this paper – it is the isolationist bias towards Africa – that blinds us to the archaeological and linguistic evidence for expansion and what some anthropologists working on religion in Africa have been saying for some years about the parallel development of inter-regional exchange with the spread of divination and religious cults in eastern and southern Africa and their connections with south central India. To bridge the gap, Robert Thornton has recently summarised archaeological evidence for glass and bead production in Southern Africa which he links to parallel technologies an iconography in Southern India (see this volume). Van Binsbergen has also argued for parallels in ritual practices and iconography between healing and curing cults in Southern Africa (*bungoma*, specialists called *sangoma*) and the iconography of various gods in South Indian Hinduism (see this volume, ch. 7; and van Binsbergen 2017). Thornton argues for beads as significant aspects of divination/healing cults in both Southern Africa and India and dates their co-production in both areas to between 6th and 16th centuries CE. From Great Zimbabwe etc we know that Indian Ocean beads were found there in trade for metals, wood, gums, ivory and slaves but the pattern Thornton and Van Binsbergen describe is more than trade and involves a more ontological fusion based on long term mutual concerns and sharing of healing and curing practices. A recent study of an amorphous organic residue extracted from a 7th-early 8th century CE brass artefact from the trading port of Unguja Ukuu, Zanzibar showed that it was copal, a local East African aromatic (Crowther *et al.* 2014). The artefact was an incense burner and the early find of copal (which later rose to major importance in colonial period trade) indicates connections between East Africa and the Indian Ocean world had a much earlier role in the long distance incense trade

Recent work suggesting possible links between traditional healing practices in Southern Africa (*Bungoma* practised by *sangoma* or initiated healers) and trance and healing in South India imply more than trade but significant exchange of commonalities in healing knowledge perhaps starting at an early date c 600 CE to c 1600 CE after which the Indian Ocean connections were disrupted by the arrival of the Portuguese. Whilst it is know that sites like Great Zimbabwe and Mapungubwe were located in this period to supply ivory, metals, gum resins, woods and slaves to the Indian Ocean trade, this

seems to have been set within a wider sharing of ritual, healing and medicinal practices, witnessed in particular by the material objects associated with Ganesha and Hanuman having strong iconographic parallels with the material culture of Southern African *Bungoma* practises (in particular beads made of metal and glass, the 'weapons' (mace / spear / axe / knife) and the fly whisk). The evidence for parallels in ritual costume, iconography, regalia and healing techniques in both areas suggest a mutuality not dependent on a raw materials versus finished products kind of trade but rather the sharing of ritual knowledge maintained for a long period by the porosity of the boundaries separating and uniting them.

A more precise and more recent example of how healing and divination associations formed the basis for long distance exchanges in ritual knowledge and the organisation of the slave trade and later palm oil trade in S.E Nigeria and Southern Cameroon can be seen in a case from the Cross River area on the Nigeria/Cameroon border area (Röschenthaler 2004, 2005, 2006). A cosmological ecumene is established through the circulation and exchange of masquerades, dance, music and regalia associated with different village cults. As Röschenthaler explains, the knowledge associated with the costume and music is retained within the boundary of the cult area but objects and techniques can be acquired by other cults who will transform and modify them to suit their conditions. We can trace a string of these cult areas extending down through Cameroon, Gabon to the Congo basin and beyond, forming in very broad terms, the cult associations that Turner categorised as cults of affliction and life crisis cults in his Ndembu study (Turner 1968).

If we can detect a common pharmacon of material practices of healing and nurturing over such an extensive area from Africa to India and Island South East Asia we do so for a region that never was included in the 'origins of civilisation'. For a region extending from Oceania through ISEA to the Indian Ocean and Africa we have a struggle to apply the usual criteria of state formation, urbanism, and literacy before the impact of European colonialism. Nor should we attempt to do so because these are the wrong criteria. If we treat earlier discussion of food systems and their distribution as signs of wider networks and patterns of mobility of persons and things – then we maybe able to see that food, healing and curing are part of the same system. Moreover dispersal and alternatives are sources of power rather than centralisation and control. The creation of civilised/uncivilised worlds emerges therefore out of a common existing 'Neolithic' civilisation that extends over longer time periods and on a larger inter-regional scale. 'Expansion' of populations whether in the micro worlds of Egypt and Mesopotamia, or the expansions of Bantu and Austronesian speaking peoples in Africa and ISEA, are part of cultural spreads that give access to the most widespread means of ensuring life itself. It is only in certain circumstances of restricted access that conditions of violence contained within institutional frames of inclusion and exclusion, promote the state-urban worlds of 'complexity' that have for too long been isolated as the only circumstances in which 'civilisation' can be identified.

5.6. Conclusion

My main aim in the paper has been to complexify the nature of global histories that write within the idioms of civilisation, urbanism etc as the key variables on which understanding modern worlds has to be based. Clearly the scale involved with states and empires is significant but perhaps it is worth pointing to the fact that like industrialisation in Europe – urban civilisation from the Bronze Age may have developed as a contingency to some other concerns that were actually elsewhere and involved none of these attributes precisely because ‘elsewhere’ they had better control of nurturing the conditions of life.. For Goody ‘Africa remains ‘firmly placed in the Neolithic, and not the Bronze Age’ (2010: 45). By taking a wider civilisational perspective we suggest that Goody’s description of Africa (and more widely for the Indian Ocean and island South East Asia) has validity but not perhaps in terms of the consequences for a social evolution that implied the Bronze Age was the only true path to modernity. Instead the Eurasian miracle was itself based on a particular response to the wider neolithised world of which it was a part and which preceded it and surrounded it. The response lay in the particular circumstances of localities that were certainly beneficiaries of river valley systems where intensive agriculture could be developed to maintain high population densities. But it was the control and use of violence that was used by ‘early states’ to break into ‘neolithised’ worlds, appropriating substances and ritual knowledge on which their control of populations and conversion of them into peasantries depended. But, none of this was uniform and the idea that we are still with the Neolithic, maybe justified, in the sense that Levi-Strauss originally hoped for by locating a logic of the concrete in the modern.

5.7. References cited

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Chapter 6

The Idea of Africa in History

From Eurocentrism to World History

by Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch

6.1. Introduction

This paper intends to demonstrate, by the way of an historical overview of Africa's centrality from the beginnings of mankind, that all over successive historical globalisations, Africa South of the Sahara (we may roughly take it as a geographical subcontinent) was no more no less than other 'worlds' (Indian Ocean world, Mediterranean world, Far East Asia, Europe, etc.) at the centre of the other worlds. Europeans have built 'their' idea of Africa, which they believed and still believe they had 'discovered', while they were by large the last ones to do so. Africa and Africans developed a long history before Europeans interfered. Moreover, they played a prominent role at different stages of world globalization before Western intervention.

Geographically, Africa is located at the core of three worlds. Africa allowed them to be connected one with the other: the Mediterranean world (from Ancient times), the Indian Ocean World, and (quite later) the Atlantic world.

Therefore, from the beginning of Ancient history, Africa played a major worldwide role. Needless to remind that mankind began in Africa and diffused from Africa all over the world.

Africa was for long the major provider of gold, either to the Indian Ocean world (from Zimbabwe), as to the Mediterranean and European world (from western Sudan).

Africa was a major world provider of force of labour, sending slaves to the rest of the world, as well to the Muslim world, to India, as to the Americas.

With the industrial Revolution, Africa was a major provider of raw materials for British and French growing industrialisation.

Useless to remind that today, Africa is a leader in sources of energy (gas) and precious minerals again. South African gold renewed with the ancient gold streams, providing in the 20th century 60percent of the gold in the world (80percent of the western gold after the Soviet revolution)

The question is not so much to demonstrate it, which might (and should) be relatively well known, as to understand why these evidences were let aside, forgotten, or even denied. Of course we may (negatively) assert that others confiscated African gold, African men and African raw materials. But it may be as instructive to (positively) look at the process by which Africa afforded so many wealth and products without which other continents could not develop. Africa was necessary to world development and Africans were actors and unceasingly adapting partners to be studied as such, and not to be just reduced to passive victims (no more no less than others, for other reasons; plantations could not develop without planters, but also without slaves; industry could not develop without industrial discoveries and steam machines, but it could not produce without African raw materials).

Why was it denied only for Africa, which was just made a 'periphery' by the will of Western knowledge as early as European believed to have 'discovered' Africa? Let us rather say that Africans 'discovered' Europeans, long after they had already met Arabs, Indians, and even Chinese. Africa was not marginal to capitalism: like others, it was a major condition for world development, *i.e.* for the making of capitalism.

6.2. African History rediscovered

6.2.1. Forgotten Africa

History of Africa is very long, and has been too long ignored. The reason of it is known: Eurocentrism generated social sciences from the beginning of modern times, from the Enlightenment century, and above all from the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, Africanist or Asiatic knowledge, among which History and Ethnology, began to emerge at the time when political and cultural European supremacy culminated over the rest of the world. For a long, too long a period, the European observer's viewpoint was supposed to be universal. Only at the end of the 1970s this postulate began to be discussed by Indian and Palestinian researchers under the name of *subaltern studies*.

Beforehand, Africa, and first of all African geography became a topic to be studied precisely at the moment when European scientists elaborated social and human disciplines

(Wallerstein 1991, 1996).

During Antiquity, the Mediterranean world ignored Africa as a continent. South of Egypt, unknown or little known spaces were called either Nubia, or Ethiopia, or Libya. *Africa* appeared with Romans, who used the name only for Carthage and its hinterland (the senator who defeated Punic Carthago was nicknamed *Scipio Africanus*). Later, Arabs recuperated the name *Ifriqiya*. *Africa* was used for the whole continent only when, at the very end of the fifteenth century, Portuguese navigators sailed around the Cape, changing its name from Cape of Tempests to Cape of Good Hope (1498).

Modern Africa was borne from portulans and cartography. From the sixteenth century onwards, European writings described Africa, and built their idea of Africa, made from traders, missionaries, explorers, and any other kinds of travellers and slave traders' tales.

6.2.2. De-construction of African image

In the early 1980s, two books written by Congolese scientist Valentin Mudimbe deconstructed *Africanism* (Mudimbe 1988 & 1994). Surprisingly, these books were not translated in French, while Edward Said's deconstructing *Orientalism* was translated only two years after its English version was published (Said 1978).

Similarly, at the same time, with *Black Athena*, Martin Bernal wanted to deconstruct both Hellenism and Egyptology as, at least partly, European constructions. While Said's or Mudimbe's enterprises were well accepted, at least in the English speaking world, Bernal's books were globally rejected with endless controversies. Why? Because Said and Mudimbe dealt with non Western spaces, which were of little interest for most Western scholars, while Bernal frontally attacked white knowledge on supposed to be its Western cradles: Egypt, and Greece. Of course, he was often provocative, but he also proposed commonsense statements that were unfairly denied. Western scholars, implicitly or explicitly, made of the 'Greek miracle' an Indo-European production; they also thought of Egypt, studied from the eighteenth century onward, as 'mother' of western culture, excluding this eventuality for totally ignored sub-Saharan Africa. Besides, Bernal being a recognised specialist neither of Egypt nor of Greece, he dared to interconnect both worlds. Therefore, just being neutral, his linguistic speciality allowed him to compare and connect both Egyptian and Greek cultures, a comparison little made beforehand. This was an insolent assertion, similar to when, in France, Cheikh Anta Diop had proposed, 20 years before, Egyptian origins for sub-Saharan culture (Cheikh Anta Diop 1955). Wim van Binsbergen is right to state that many of Bernal's ideas are today confirmed by recent trends of knowledge. Like Said and Mudimbe, Bernal was a talented precursor whose contribution helped rejecting a Eurocentric vision of world history (van Binsbergen 2011; Bernal Vol. 1 & 2 1987*f.*).

Being myself a specialist of African history south of the Sahara, I focus my paper on this area. The question is: why did European scientists so long thought as if Africa, and especially African history, did not exist, while the sub-Saharan continent played such an important part from the very beginning of mankind? Why sub-Saharan Africa was, so long, marginalised, forgotten, and even rejected? (Coquery-Vidrovitch 2011).

6.2.3. A historical denial

This denial has a long history (Cohen 1980; Coquery-Vidrovitch 2003: 646-685). A negative image of Africa emerged when, on the Western side, the Atlantic slave trade began. Of course, Muslim Arabs developed other African slave trades, as well towards the Mediterranean Sea as to the Indian Ocean, at least from the ninth century onwards. But the Atlantic slave trade specifically connected blackness and slavery. From the seventeenth century, and above all from the eighteenth century, an Atlantic slave was only black, and all black people were thought of as slaves. In French, in the famous Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, negro [nègre] is synonymous with black slave.

At the turning point with the nineteenth century, when slavery was discussed by philosophers, and condemned by humanitarian thinkers, black people's inferiority became a racial target. Linne, then Buffon, proposed a 'scientific' differentiation between inferior races (the lowest one being black) and superior race (of course the white one). This paradigm was developed all over the nineteenth century, to become a 'scientific truth' in the last third of the century. While slavery disappeared in European colonies where slaves were progressively emancipated, this was a logical result of previous slave trading, useful to maintain black people's low social status. With the emerging 'colonial imperialism', all Western people, USA included, were convinced with the Africans' incapacity to develop by themselves. 'Racialism' developed stronger and stronger all over the century. One can read it in missionary and colonial literature: former travellers were curious and even admired the people they discovered. European writings became more and more severe. At the end of the century, most of them called for colonial conquest to suppress African slavery that their recent ancestors had so much contributed to develop. Out of a few hundreds of assimilated citizens, colonialism made of former slaves 'natives' (in French: *indigènes*), creating a legal status inferiority. In short, mere racism emerges, and remains very strong at least till the mid-twentieth century. Only in 1946, in French African colonies, so-called '*statut de l'indigénat*' was suppressed.

Western heritage is heavy. Western today opinions are fed with this cumulative anti-black, anti-African despise. Africans were pagan turned into slaves, then slaves turned into natives; today, in France, it resulted into a scandalous opposition between French supposed-to-be rooted in the country (the ultra right militant Le Pen nicknamed them 'de souche'), and French immigrants, especially either blacks coming from South of the Sahara or Muslim Arabs coming from Maghreb. This nationalistic movement finally resulted into a recent aberration: a dreamed concept of *national identity*, only including continental hexagonal France and praised by a national romance (*roman national*). It led to a disastrous President Sarkozy's speech delivered in Dakar University (Senegal), publicly asserting, to an audience of Senegalese full professors, that 'Africans had not yet entered history enough' (July 2007) (Adame Ba Konare 2009).

For centuries, Africanist research was distorted by a number of prejudices reinforced by a majority of colonial historians, ethnologists and anthropologists. Recently, *postcolonial studies* demanded that Western researchers get consciously rid of this Eurocentric heritage. This may also apply to a number of African researchers who were taught, as others, with what Valentin Mudimbe nicknamed the 'colonial library', that means the

inherited biased Western literature used by all researchers in the world. Moreover, colonial heritage made Africans themselves suffer from an inferiority complex, doubting of their ability to equal Western knowledge, as Achille Mbembe rightly underlined (Mbembe 2001).

6.3. Africa, a mother of the world

Nevertheless, similarly to other parts of the world, Africa and Africans brought a lot of creative wealth to foreign worlds. Africans, like others, may be proud of their historical legacy all over history, rather than insisting on all that was taken out, plundered and lost. No more no less than other parts of the world, Africa was at the core of world culture and wealth.

6.3.1. *Africa: crossroads of the world*

It is but an obvious statement to remind that Africa was at the beginning of mankind. Several times during these millions of years, prehistoric people left Africa (and especially Eastern and Southern Africa) to spread out all over the world. For a time, it was thought that our common ancestor was Lucy, who lived in Kenya some 9 millions of years ago. Now Toumai, discovered in Northern Chad, would perhaps be 13 millions years old. Again, around 200 000 years ago, *Homo sapiens*, our direct ancestor, was born in Africa.

Why, when actual history begins, between 7 000 and 4 000 years ago, Africans stay at home on their continent, for centuries to come leaving it only by force and slave trading? Probably because, adopting agriculture, this very large continent was, for diverse reasons, a satisfactory field for expansion. For Africans were not closed on themselves. Not only Africa South of the Sahara, several times, was located in the middle of the known world of the time, but it also ensured multilateral connections between other worlds coming to Africa. European cartography put Europe in the middle of the map; Chinese make the same for China, and Americans for Americas. Put Africa in the middle of the map (which is seldom drawn), and at once you understand that Africa is crossroad for three worlds:

- The Afroasiatic Mediterranean world, probably the oldest connection
- the Indian Ocean World, mainly between the fifth and the sixteenth century
- at last, the Atlantic world, the last to come, only at the end of the fifteenth century, while African history had begun centuries beforehand. Europeans did not 'discover' Africa, they only discovered 'their' Africa.

Every time, connections played their part both sides. Foreigners (Indians, Chinese, Arabs, Portuguese, other Europeans, and Americans) successively or at the same time interfered. It was very profitable for them; therefore, their respective histories were influenced by it and evolved because of it. The same occurred for Africa. Cultural, political and economic hybridations resulted for all of them. Of course, international trading

markets were mostly abroad. But Africans were not passive partners. Unceasingly, new streams, new actors, new contacts emerged: sultans monopolising gold mines, slave traders, trading entrepreneurs played a major part, as well out of Africa as inside Africa. This is not a surprise: it is normal history. We may compare with European history when, often, external events were major actors of change. Such was the discovery of Americas for Europeans. Let us take a French example: Roman conquest, North-South medieval competition between people of Oil and Oc languages, pre-modern wars against Spain and England in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, Napoleonic adventures in the nineteenth century, three wars against Germany, two of them world wars in the twentieth century, all these contacts with others were as many impulses for change.

Therefore, there is no reason why African history would be but an epiphenomenon compared with other histories, just because technological improvements started later than elsewhere. This did not hindered historical internal processes. Only Eurocentric history made African history peripheral. For Africans, other people were peripheral. A few historical processes may help understand it.

6.3.2. *Gold and Africa*

From ancient times, and during the Middle Age and pre-modern history, gold, an uncommon and precious mineral, was a condition for financial prosperity, as well in Europe as in the Indian Ocean. Where did gold come from, before the beginning of the sixteenth century, when only a little gold was discovered in Caribbean islands (Mexico and Peru mainly produced silver), then gold was mainly discovered in Brazil in the eighteenth century?

6.3.2.1. Gold in Western Africa

Except remote mines somewhere in the Ural mountain, gold was mainly produced in Western Sudan (*Dar as Sudan* means, in Arabic, land of the blacks) where mines were located in the upper Senegal river, and in the hinterland of the coast that Portuguese early nicknamed 'gold coast' (*costa do oro*). This was described by a Byzantinist historian, Maurice Lombard, as early as 1947. Nevertheless, only once he alludes to 'Sudanese gold'. He first thought that Byzantium gold came from plundering ancient Egyptian tombs, or Nubian gold in the upper Nile. Besides, confusing 'Sudan gold' and 'Muslim gold', he does not speak of Sub-Saharan African producers and brokers. He only describes a closed cycle circulating between Byzantium, the Muslim world and Western Europe, without questioning whence gold comes, in spite of a well known history of West Sudan medieval Empires: Ghana, Mali, Songhai, which built their power on gold trade. Al Bakri, end of the eleventh century, Idrisi end of the twelfth century well describe Ghana Empire of gold. Ibn Khaldun tells the story of Kankan Musa, king of Mali, and his splendid pilgrimage to Mecca. He went across the desert with 12 000 slaves and many camels, carrying so much gold to Cairo as inflation exploded.

Africans exchanged gold against Saharan salt. Salt was for them a biological necessity, as salted leguminous plants little exist in Africa South of the Sahara. This trade is very old.

Our first source is Greek historian Herodotus's History (fifth century BC), who describes it as a 'mute trade' beyond 'Hercules columns' (the strait of Gibraltar) between gold and salt traders: the former (Phenician traders) bringing salt and retiring, while the latter (African ones) came to appreciate whether or not it was enough to put their gold, The game was renewed as long as necessary. This practice still existed in the fifteenth century, when the first Portuguese or Italian traders (such as Venitian Cà da Mosto) described it (1445-1457).

African gold was necessary for European development before America's discovery. It began early: in Rome, one cannot understand why Septimus Severus, an African born in Leptis Magna (now 60 miles east of Tripoli), was made an Emperor (Third century AD) when not knowing that this harbour certainly was the final point of a central trans-Saharan road. To become emperor, obviously an African needed not only power but also wealth, and a city so large and splendid as Leptis Magna cannot be explained, as it is usually done, just by its production of olive trees and wheat fields, which was the usual case all around the Mediterranean Sea. Sure, gold arrived there.

African gold was known from Ancient Greek and Roman people. It also was known in the Middle Age. Around the Mediterranean Sea, Arabs preferred using silver for their currency. They mainly used gold to interfere with the Western European world. Western Europe needed gold to exchange with Eastern Asia. European caravans went across the Asiatic continent as far as India and even China. They were eager to collect silk cloth, precious stones, and spices. It is no exaggeration to suggest that African gold (rather than Byzantium gold) allowed Marco Polo to finance his equipment and travel to China as early as the end of the thirteenth century. Why was not this major event noticed by European historians?

6.3.2.2. Zimbabwean gold

The same occurred for gold in Southern Africa. Zimbabwe kingdom was prominent for gold production between the eleventh and the fifteenth century. Only one century later, Portuguese heard of Monomotapa kingdom, which developed after Zimbabwe vanished. Gold from Zimbabwe irrigated the Indian Ocean traffic. Much Chinese pottery was discovered on Zimbabwean sites, located 200 miles in the hinterland of Sofala, a major port on the Indian Ocean (Garlake 1973). And what about huge amounts of gold consumed in ancient Egypt, which was not a gold producer? Mines were located South of Egypt, but specialists still discuss about the location of 'Pount' mines quoted by ancient Egyptian sources (in Arabia? In Ethiopia?). Archaeological material has not yet been discovered, perhaps because it was not looked after. Nevertheless, why gold would not come from Zimbabwe? Maurice Lombard, quoted above, suggested it in a later book. Nobody paid attention to it (Lombard 1971).

Of course, Africans were ignorant of gold value on the world market of the time. They thought that a salt bar was as valuable as a gold ingot. Nevertheless, thanks to their gold, Western and Southern Africa played a major part in the making of the Western world. Without their gold, without the active political and economic part played by major African gold Empires, modern pre-capitalism could not emerge. Medieval African gold played a part similar to Johannesburg gold (again in Africa) when it was discovered

end of the nineteenth century (1886). During most of the twentieth century (1917-1990), because of the break between the East and the West, South Africa produced 80% of gold used as a standard currency by the Western world (and 60% of gold world production).

Therefore, for centuries, Africa provided the world with its major financial tool.

6.3.3. *Slaves and Africa*

A second point is slave trading. Let us draw on a map the major trends of slave production and flows between the seventeenth and the nineteenth century: sub-Saharan African slaves were sent to every part of the world: towards the Mediterranean Sea, across the Sahara and from Egypt; towards the Indian Ocean, by Omani and Zanzibar sultanates; and last but not least, towards the Atlantic Ocean (see map). Internal slave trade also developed a lot inside Africa, where plantations were created on the eastern coast, on the Western coast, and in the upper Congo. An actual 'Slave Mode of Production' expanded all over Africa in the nineteenth century (similar in some ways to the South cotton plantation area in the US) (Cooper 1977; Meillassoux 1991; Lovejoy 1983). Networks of slave trade roads covered the whole of the continent. Sugar cane and cotton plantations expanded in Americas, clove plantations, cotton plantations, sisal plantations developed in Africa and Zanzibar. African slave manpower worked everywhere: not only in Americas, but also in Arabia, in India and Indonesia, and probably even in China. Not only black Africans were used as producers on pre-modern plantations, but they were also incorporated inside the capitalist system, above all in the States when cotton fed textile industry. It was a major impulse for the first Industrial Revolution, at the eve of the nineteenth century.

In other words, African slaves and Africa were at the core of what Marx explained was a major force of production: for centuries, Africa provided the world with its force of labour.

6.3.4. *Raw materials and Africa*

A third moment is precolonial nineteenth century when the Atlantic slave trade declined. English industrial revolution needed more and more raw materials: (Newbury 1961) not only cotton produced by American slaves, but also oil-seeds needed to oil machines, to give light to workshops before the invention of electricity (end of the century), to make soap the formula of which was just discovered, to dye cloth before the invention of chemical dye (end of the century). Palm oil mainly came from West African coastal areas, peanuts came from Senegal (Vanhaeverbeke 1969) - and also India -, copra oil came from Eastern Africa; dye came from plants (indigo, kola nuts) and tinted red and yellow trees from rain forests. Zanzibar Island was the only clove producer and exporter. At the end of the century, wild rubber was collected in Equatorial forests, in Africa as well as in Brazil, as long as Indonesian and Malaysian plantations did not exist (1911). South African gold was flooding the world. Again, Sub-Saharan Africa was essential for West capitalism. Once more, political and social African systems adapted to new

markets. Inside Africa, production increased, and slave labour increased the same. New local and regional political entities took the floor: empires of conquest, warlords, jihad leaders, and planters. Long before colonial conquest was completed, internal political configuration of Africa was upset (Coquery-Vidrovitch 2009 & 2011).

The independence era again made Africa providing the world with its wealth. A well-known similar process still works, Africa probably possessing the richest mineral resources in the world (diamond, gold, copper, cobalt, uranium, rare minerals, etc.).

In other words, Africa provided and go on providing the Western world with an increasing number of raw materials and minerals demanded by European production, industrialisation and equipment.

6.4. International Politics and Africa

6.4.1. Colonialism

The European International Berlin Conference (1884-1885) was a proof that Africa played a major part in international affairs. For the first time, European Great Powers (Ottoman Empire included) met, but not just to conclude peace once war was over (as a number of them did many times, and again in 1815 at Vienna Conference putting an end to Napoleonic adventures). In Berlin, it was different: they preventively met to avoid war (Brunschwig 1971). The only topic discussed was Africa, to proclaim the rules of the game to avoid troubles. Thus doing, Europeans powers prefigured the European Union to come.

Nearly complete colonisation was achieved in the early 1900s (Morocco protectorate, in 1912, was the end of Africa's conquest). For a moment, between the two World Wars, Africa was taken apart from the rest of the world. It was used as a reserve by European mother countries, above of because of economic depression starting in 1931. Africa nearly disappeared as a world question. It was a short parenthesis: from the beginning of Second World War to the end of Cold War (1939-1989), Africa was again a major military then diplomatic battlefield. First, it was used as a battlefield against Nazis' troops by British and Free France armies. General De Gaulle asserted he was in France in 1940 in Brazzaville (Congo), and again with the Brazzaville conference in 1944. Congo and Cameroon were points of departure for the French army of re-conquest towards South Italy and France. After World War II, Africa became a strategic and diplomatic field of Cold War, midway between the East and the West. Africa began to claim for itself when Third World emerged (Bandoeng conference 1955, non-alignment conference 1956).

6.4.2. Independence

In the 1960s, independence reinforced African voice: soon 45 African States, now 54 states (islands included) voted at the UN assemblies. IAU (International African Unity) organization was created in 1963, and struggled to help late colonies fighting for their independence. Looking a map again makes things clear: Africa was an actual buffer

zone between USA and Western Europe on one side, and USSR and China on the other side. African states were courted by both parts; they were themselves torn between liberal and socialist options (said: Monrovia and Casablanca groups).

Since the fall of Berlin Wall, Africa's interest did not decreased. End of Cold War rather favoured new opportunities, because it did not mean the end of arms trading. Part of the African continent now is a major consumer of Great Powers armament production. It resulted in tragic internal political histories. It would be dishonest to assert it only resulting from African powers' incompetence. This may be partly true, but politics nowadays is a worldwide affair, more and more involved with economic globalisation. Africa, for example, is taking the lead of oil producers, and of many other precious minerals. Once more, the African continent is necessary to the world.

6.5. Conclusion: A future for Africa?

Therefore, from the beginning of history, Africans were located, no more no less than others, in any time, at the core of world history. Like others, they were necessary for the whole to develop. It played a major part producing irreplaceable raw materials and precious minerals, and providing a huge labour force (yesterday slaves, today migrant workers). Nevertheless the subcontinent usually is neither well industrialized nor yet a large consuming market. This is why others think it to be 'peripheral' to their own worlds. It is untrue, for multiple reasons: of course economic factors, but also strategic, demographic, cultural and human factors.

How to get rid of this infernal cycle, making people inferior, defamed, and victimized? True, African history cumulated an upsetting series of trials which benefited to outsiders who took advantage of these misfortunes. We have now to reject this symbolic representation to accept realities of today: others decided that Africa was a periphery. Africans themselves have to prove it is untrue. They have to be positive, remembering not so much what others took them, but how much the world was endowed with what they provided to others. African capacities are huge. Africans may be confident with people who, all over centuries, were able to resist so many assaults on them. Youth is massive, dynamic, and inventive; productive resources are enormous. Cultural flourishing is fascinating. Social and political trends are in the move. It was made possible by an exponential schooling, in spite of so many drawbacks. A will for democratisation has been expressed since the 1990s, when popular national conferences multiplied, once more in spite of many obstacles. A civil and political society is more and more differentiated and became an urban majority. Middle classes are developing, and they less and less accept dictatorial powers. Unfortunately, social change is a low process. Time to time, it may stop and even regress, due to patrimonialism and corruption. Nevertheless, it cannot be ignored, while international medias too often still stick to an afro-pessimist view of a continent condemned to remain peripheral. This is contradicted by an exploding information and communication process (mobile phones, internet, computerizing), and also an average number of impressive GDP acceleration in spite of the worldwide crisis.

Africa should now aim at building a global political force able to compete with other international Powers. Prominent individuals, and strong and well-known African groups work at it. So does, for example, Alpha Omar Konare (former Mali, then AUO President)'s association, connected with South African democrats. African political and philosophical literature, including francophone literature not so long ago rather connected with 'françafrique', now insists on the necessity for Africans to 'count on their own force' (i.e.: Diagne 2001, Monga 2009, Konaté 2010). We, the Western world, have to let these forces go instead of despising or ignoring them. It will make possible for Africans not only to claim for reparations, but also to obtain them.

The future of Africa is in question.

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Chapter 7

A note on the Oppenheimer– Dick-Read–Tauchmann (‘Sunda’) hypothesis

**on extensive South and South Asian demographic
and cultural impact on sub-Saharan Africa in pre-
and proto-history**

by Wim van Binsbergen

NOTE. Professor Kurt Tauchmann of Cologne University, Germany, has for many years studied transcontinental continuities between sub-Saharan Africa, on the one hand, and South and South East Asia, on the other hand. He was to be one of the key speakers at our conference, and he submitted a comprehensive abstract that was circulated through the conference website. However, he never came round to writing out his proposed paper. He was taken ill and hospitalised, and was sadly missed during our conference discussions. The following note was hoped to do some justice to at least one of his viewpoints as communicated at an earlier stage, so that our conference could still benefit to at least some extent from the inspiration and expertise Kurt Tauchmann’s work has to offer. – WvB

7.1. Introduction

A few years before our conference, Professor Kurt Tauchmann of Cologne University, Germany, has been so kind as to comment on my book draft on an Africanist application of Oppenheimer's (1998) Sunda¹⁹² thesis from his own specialist perspective – Tauchmann has been looking at South East Asian / African connections for many years. He proposed to add a few specific traits (paramour, joking relations and rulers' *ius primae noctis*) to my long list of Sunda traits which I provisionally proposed to be detectable in Africa. While corroborating the incidental, personalised South East Asian effect upon Africa through traders and royals – a factor stressed in my draft analyses – his main point was the following: *attention should be given to a massive demic-diffusion element, i.e. cultural diffusion because populations on the move bring their cultural baggage with them. In his opinion, prior to the Bantu expansion in East and South-East Africa, pre- and proto-historic migrations from South East Asia (such as have long been recognised to have populated Madagascar and given it its distinction cultural and linguistic characteristics) had given rise to a considerable Austronesian genetic and linguistic presence in those parts of Africa.* This is a moot point – the historian Kent who claimed – 1970 – extensive Sunda kingdoms on the East African coast (*cf.* Birkeli 1936) was not taken seriously.

7.2. Convergence with Stephen Oppenheimer's General and Special Sunda hypothesis

7.2.1. Oppenheimer's Sunda hypothesis

In 1998, the British paediatrician and subsequently leading geneticist Stephen Oppenheimer formulated his Sunda thesis, claiming:

- with the melting of the polar caps at the end of the last Ice Age (10 ka BP), the ensuing global rise of the ocean level with 200 m and the inevitable flooding of much of the then subcontinent of South East Asia ('Sunda'), a massive Sunda out-migration came to populate not only Oceania but also ramified in a westerly direction along the Indian Ocean coast, all the way to the Indus and the Persian Gulf (and by implication possibly even to Africa, although that continent remains out of Oppenheimer's scope)
- this Sunda influx into South-western Eurasia is held responsible, according to Oppenheimer, for fertilising the Indus and Sumerian civilisations, bringing the cosmology and mythology of the Ancient Near East including that of *Genesis*.

In a recent publication I have sought (van Binsbergen with Isaak 2008) to demonstrate,

¹⁹² Also *cf.* the Introduction, section 1.54, above.

by a painstaking statistical analysis of flood myths worldwide, that Oppenheimer's 'Special Sunda thesis', i.e. (b) (which I thus designate by analogy with Einstein's Special and General Theory of Relativity; Einstein 1960) does not stand up to the empirical evidence. However, Oppenheimer's 'general Sunda thesis', claiming an overall South East Asian influence on Western Eurasia (and by extension, on sub-Saharan Africa) during the last 6 ka or so, I have found rather inspiring especially for an understanding of the long-range cultural dynamics in the recent prehistory, and the proto-history, of sub-Saharan Africa; cf. Dick-Read 2005; van Binsbergen 2007b).

7.2.2. *Oppenheimer's arguments for his General Sunda hypothesis*

Among the archaeological indications allegedly in favour of his Sunda thesis, Oppenheimer cites a few that I consider spurious:

- the Niah cave on Western Borneo, whose depictions of ships, however, (especially in a subcontinent with soul ships and maritime traditions) are not necessarily evidence of cataclysmic flooding and escape by boat;
- El Ubaid (South Mesopotamia) clay figurines with pelleted features (which is unconvincing for due to the nature of the material clay figurines are rather similar in execution over vast areas, even including South America);
- Oppenheimer sees the use of red haematite as a Sunda-related trait, but fails to appreciate that throughout Old World prehistory this mineral, as well as a similar iron oxide known as red ochre, has had such a wide attestation in space and time that Sunda as epicentre of diffusion is excluded (not only Borneo (Niah cave), Sumer, Çatal Hüyük, Mapungubwe (South Africa), and prehistoric China – which might all be argued to have Sunda connotations, but even the Blombos Cave block, South Africa, 70 ka BP (Henshilwood *et al.* 2001), as well as many prehistoric burial sites all over the Old World, in between!) (cf. Wreschner *et al.* 1980; Marshack 1981);
- the mankala board game (which I have discussed in several publications (e.g. van Binsbergen 1996, 1997, 2011, 2012b) and to which I have attributed, on archaeological and distribution grounds, a West Asian instead of a South East Asian origin even though it occurs sporadically in the latter region – in line with my Pelasgian hypothesis);¹⁹³

¹⁹³ The oldest documentary evidence on the game is from an Arabic MS from the late first millennium CE, *Kitab al-Aghani*, whereas the oldest archaeological evidence derives from the West Asian Neolithic (cf. Murray 1952; Rollefson 1992; Kirkbride 1966). The game is discussed as locally Lankan in Parker's classic description of Sri Lanka (1981 / 1909: 587 f.), where that author makes the connection (perhaps spurious) with one Ancient Egyptian apparent attestation. All this would render mankala an interesting case for the study of African-Asian continuities. Unfortunately, in the course of my short Sri Lankan fieldwork it proved almost impossible to find any mankala boards, except a handful in the Colombo Museum, where (in line with Parker) the game is identified as 'Colombo olinda'. The very name *olinda* proved misleading, for to many Sri Lankans this appears to be simply the Sinhalese name for a type of seeds commonly used as mankala tokens, or for a shrub producing

- semi-circular axe blades, whose wide distribution (between New Guinea, South East Asia, Scandinavia, and Nkoya regalia in Zambia) is too unspecific¹⁹⁴ to sub-

them. The Dutch *mankala* specialist De Voogt inspected (2000) the Colombo Museum specimens and cannot give them a higher antiquity than early 19th c. CE.:

'Finally, special mention should be made of a bed owned by Ehelapola (37.1.26). [Ehelapola was a Lankan politician flourishing in the first quarter of the 19th century -- WvB] Hidden behind a removable top, a *mankala* game is carved out of the panel of the bed. The relevance of this item is considerable. At present, there is a general conviction that *mankala* was played by royalty in the Kandy period. The data on boards in the museum files only indicate the date they entered the collections and do not identify the owners, former players or dates of making or using the board. The bed of Ehelapola is one of the few objects that clearly indicate an owner who apparently favoured the game so much that it was carved in his bed. This gives evidence that the game was played by royalty, by men and that it enjoyed a certain popularity. It cannot have been for pure ceremonial use since Ehelapola used it as a pastime. In addition, this bed and board give evidence of the age of the game. It is known that Ehelapola lived before 1815 which makes this object the *oldest* [my italics -- WvB] wooden *mankala* board in a museum collection of a confirmed date. So far, the oldest collecting date has been 1823 (de Voogt 1997: 15) and little can be said of wooden *mankala* boards of the Nineteenth Century in relation to the time they were made or used in play. The bed of Ehelapola gives clear evidence of the much suspected old age [sic -- WvB] of *mankala* games and boards.' (de Voogt 2000: 94f)

A testimonial from my one Lankan informant who clearly knew the game well, suggested that the game had died out in the course of the 20th century, while before that time it was known in Sinhalese under a name meaning 'making the time last longer' - to be played during the introductory phase of weddings, which could not proceed before the game had a winner. Such an intercalary situation outside time (the wedding mythically referring to the cosmogonic union of Heaven and Earth, before time) reminds us of the use of the game according to Parker, in New Year celebrations (in Sri Lanka there is normally an intercalary period of a few hours, not as in Ancient Egypt five days, between the end of the Old and the beginning of the New Year; female-played drums, board games, and the eating of ceremonial fat cakes fill this vacuum in time, and help to bring the New Year forth). I am now in two minds about the origin of Sri Lankan *mankala*. (a) It could very well be part of the Pelasgian heritage, and in that case share a common West Asian origin with African *mankala*. (b) Meanwhile, given the likelihood of a transcontinental maritime trading network since the Bronze Age, and of African slaves in the Indian Ocean (even though this fact is played down in present-day Lankan public representations including museums), the specific African forms of the game could be brought to the island in the course of the last two millennia, by Africans. A similar suggestion of being an African import was made for Indonesia, where the *mankala* game is likewise not totally absent, yet rare *qcf.* Barnes 1975).

¹⁹⁴ Oppenheimer seeks to argue continuity between ceremonial axes from New Guinea, the Isle of Roti (East Indonesia), and Sweden (the Galstad Axe, 800 BCE). Now ever since the times of Montelius (1843-1921) archaeology has emphasised definitional elaboration and rigour, and geo-graphic and temporal self-restraint, in the field of typological comparison. Inevitably, one cannot engage in long-range comparison without arousing and offending the ghost of Montelius, and that truism would apply to my own work as much as to Oppenheimer's. Yet when comparing artefacts from the extreme ends of the Old World, we do need to exercise extreme methodological caution. What the artefacts discussed by Oppenheimer have in common is that the outer periphery of the axe blade is more or less a circle segment, while similar curves return elsewhere on each artefact. The caption suggests continuity with Lapita pottery (the major class of 'index fossils' of early eastbound Oceanian expansion), and with the Dong-Son bronze culture of Viet Nam. One might even go on to point to Etruscan, Celtic (La Tène) and Anglo-Saxon artefacts from South, Central and West Europe,

stantiate Oppenheimer's theory, and the same applies to torques as mentioned by Oppenheimer.

Meanwhile Oppenheimer's claims may serve, as he suggests, to solve apparently puzzling elements. *E.g.* the shell money (almost indistinguishable from current Melanesian versions) in the royal tombs of Ur would come closer to an explanation – if the parallel is not a red herring in the first place, for beads and other ornaments from sea shells and ostrich shells have a very wide distribution in space and time, against which the Oceanian-Ur affinity needs not be proof of Sunda influence at all. The emergence of Indus and Sumerian civilisation may, as suggested by Oppenheimer, have been indebted to some Sunda catalytic influence. Thus the General Sunda hypothesis seems to promise considerable explanatory power and appeal, and my dismissal of the Special Sunda thesis with regard to *Genesis* mythology specially flood myths (van Binsbergen with Isaak 2008), does not in the least mean that I consider the General Sunda hypothesis to have been refuted wholesale and once for all – quite on the contrary.

Despite my rejection of his specific claims concerning *Genesis* / Ancient Near Eastern mythology, Oppenheimer also brings up a remarkable mythological point that seems a real eye-opener:

- Berossus' tradition,¹⁹⁵ according to which which humankind learned the arts of civilisation from an amphibian being, Oannes, that appeared at the Persian Gulf and that, after teaching by day, retreated to join his companions at sea for the night.¹⁹⁶ Oppenheimer interprets Oannes as a personification of Sunda voyagers arriving via the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, at the mouth of the Euphrates and Tigris. This is an interesting idea which is, however, open to many alternative interpretations. The Berossus fragment has it as follows:

whose ornaments are often circle-based. Again, the point is not that any connection between Sweden and East Indonesia is automatically to be dismissed (*cf.* the Nkoya example, which yet – because of my identification of the Nkoya as Sunda-related – suggests the possibility of a genuine Sunda link also for these axes), but that only a finely attuned, theoretically underpinned typology, explicitly argued before a professional forum, could make such statements more than mere wishful thinking. Without the attending analytical framework, such assertions are, in the most literal sense, meaningless. The same argument holds for the example of the neck rings from Nias, Indonesia, and those from North Europe – and, as might have been added again, Celtic Europe, where, for instance on the famous Gundestrup cauldron (*cf.* Kaul & Martens 1995; Klindt-Jensen 1959) which is mentioned in Oppenheimer's text, they appear to be signs of divine and royal election rather than a 'Torc of Death'.

¹⁹⁵ After Smith 1873: 306; *cf.* Cory 1832.

¹⁹⁶ The source of the Oannes myth is a Berossus fragment in the ancient historian Alexander Polyhistor, as cited in Cory 1832, *cf.* Fragments n.d. and Jacoby 1923-1927. On the Oannes myth, *cf.* Smith 1873; Schnabel 1923; Hallo 1963: 176, n. 79 and Lambert 1962: 65 (etymologies of the name Oannes, mainly as 'child of the waters' – an epithet with mythical resonances throughout Eurasia, from Celtic Morgana 'Sea Child', to South Asian Agni, the fire god likewise called 'child of the waters'). A very interesting reading is that of Georges Roux (1992), who sees Oannes as a personification of the Sumerians: the latter settled in what is now Southern Mesopotamia when the general rising of the sea level chased them from the alluvial plain which is now the Persian Gulf – in other words they, like Oannes, came from the sea, but only locally so.

'...he gave them an insight into letters and sciences, and arts of every kind. He taught them to construct cities, to found temples, to compile laws, and explained to them the principles of geometrical knowledge. He made them distinguish the seeds of the earth, and shewed them how to collect the fruits; in short, he instructed them in every thing which could tend to soften manners and humanize their lives. From that time, nothing material has been added by way of improvement to his instructions. And when the sun had set, this Being Oannes, retired again into the sea, and passed the night in the deep; for he was amphibious.'

Although we must refrain from accusing Oppenheimer of guilt by association, yet it is instructive to compare the preposterous use to which Temple (1977) has put the same myth. He sees the legendary Oannes who reputedly appeared at the Persian Gulf at (what we could call today) the onset of Sumerian civilisation, as an extraterrestrial space traveller (!), who imparts his local knowledge of the composite (allegedly, even triple) nature of the star Sirius, to the locals (who apparently have, or receive on the spot, the astrophysics to make sense of the idea of stars as distant concentrations of matter which may or may not revolve around each other), and from there, via the Garamantes people who traversed the Sahara at some time around the beginning of the Common Era, that privileged knowledge made its way to the Dogon, where Griaule and Dieterlen (1965) tapped it in the middle of the 20th century CE.¹⁹⁷

Meanwhile the most convincing identification of Oannes is simply the water god Enki. As the prominent Assyriologist Oppenheim writes (1970: 195 and 365, n. 24):

'Among the old gods of the pantheon, Ea (corresponding to Sumerian E n . k i) occupied a special position. Originally the local deity of the southernmost city, Eridu, he shared, according to late speculation, the rule of the cosmos with Anu and Enlil inasmuch as his realm was the waters surrounding the world and those below it. [cf. the division of the world between Zeus, Poseidon and Hades in Homer, *Iliad*, XV, 184.f.] Apart from having been the patron god of exorcists, Ea was a master craftsman, patron of all the arts and crafts, and endowed with a wisdom and cunning that myths and stories do not tire of extolling. He must have been thought of in certain respects as a 'culture hero', until the late period, since an Ea figure seems to have been the prototype of the culture hero Oannes mentioned by Berossos. (...) Oannes taught men the art of writing and figuring, and all crafts, also to organize in cities, and to establish temples'.

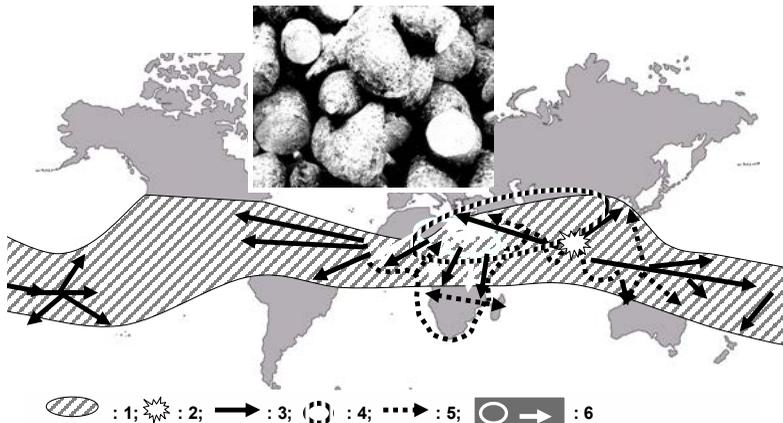
¹⁹⁷ As an apparent proof of African astronomical knowledge superior even to state-of-the-art North Atlantic science, the Griaule-Dieterlen publication has generated an enormous literature, mainly from Afrocentrist side. My Leiden colleague Walter van Beek (1992) restudied the Dogon in recent decades, but could not get confirmation that Griaule's cherished ethnoastronomy had any empirical, intersubjective basis in Dogon culture; however, Dogon culture is generally admitted to be fragmented and heterogeneous, and it is a time-honoured epistemological principle that one can hardly empirically prove non-existence. In North Atlantic specialist science, the dual nature of Sirius was only proposed on mathematical grounds by Friedrich Bessel in 1844, to be confirmed astronomically a few decades later. All this leaves ample opportunity for the scientific notion of a dual Sirius to percolate to the interior of West Africa (Sagan 1979). After all, also Islamic secret sciences have made a considerable impact there – as is clear from the famous pronouncements of Ogotomelli, likewise published by Griaule (1948). However, this part of Africa is generally known for its exceptionally elaborate mythological tradition (Willis 1994: 265), and my preferred view is that, by another 'fallacy of misplaced concreteness' (Whitehead 1997), Dogon mythology has simply been misread, not as a multilayered, ambiguous and heterogeneous mythical cosmology that it is, but as if it were a modern astronomical treatise in disguise. Incidentally, astronomers are still looking for a third member of the Sirius star system, but as far as I know, without success (Solstation.com 2005; Benest & Duvent 1995; Schroeder *et al.* 2000).

The identification of Oannes with the god Ea / E n . k i is fitting in other respects (Cotterell 1989: 86): the god is reported to have incestuously pursued his daughters, and like a real spider had left his semen in the body of U t t u , the spider goddess of weaving; he was part man part fish, was reborn from the womb of his wife Nimhursaga, and was the Great God protecting Ziusudra (of the Sumerian Flood myth) = Nuaḥ (Bible) = Atrahasis (in the epic bearing his name) = Utnapishtim (Gilgamesh epic). Also compare the South Asian Matsya (an *avatār* or historical manifestation of the great god Vishnu), saving the flood hero Manu – Matsya is reminiscent of the Sumerian Oannes, and both are, admittedly, smack in the proposed Sunda trajectory.

Finally Oppenheimer adduces a few further traits whose distribution does seem to offer some support for the Sunda hypothesis, notably

- the presence of cloves in a 2nd or even 3rd mill. CE Anatolian context (Wright 1982) – whereas cloves by that time were only grown in the Moluccan Islands, Eastern Indonesia
- the presence of bananas in West Africa 1000 years BCE – whereas bananas, known to originate from New Guinea, can only be propagated through shoots, which therefore must have been transported with great human care from South East Asia to West Africa

The distribution of taro (*Colocasia esculenta*; cf. Lee 1999) may be a further case in point.



1 Approximate distribution of taro as a major food crop today; 2 probable origin of Taro; 3 subsequent diffusion (based on Lee 1999); 4 Extended proto-Neolithic Fertile Crescent (Sahara-China); 5 Sunda model for W Asia and Africa; 6 Back-into-Africa movement, from 15 ka BP onwards: mtDNA types R and M1

Fig. 7.1. Tentative reconstruction of the diffusion of Taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) as another indication of Sunda influence on the West

Dick-Read (2005) even claims, and several specialists concur, that the New World food plants that were to play such a dominant role in sub-Saharan Africa in post-Columbian times (maize, cassava, peanut, etc.) may already have reached West Africa in pre-Columbian times via a trajectory along the Pacific, the Indian Ocean and the Cape of Good Hope.

Oppenheimer, with all his interest in comparative mythology (unfortunately guided only by his reading of James Frazer, *floruit* c. 1900 CE) does not exploit to the full the truly puzzling fact that the distribution of a considerable number of mythemes centres on the Western and the Eastern end of Eurasia without the Pelasgian, trans-Steppe model offering a satisfactory explanation. These are specially sea-related mythemes, such as gods / culture heroes fishing up the land from the sea (in Ancient Nordic and Oceanian mythology), or inventing the sail (in Greek and Oceanian mythology).¹⁹⁸ But also the mytheme of incessant divine intercourse preventing the world (the junior gods) from being born, is found both in the Aegean, on the Bight of Benin, and in Oceania. A similarly global distribution has the mytheme of 'Creation of humankind from earth or mud' (*Genesis*, Egypt (Hnum), South East Asia, South China, Oceania (Willis 1994: 22, 91). Also spider gods range from West Africa (Nzamb / Nyambi), via the Mediterranean and the Ancient Near East (e.g. Athena, Neith, Anahita, Uttu) to Oceania. Here we may take recourse to my hypothesis of a multi-centred, multidirectional, transcontinental maritime network creating conditions of proto-globalisation from the Bronze Age onward – but such an hypothesis, while admitting the possibility and the fact of contact between South East Asia and the West, does not in the least stipulate borrowing in exclusively one direction. However, given the Graeco-Roman Ancient World's extensive familiarity with the Indian Ocean environment (as attested by a text like *Periplus Maris Erythraei*¹⁹⁹ from the beginning of the Common Era, by the massive circulation of Ancient Roman coins in the Indian Ocean region, the fact that diaphanous silk dresses were the great ladies' fashion in Imperial Rome, etc.), and the relatively late peopling of Oceania in the most recent millennia, there is a strong possibility that these parallels derive from a one-directional diffusion Eastward from a Mediterranean / West Asian source – counter-directional to the Sunda thesis. In this connection it may be relevant that, according to an older but still mainstream physical anthropology, Polynesians are considered a variety of Mediterranean people.²⁰⁰ This confirms, for the somatic aspect, the Mediterranean-Oceanian continuity found in comparative mythology. The relationship is rather too specific and exclusive to be explained by some generalised recourse to a global maritime network. Both East-West ('Sunda') and West-East movement could explain the data. The fact that the Oceanian mythology was only attested in recent centuries, two millennia after Graeco-Roman Antiquity, appears to speak in favour of a West-East movement. Yet the multiplicity of possible Sunda indications in the Ancient Mediterranean from

¹⁹⁸ In my forthcoming monograph *Daedalus's Invention* these mythemes, their variants and sources are discussed in detail.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Cory 1828; Chami 1999; Casson 1989; Charlesworth 1928; Dietrich 1883; MacDowall 1964.

²⁰⁰ Montagu 2010 / 1959: 461; cf., on the linguistic side, Pedersen n.d.; Bopp 1841; Manansala n.d. – but these are mere inconclusive pointers in a possibly promising direction.

the Early Bronze Age onwards as presented in the next two paragraphs puts me in favour of the East-West, Sunda alternative.

7.3. Putting the Oppenheimer–Dick-Read–Tauchmann hypothesis to the test with special emphasis on Africa: The linguistic argument

The presumed Sunda presence in Africa would have to be detectable in the form of an Austronesian substrate in Eastern and Southern Bantu languages (a phenomenon already suggested – albeit for only a few East and South-eastern African languages, notably Makuwa, and the Sotho-Tswana cluster –, by the sometime Leiden Professor of African Linguistics Thilo Schadeberg; personal communication 1994). Also, Tauchmann’s point calls to mind the fact that recently, population geneticists have formulated the ‘Back-into-Africa’ hypothesis, which implies an influx of East Asian and South East Asian genes into sub-Saharan Africa in pre- and proto-historical times.²⁰¹

To such distributional indications we may add etymological indications. Following up an old idea of the great German linguist Franz Bopp (1841), Torsten Pedersen (n.d.) claims, on the basis of ample, up-to-date and convincing data, an Austronesian substrate to be detectable in Indo-European; he explicitly cites Oppenheimer 1998. Paul Manansala (2006) reaches the same conclusion of the basis of similar literature. For important theonyms and personal names from the Eastern Mediterranean in the Bronze Age, such as Osiris, Neith, Minos / Menes,²⁰² I found that Austric etymologies may be formulated (van Binsbergen & Woudhuizen 2011) – which of course remains nothing but a possibility and does not mean that these names must necessarily derive, 100% sure, from South East Asia. The same is true for the name Dilmun, the mythical paradise of the Sumerians, which modern scholarship has often identified with the Isle of Bahrayn in the Persian Gulf; while the Arabic meaning is ‘Salt Water and Sweet Water’ – literally: ‘The Two Waters’: it was a standard watering place for ships to and from the Indian Ocean. If we were to assign an Austric etymology to the name Dilmun that would give a meaning ‘Star Land’ or ‘Moon Land’ – quite plausible, not only given the place’s connotations in Sumerian mythology, but also given the roughly crescent-like shape of its contours, and the fact that, in some other languages around the Indian Ocean including Arabic, the names of much larger but similarly shaped islands like Madagascar and Ceylon may be associated with the same meanings.

Of course, the main linguistic argument for the reality of Sunda influence on the West is the fact that virtually the whole population of the huge island of Madagascar, tucked

²⁰¹ *E.g.* Hammer *et al.* 1998; Cruciani *et al.* 2002; Underhill 2004; Coia *et al.* 2005; also Fig. 7.3, below.

²⁰² Of course, in their original form and reconstructed by specialists. What we use in modern interdisciplinary scholarship, including the present argument, are varieties of Greek or Latin mere approximations of the original names.

against the African continent in the Western Indian Ocean, speaks closely related Austronesian languages.

Meanwhile an interesting linguistic indication of possible Austric influence on the Persian Gulf lies in the claim,²⁰³ first made by the French anthropologist Paul Rivet in the 1920s, and meanwhile supported by the prominent and authoritative linguist the late I.M. Diakonov (1974), to the effect that there exists a striking affinity between Sumerian (a puzzling language isolate which had entirely eluded scholarship up to the second half of the 19th c. CE, yet the very basis of the civilisations of the Ancient Near East) and Munda. The latter language is a member of the Austric macrofamily. Austric is a relatively recent linguistic construct (proposed by the famous anthropologist and student of comparative religion Wilhelm Schmidt in 1906) comprising the two main branches of Austronesian (e.g. most Indonesian and Oceanian languages) and Austrasiatic (comprising many of the languages of continental South East Asia, including Munda).²⁰⁴

C A S E	0	5	10	15	20	25	
Niger-Congo	27%	-+-----+	-----+	-----+	-----+	-----+	
Khoisan	4%	-+	-----+	-----+	-----+	-----+	
Amerind	33%	-----+	-----+	-----+	-----+	-----+	
Austric	40%	-----+	-----+	-----+	-----+	I	
Eurasianic	81%	-----+	-----+	-----+	-----+	I	
Afroasiatic	66%	-----+	-----+	-----+	-----+	-----+	
Sino-Caucasian	72%	-----+	-----+	-----+	-----+	-----+	
log. time scale A (c = 0.476)	0	5	10	15	20	22.5	25 ka BP
log. time scale B (c = 0.666)	0	5	10	15	20	22.5	25 ka BP
uncorrected linear time scale	0	5	10	15	20	25	ka BP

The Middle Palaeolithic background to this bifurcation, and its correspondence with genetic haplotypes (mtDNA types) I have suggested elsewhere (van Binsbergen & Woudhuizen 2011: 77f, which also gives the logarithmic formula for the

²⁰³ I am indebted to Vaclav Blažek for pointing this out to me.

²⁰⁴ In the further pursuit of such connections linking Austric to the Western parts of the Old World including Africa, we must look further than merely diffusion and also include underlying genetic relationships into our analysis – i.e., those indicative of a common origin. This especially applies to the relationship between Austric and one of the four linguistic macrophyla historically spoken in Africa: Niger-Congo. The Tower of Babel linguistic database enables us to trace patterns of relationship between the world's linguistic macrophyla – at least, it does so after specific steps of data processing, and after my own reassessment of the corpus of proto-Niger-Congo as operationalised by a newly constructed corpus of proto-Bantu (steps that are beyond our present scope; cf. van Binsbergen, in press (a); van Binsbergen & Woudhuizen 2011: 77f; van Binsbergen 201d. The results (Fig. 7.2) are truly remarkable in that they bring out the relatively close affinity between

1. a central cluster of macrophyla, comprising Eurasianic, Afroasiatic and Sinocaucasian, on the one hand, and
2. a peripheral cluster of macrophyla, comprising today's African macrophyla Niger-Congo, Nilo-Saharan and Khoisan, as well as Austric and Amerind.

time scale). That Niger-Congo and Austric have considerable affinity is already suggested by the fact that the eponymical Bantu (< Niger-Congo) lexical root –ntu, ‘human’, comes back as *taw*, ‘human’, in proto-Austronesian. However, there are substantial reasons for us not to isolate the case of these two macrophyla, but to see this correspondence as just two indications of a truly ‘global etymology’ (cf. Bengtson & Ruhlen 1994; however, they do not include this case), whose outlines I have sketched in van Binsbergen 2010: 155 f., 2018) around the semantics ‘under, bottom, human’. Meanwhile it is very likely that the spread of Bantu (< Niger-Congo) as a phylum in Africa, from the 1st mill. BCE onward, and the expansion of South East Asian demographic / genetic and cultural influence in that continent, have gone hand in hand, and that it is in that combination in the most recent millennia, rather than in the common *Borean elements of both Austric and Niger-Congo in the Upper Palaeolithic, that we must look of an explanation of the –ntu / *taw* parallelism.

Fig. 7.2. Cluster analysis of *Borean reflexes in present-day linguistic macrophyla

7.4. Putting the Oppenheimer–Dick-Read–Tauchmann hypothesis to the test: The genetic argument

7.4.1. First ‘Out of Africa’, then ‘Back into Africa’

In a 2004 paper, Peter Underhill indicated a transmission of haplo group M from Eastern Eurasia to sub-Saharan Africa, yielding haplo group M – complementary to the transmission of Western Eurasian haplo group U to sub-Saharan Africa, in the form of haplo group U6.

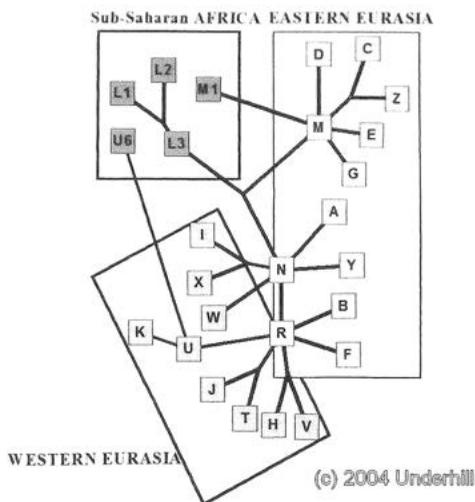


Fig. 7.3. ‘Back into Africa’ according to Underhill (2004)

Forster (2004: his Figs 2b (80–60 ka BP), 2c (60–30 ka BP); and 2g (15–2 ka BP)) renders essentially the same process in a geographically more explicit and detailed form. Although the complexities of the U haplo group in Western parts of the Old World during

the Upper Palaeolithic are notorious (Maca-Meyer *et al.* 2003; Plaza *et al.* 2003; Cherni *et al.* 2005; González *et al.* 2003), it may not be impossible to read the transmission of Eurasian U to sub-Saharan African U6 as corresponding with the cultural transmission of Scythian, Uralic, or otherwise West Asian / Pelasgian traits into sub-Saharan Africa from the Late Bronze Age onward, as a result of chariot technology, discussed in some detail in some of my recent publications and work in progress (van Binsbergen 2009, 2010b, 2010c, 2011d; van Binsbergen & Woudhuizen 2011).

Forster's global treatment highlights the South and South East Asian connotations of haplo group M (as a gradual transformation, along the South coast of Eastern Eurasia, of haplo group M brought to South West Asia (the Arabian peninsula) along the Northern Route 'Out of Africa' (from 60 ka BP on) – while another offshoot of M was transmitted to East Central Asia and eventually became ancestral to part of the population of the Americas. Forster shows how the M₁ haplo group was transmitted via the Persian Gulf into Northern Central Africa; considering the prominence of other M haplogroups in South East Asia, this region might also have been the ultimate origin of M₁, but so far the evidence for such an assumption does not seem to be available.

7.4.2. *The Pelasgian hypothesis*

If Tauchmann's hypothesis is correct, then this would have considerable consequences for the Pelasgian thesis, which I have formulated specifically as an alternative, not only to Bernal's *Black Athena* hypothesis but also to Oppenheimer's General Sunda thesis. With the Pelasgian hypothesis, I postulate that much of the long-range cultural dynamics of the Old World since the Early Neolithic may be explained on the basis of a Primary Pelasgian Realm extending from the fertile Sahara to Central Asia ca. 7 ka BP, and containing, *in nucleo*, a considerable number of cultural and genetic traits, which (while undergoing transformations in detail) subsequently spread West to cover the entire Mediterranean, and East to China, to finally be transmitted, on the wings of chariot technology in the four directions of the compass (hence my term '*cross-model*' for this process): to North Western Europe, to Northern Europe, to East Asia, and to sub-Saharan Africa. The empirical backing for this hypothesis is supplied by an extensive list (van Binsbergen & Woudhuizen 2011) of over 80 traits (some genetic, most of them cultural), with summary indications of their distributions in West Asia, the Mediterranean, Western Europe, Northern Europe, the Steppe region of Asia with extensions to East, South and South East Asia, and finally in sub-Saharan Africa.

7.4.3. *Sunda and/or Pelasgian*

Under the Pelasgian hypothesis, I have tended to consider the prevalence of Pelasgian traits in sub-Saharan Africa mainly as a result of southward diffusion from the Mediterranean / West Asia – using as important indications: Steppe traits (such as the skull complex / headhunting), the Niger-Congo (> Bantu) macrophyllum (for which I demonstrate the *Borean affinity; van Binsbergen in press (a)), the dominant mythology of the Separation of Heaven and Earth, the central institution of kingship, continuities in the kinship and gender field, etc. The parallels between

- South East Asia / Sunda,
- sub-Saharan Africa, and
- the Bronze Age Mediterranean

I explain, under the Pelasgian thesis, as resulting from the spread of Pelasgian traits from their postulated West Asian / Eastern Mediterranean origin into the Western Mediterranean, Africa and South East Asia.

My Pelasgian hypothesis, meanwhile, emerged as a less radical and ultimately more convincing alternative to an earlier model of mine, in which both the Mediterranean and the African distributions of 'Pelasgian' traits were in fact interpreted as reflecting, in accordance with Oppenheimer, the presumable penetration of 'Sunda' (*i.e.* South East Asian, Austric) traits, both into the Mediterranean and into sub-Saharan Africa. In my more extensive discussions, I have not concealed a number of indications (see above) of the possible Sunda background of West Asian and Eastern Mediterranean phenomena, *e.g.* the potentially Austric etymology of Dilmun (the Sumerians' sacred island and trade centre in the Persian Gulf), and of a number of central names / concepts in Ancient Egyptian religion (van Binsbergen & Woudhuizen 2011: 370-372, Table 28.4). Now, under Tauchmann's hypothesis of an extensive pre-Bantu Asian presence in East and South Africa during the first, and perhaps early second, millennium of the Common Era, my earlier, Sunda-centred model may need to be, to some extent, restored to the central explanatory position in which I held it a few years ago. A considerable number, perhaps even the majority, of 'Pelasgian' traits in sub-Saharan Africa might have come to the latter region, not directly as a result of southward expansion of Pelasgian traits from the Mediterranean, but only indirectly, carried on the wings of Sunda expansion, so via the detour of South and South East Asia. We may have to interpret the apparent Bantu elements in the West Asian and the Eastern Mediterranean Bronze Age (van Binsbergen & Woudhuizen 2011) as a further indication of Sunda influence – and by the same token we would interpret as distant Sunda effects the rapid improvement, in the Eastern Mediterranean, of nautical skills, and the emergence, there, of Neolithic trading ports (such as Jaffa / Joppe and Corinth).

7.4.4. Genetics and the Oppenheimer–Dick-Read–Tauchmann ('Sunda') hypothesis

An entire, separate argument could be advanced concerning the genetic support for the Sunda thesis. Oppenheimer, himself a paediatrician who developed into one of British most prominent and vocal geneticists today, seeks such genetic support for his thesis primarily in the global distribution of thalassaemias – a range of hereditary blood conditions which combine the debilitating effects of chronic anaemia with a remarkable resistance against malaria. While it is thalassaemia research which put him on the track of the Sunda thesis in the first place, I, as a non-specialist from a different discipline (so without any authority in this field), am not impressed with the thalassaemia evidence as claimed to underpin the Sunda thesis, but other genetic markers, and (contrary to what could be expected on the basis of van Binsbergen with Isaak 2008) yield positive results for the Sunda thesis.

If Tauchmann is right and there was in fact a massive South East Asian / Austric presence in East and South East Africa prior to the effective penetration of the Bantu expansion there, then this would have to show in the genetic record. In that case distribution maps of classic genetic markers and of single genes would have to bring out patterns that link sub-Saharan Africa with South East Asia, more than with most other parts of the Old World.

As we have seen, at the level of mitochondrial DNA types (Forster 2004), this is certainly the case: African continuities in terms of the 'Back-into-Africa' thesis are to be found in relation with the haplo groups M1 and U6.

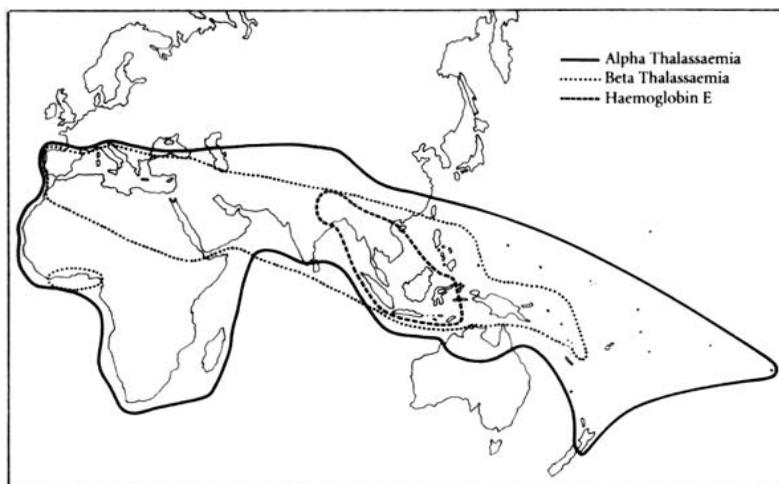
Although belonging to a phase in the genetic sciences prior to the advances in molecular biology in the 1990s, yet the distribution maps which Cavalli-Sforza *et al.* (1994) present in abundance, offer a further opportunity of testing the Sunda hypothesis.²⁰⁵

7.4.5. *The surprisingly negative evidence from thalassaemias*

Here we expect, in the first place, to derive insight from the distribution of thalassaemias, for Oppenheimer (one of the main present-day researchers of the genetic aspects of these conditions) advances the world distribution of thalassaemias alpha and beta as the main genetic underpinning of his Sunda hypothesis (Oppenheimer 1998). I reproduce his global distribution map of thalassaemia here as Fig. 7.4. He offers a genetic argument identifying South East Asia as the place of origin of these mutations. Note that beta thalassaemia is mainly confined to a belt, north of sub-Saharan Africa, that extends from Northern Spain to Melanesia; but that it also occurs on the Bight of Benin – although not along other significant stretches of the proposed Sunda trajectory into Africa: not in Madagascar, nor in Southern Africa. The latter threatens to make this finding less convincing as evidence of direct seaborne Asian influence during the last millennium and a half.

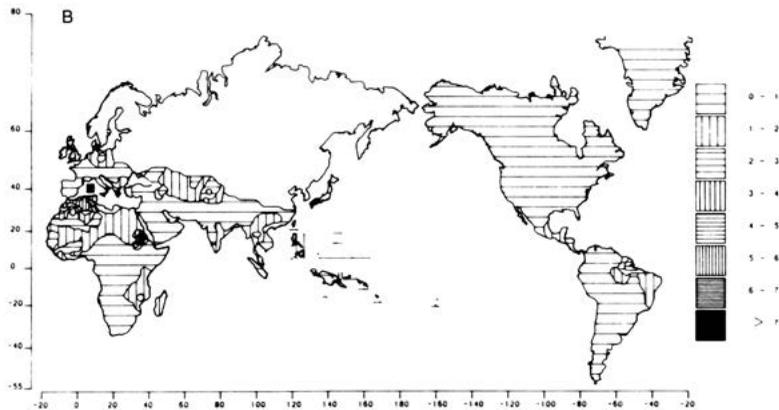
Fortunately we have the additional evidence from Cavalli-Sforza *et al.* 1994, showing more than minimum readings for Madagascar and the East African coast – somewhat in line with the Oppenheimer / Tauchmann hypotheses. Yet, for beta thalassaemia the evidence does not look good (Fig. 7.5). Without denying the possible implications of the relative highs, in Africa, in Eritrea and the Maghreb, the African incidence of beta thalassaemia remains so low, across the continent, that no claim of a massive Asian substrate influence throughout East and South East Africa can possibly be based on it.

²⁰⁵ After my initial training in physical anthropology, as a minor field, at Amsterdam University in the 1960s, under R.A.M. Bergman, I only followed genetics from a distance, until in the 2000s, in the context of Michael Witzel's work and of his Harvard Round Tables, it appeared as a major ancillary field in long-range research in comparative mythology. Today, a professional geneticist would be most unhappy to exclusively rely on Cavalli-Sforza *et al.* 1994. However, single-handedly, this is the best I can do at this stage.



note the isolated coastal attestation of beta thalassaemia along the Bight of Benin

Fig. 7.4. Global distribution of alpha and beta thalassaemia according to Oppenheimer (1998).



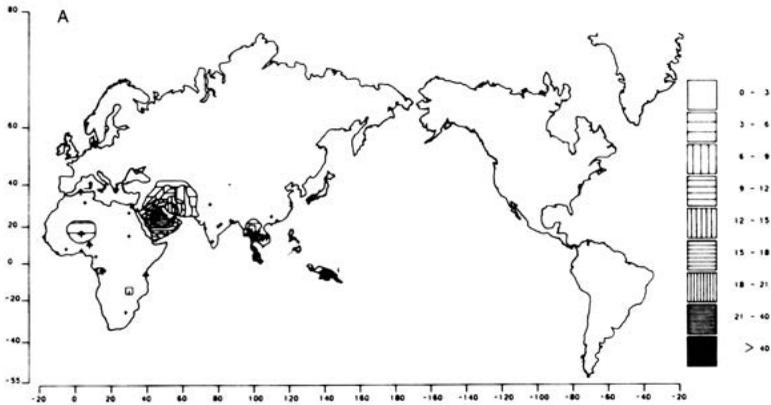
(after Cavalli-Sforza *et al.* 1994: Fig. 2.14.6.B; numbers to the right indicate the gene frequency in %)

Fig. 7.5. World distribution of beta thalassaemias

For alpha thalassaemia (Fig. 7.6) the conclusion concerning an Asian substrate in sub-Saharan African can be even more straightforwardly negative:

there is clearly a succession of highs extending from South East Asia to South West Asia (Iran and Arabian peninsula), suggestive of movement along an East-West axis; but the direction of that movement cannot be determined from the distribution alone – it may have been from East to West as implied by Oppenheimer, but just as well from West to East, as would be in line with the Pelasgian hypothesis;²⁰⁶

anyway, none of these high frequencies of alpha thalassaemia have reached sub-Saharan Africa.



after Cavalli-Sforza *et al.* 1994: Fig. 2.14.5.A; numbers to the right indicate the gene frequency in %; unfortunately, the figure gives no information on Madagascar, Indonesia, Oceania and Australia but this may be remedied by a more extensive library study; also cf. Fig. 7.5

Fig. 7.6. World distribution of alpha thalassaemias.

7.4.6. The corroborative evidence from other genetic markers

Thalassaemia distribution is apparently not the way to genetically prove a massive Asian substrate presence on the African continent. Yet some other single-gene distributions offered by Cavalli-Sforza *et al.* 1994 may have more in stock for us:

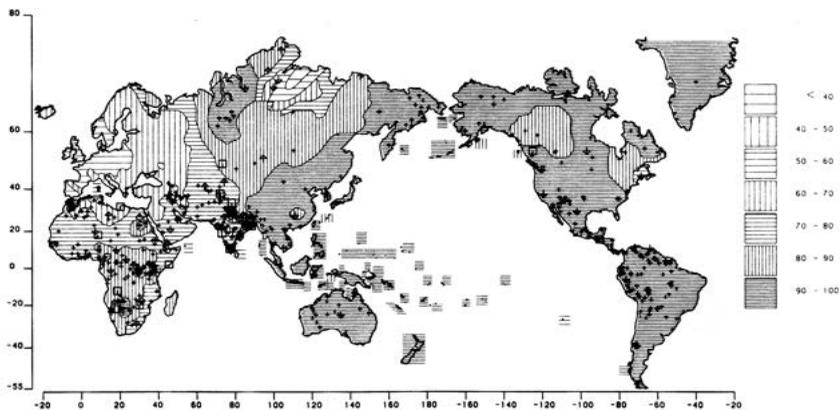
- not HLAB*12 (which reaches even a global low in South East Asia);
- nor RH*CDe neither RH*C (both of which are very high in South East Asia, but not conspicuous in Africa);

²⁰⁶ In fact, looking at the distribution, the most likely interpretation would be an original epicentre in South-west Asia (Iran and Arabian peninsula – in line with my Pelasgian hypothesis), whence subsequent transmission to South East Asia and New Guinea.

but we have a hit in the case of

- the Rhesus marker RH*D
- and perhaps also in the case of IGHGIG₃*za;bob1b3b4b5,
- and GC*IF

For the latter three single-gene markers I give the global distributions:



(Cavalli-Sforza *et al.* 1994: app. 79)

Fig. 7.7. The global distribution of the RH*D Rhesus marker offers support for the idea of recent Asian substrate presence in Africa.

As is manifest from Fig. 7.7, the RH*D marker obtains in most parts of Africa frequencies that are relatively low by global standards (although normal for the Western Old World – for the same pattern obtains in Europe); in Central Africa (from the Northern to the Southern savannah, with the exception of Mozambique and Eastern South Africa) frequencies rise to intermediate levels found in certain parts of North America and Northern Eurasia; high African frequencies at a par with common levels in the New World, South East and East Asia, Oceania and Australia are reached in four regions of Africa:

- (a) the Zimbabwe-Botswana Plateau,
- (b) the Western Grassfields of Cameroon,
- (c) Upper Egypt, and
- (d) the Eastern Maghrib.

Given the limited extent and the fact that there are as many as four of them, these African areas look like *destinations* rather than *origins* of transcontinental gene transfer. Of these four regions, (a) and (b) qualify as likely targets of substantial South East and East

Asian influence in recent millennia – as is testified by the many Asian-African ethnographic parallels in such fields as divination, musical instruments, sculpturing styles, burial customs, kingship, etc.²⁰⁷ For Ancient Egypt, a possible Sunda connection was argued on the ground of possible Austric etymologies of major theonyms (van Binsbergen & Woudhuizen 2011: 370 f.; also cf. Pedersen n.d.). The Maghreb case remains to be explained, possibly as the northernmost extension, into the Mediterranean, of Sunda maritime influences from the Bight of Benin or from Egypt and Syro-Palestine.²⁰⁸

The geographic distribution of IGHGIG3[†]za;boblb3b4b5 (Fig. 7.8) gives the impression of two narrow inland corridors: one stretching from Southern Sudan via the Western Grassfields of Cameroon, to Mali and Senegal; the other, less conspicuous, from Mozambique to Angola. In my provisional analysis of African-Asian continuities so far, my empirical ethnographic discussions of Sunda traits in Africa have concentrated on these two inland corridors. Admittedly, some of the data on these corridors are also amenable to an interpretation in terms of my Pelasgian hypothesis – as Pelasgian traits brought to sub-Saharan Africa in the form of a southern extensions of the cross-model, from the Late Bronze Age onward. Probably a combination of Sunda and Pelasgian models works best, but at any rate a considerable Asian substrate effect in the genetic makeup of sub-Saharan Africa appears to be detectable.

²⁰⁷ Since this was first drafted, I conducted (2015; after my first acquaintance with the region in 2006) some exploratory fieldwork in the Cameroonian Western Grassfields in order to identify conspicuous Sunda elements there in material culture, cosmologies, rituals etc. (van Binsbergen, in press (b)). In this connection I wish to express my indebtedness to the African Studies Centre Leiden, for contributions towards the financing of this research; to Jacqueline and Pascal Touoyem, for research assistance and wider logistic help; and to Dennis van Binsbergen, for photographic assistance. My sweeping impressions of 2006 were not exactly corroborated. Among the Bamileke inhabitants, nobles and chiefs of the Western Grassfields I found not the slightest *conscious* awareness of any Sunda influence, even though Indonesian impact on sculpturing and decoration styles seemed considerable, and even though core cosmological concepts of the Bamileke prove to be classical Chinese. I have not yet been able to probe the Bamileke language any further for indications of Austric or Sino-Tibetan influence. My tentative suggestions as a result are that Sunda influence here, if any, must be fairly old (scarcely later than 1000 CE); must have been wiped from collective memory as was the fate of other proposed *Fanthom Voyagers* (Dick-Read 2005; cf. Introduction, ch. 1 above); and (considering apparent continuities with the kingship culture of Meroe / Sudan, e.g. in royal architecture) may have been transmitted overland (which explains the African East-West corridor in the genetic material) rather than by sea.

²⁰⁸ The giant child of Poseidon / Water and Gē / Earth, Antaios / Anti (a well-chosen parentage if Antaios is to symbolise seaborne influence from afar), one of the divinities associated with this region, has a namesake and counterpart in Egypt (Anti), and there are indications of migrations from Egypt via the Maghreb and then South across the Sahara in the Late Bronze Age (van Binsbergen & Woudhuizen 2011: 385 f.; the genetic evidence on this point is considerable but space is lacking for its discussion.). In the Gilbert Islands, Micronesia, Oceania, anti (perhaps from proto-Austro-Asian *a^hntij 'hear at a distance' (Starostin & Starostin 1998-2008: Austric etymology) is the term for 'gods', and 'ancestors' are called anti-ma nomata ('living gods') (Cotterell 1989: 50). Further West-Eurasian mythological echoes are found here – not only the general Oceanian echoes (fishing up land; invention of the sail; incessant pre-cosmogonic mating of the primal divine couple) but also the origin of death in humans' eating from a sacred tree, cf. Genesis 2:17; apparently not all parallels between the Western and Eastern ends of the Old World, as claimed by Oppenheimer, were spurious – *pace* van Binsbergen with Isaak 2008.

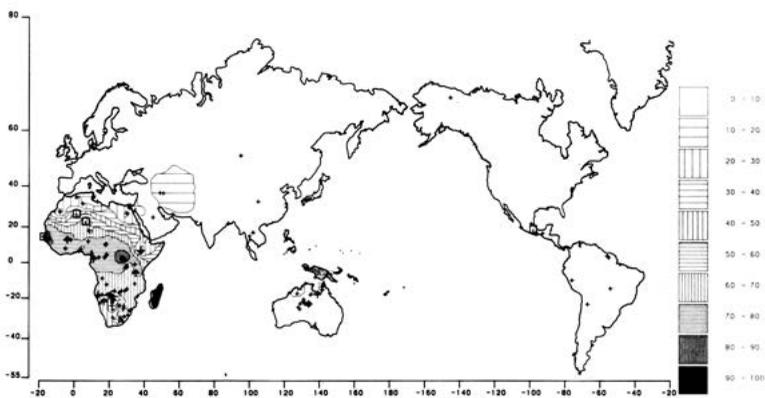


Fig. 7.8. Global distribution of IGHGIG3*za;boblb3b4b5 as a possible indication of recent Asian substrate presence in sub-Saharan Africa

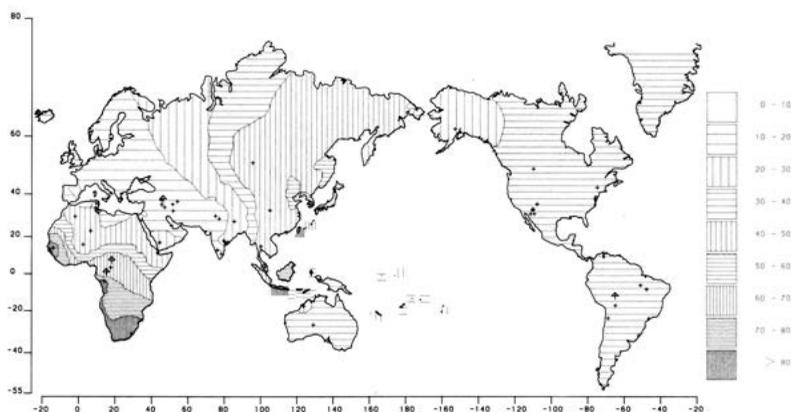


Fig. 7.9. Global distribution of GC*IF as a possible indication of recent Asian substrate presence in sub-Saharan Africa

I suggest that in connection with the geographic distribution of GC*IF in coastal South and West Africa (Fig. 7.9) we could point to the regrettable forced migration of inhabitants of South East Asia, Ceylon and Madagascar to South Africa (where they contributed greatly to the emergence of the so-called 'Coloured' segment of the modern South African population, and to the implantation of Islam in that country) and perhaps onward to West Africa (where the Isle of Gorée was a main transit port for slaves destined

for the West Indies) under the aegis of the United East Indian Company (VOC), in historic times from the 17th c. CE onward.

7.5. Conclusion

By and large, we have found substantial empirical, genetic evidence for the Oppenheimer–Dick–Read–Tauchmann hypothesis of an extensive recent Asian substrate presence in sub-Saharan Africa.

In addition to this genetic evidence in support of the Oppenheimer–Dick–Read–Tauchmann hypothesis, numerous points in support may be adduced from linguistics, archaeology, comparative ethnography, religious studies, and history. However, my hope did not come true that the papers of this conference and book would substantially contribute further evidence on this specific point.

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Chapter 8

Africa's Development in the minds of her children in the diaspora

Aspects of diaspora social impact on Africa

by Ndu Life Njoku

8.1. Preamble

In their lives, people enter into definite patterns of relations that are indispensable, and also independent of their will: relations with other people (whether or not they like it) which they go into in order to achieve goals which they cannot achieve individually. Social groups (ranging from a small group of two, like a married couple in a family, to nation-states and international bodies), with definite tasks and responsibilities, are products of these human relations. In international relations, people of different nationalities suffer certain disabilities and/or enjoy certain privileges due to the ways relationships are patterned within the international system, or due to the nature of inter-group relations. When, on the one hand, the individuals involved are critically aware of these social conditions, they are said to possess genuine consciousness.

On the other hand, consciousness is false when the social actor/actress has no clear knowledge as to why the social arena (in the international system, for instance) is patterned in a particular way, or why certain goals cannot be attained within the existing structure of social relations, or actions that must be taken to bring about desired changes. But, false consciousness is not usually possessed in the form just defined because that would clearly expose its bankruptcy and force the acquisition of true consciousness. False consciousness, which plays the ideological role of concealing from the oppressed the source of their suffering and the path to their self-liberation, is possessed in a form that advances explanations of social reality based on myths and fallacies. False consciousness is created and sustained consciously in international relations by those who are afraid that genuine consciousness will lead to a challenging of existing injustice or unconsciously by those who have imbibed it and have been positioned to propagate it by the forces which stand to gain from the continuing ignorance of those who have been deprived by the way things are in the world.

But genuine consciousness is not always committed to change. In fact, genuine consciousness in international relations can function deliberately to prevent change in the system if the bearers of the consciousness are aware that their present privileges will be lost to fundamental changes in the global structure. Thus, genuine consciousness is either revolutionary or reactionary, or both, in the sense of being reformist (Agozino, 1987).

Therefore, consciousness, for our present purpose, is seen as the awareness of the conditions and implications of social existence in the international system. It not only embodies knowledge of the goals of social existence in the system and the obstacles to the attainment of these goals, but also prescribes appropriate actions for the removal of these obstacles. The clarification of the concept of consciousness is the foreground that knowledge/awareness and scholarship, as well as social activism, can be employed for the purpose of removing all obstacles to the welfare of man in inter-group or international relations, or to protect these obstacles in the interest of those who kept them there in the first place in order to derive some privileges. This bifurcation in the utility of consciousness shows that it could be deliberately used for the purpose of liberation, as opposed to being used for the purpose of domination.

Given that ideas and human thoughts generate either false or genuine consciousness, no scholarship – and, therefore, no knowledge – can be neutral in a world where the privileged and the deprived are locked in unceasing struggles that are now overt, and now covert. Based on the problem created by the nature of the relationship between Africans and Europeans, and the consciousness aroused by Western ideas, thoughts and discourses on Africa and the Africans, this paper sets out to show the extent to which 'African-African Diaspora intellectual multi-nationalism' has been an instrument of liberation by propagating genuine consciousness in Africa's proto-history.

8.2. Introduction: An overview of the problem

The central problematic here is the type of ideas which the contact and the relationship between Africans and Euro-Americans generated, and those ideas or thoughts that focused on Africa as their central theme. In a very real sense, most of these Afro-centric thoughts were vigorous, albeit combative, responses to Western ideas about Africa and Africans based on myths and fallacies.

Historically, the first point of call is the age of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (dating from about 1600 A.D.), when Europeans landed on the African coasts while trying to by-pass the Arabs on their way to India. Before this period, the interaction between Africa and Europe was one clothed in mutual mental respect and equality. But, this positive image of Africa and Africans was shattered by the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Of course, no one would expect such a positive image to remain under a situation where Europeans had begun subjecting Africans to the most dehumanizing treatment ever recorded in history. So, after the slave trade got off the ground, Western intellectual superstructure began to defend the slave economic substructure and the positive image of Africa and the African was replaced by prejudice of the kind seen in the 19th and 20th centuries. Therefore, the rise of racial theories cannot be understood without paying close attention to the influence of pseudo-scientific writings.

In fact, the racist intellectual theories of the Western world during the slave trade era served the timely purpose of justifying, for the slavocracy, the then existing socio-economic status-quo (Banton and Harwood 1975). Therefore, when the Abolition movement developed in the 18th century, anti-slavery activists found it necessary to wage a war against racist ideas and negative images of Africa and the Africans in a bid to address the African predicament and remedy the embarrassing situation of Africans permanently.

Analysis of the African predicament in proto-history runs along certain salient grooves: a recount of a heroic African past within the structures of Africa, revealing politico-socio-economic achievements in the continent during the period before the dawn of proto-history; disempowerment, marginalization and exploitation in the period of proto-history, whether it was during the slave trade era or under colonialism; and the purposeful socio-political struggle to promote African cooperation and unity, and to challenge colonialism and white supremacy inside Africa and even outside of the continent. It is against the background of this predicament that the study of Africa or what is generally known as 'African Studies', its paradigm, and pedagogy, has been of concern to Africanists and African scholars, including of course the very children of Africa in the Diaspora who had to champion the cause of pan-Africanism. Beyond the scholarly interest in African Studies, many of those who study/studied and write/wrote about Africa are/were equally committed to understanding Africa not just as an area of scholarly inquiry, but also as an area that deserves attention because of the concerns of its peoples; concerns which revolve around the great question of 'how to make Africa whole again' (Njoku and Osafor: 1996).

A major force in African political thought and world view, therefore, is the impact of the concept of pan-Africanism in/on Africa, the initiative of which came from Africans abroad. After the abolition of the slave trade, Africans in Diaspora continued to be treated as inferior human beings. At about the same time, a similar situation existed in the African continent. Pan-Africanism was therefore something of a racial solidarity, a bold attempt by people of African descent to protest against their low status as well as to try to create a free homeland. From the basic quest of the need for the restoration of dignity to the African through the rediscovery of self and the creation of a common identity amongst all Africans and peoples of African origin, with a view to achieving integration and the uplifting of the black race, the sense of pan-African identity was born outside Africa within the context of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. In the slave ship and in the land of their captivity in the New World, Africans from different cultural backgrounds recognized themselves for the first time as a people with a common need: freedom or emancipation from oppression and racial discrimination. Thus, between World War I and World War II, from 1918 to 1939, the various sections of the world inhabited by people of African descent became more conscious of each other than ever before. Events among blacks in America and the West Indies were influencing Africans in the homeland and African events were being closely monitored by a growing number of New World blacks. The African and New World elite began to feel that the elevation of the black race must be a joint effort, that a victory of Africans over colonialism in Africa was no less important than a victory of blacks over segregation in America. Many felt that a person of African descent could not carry himself with dignity, irrespective of his degree of freedom, as long as fellow members of his race were being humiliated elsewhere in the world (Webster and Boahen 1967).

Therefore, the Pan-Africanist movement whose origins can be traced back to the early years of the 19th century drew its rationale from the experience of subjugation to alien hegemony that was the lot of all the peoples of Africa. To recap, for a century and more, Africans had been enslaved, dominated, and exploited by outsiders; only by coming together and presenting a united front to the rest of the world, Pan-Africanists held, could they fight oppression and guarantee their own freedom and integrity in the international world.

8.3. 'Freedom, wellbeing, and development' in the minds of the diaspora children

The 'expository' and radical works of activists, scholars and writers like Du Bois, Garvey, Malcolm X, Fanon, and Rodney, to mention but a few of Africa's children in the Diaspora, have their origins in a rich historical background of genuine anti-slavery/slave trade black resistance consciousness – a resistance consciousness that pre-dates the Afro-centric movement which started in the 19th century, but gained momentum after the mid-20th century. As Uya rightly points out, 'the movement to eradicate [slavery and slave trade] from the 18th century onwards played an extremely important role in the

rationalization and consolidation of European racism, imperialism and colonialism in Africa (2004; 2006). Unfortunately, in spite of the depth and relevance of Black involvement in the eradication of slavery and slave trade, our understanding of the role of black and African peoples' (especially those in the Diaspora) contributions has not been fully recognized. No one will deny this truth. A few examples here will suffice.

If we choose to begin citing our examples by first referring to the invasion of Santo Domingo in 1805 by the Dessalines-led Haitian armies, after he took over from Toussaint L'Ouverture who died in the thick of battle in 1803, it is because of its spectacular importance; after all, many instances of successful slave revolts, which resulted in the freedom of many, many slaves, predate the Haitian example. From the spectacular example of Haiti, it is interesting to note that ex-slaves from Haiti migrated to other parts of the New World, like Alabama and Louisiana in America, with 'the revolutionary message' of liberation. It is important to note, at this juncture, that in their revolutionary agitation against American slavery and slave holders, latter-day 'black abolitionists drew ideological inspiration from the Haitian rather than the American revolution', as they called on African children in the Diaspora to emulate 'the traits of bravery and heroism and martial valour' of the people of Haiti (Sinha 2007). In a very real sense, the great significance of Haiti is that, in the struggle for ultimate freedom, 'a slave society in its prime had been dashed down and this represented a token of hope for slaves everywhere' (Uya 2007). Therefore, even with all her problems, independent Haiti remained a great source of inspiration in the journey out of bondage for Africa's children in the Diaspora, and a symbol of recognition for blacks throughout the 19th century (Uya 2003).

Also worthy of note was the establishment of communities of escaped slaves (Maroon communities) in various parts of the Caribbean Islands, especially between the 17th and 18th centuries. One good example was Palmaras, which 'represented, by and large, a *pan-African response to servitude*, numbering in her population slaves from several ethnic groups in Africa' (Uya 2007; emphasis mine). That Palmaras was organized utilizing the African political state system, that this Sudanic state model which originated or developed in Africa could be transferred and successfully instituted in another continent, and that it could cut across ethnic lines, including all who sought refuge in it, goes to underline the fact that *the singular pre-occupation of mind of Africa's children in the Diaspora was Africa's development*. This is true whether it is seen as a carry-over of the development experience Africa had in the pre-contact period before the forced migration occasioned by the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade or the right development pattern she deserved in the period after its abolition. Thus, away from the homeland, before the return to Africa movement, Africa's Diaspora children first sought to re-invent the African idea of development in their fight (for freedom) against slavery and racism, and imbue it with new meanings.

The full impact of the activities of 'freemen of colour' like Olaudah Equiano, and others in the New World, such as J. W. C. Pennington, Charles Remond and Sarah, his sister, and J. M. Smith, David Ruggles, Peter Williams, Reverend James, Reverend Paul of Albany, Reverend William Quinn of Pittsburg, Reverend Robert Purvis, Samuel Cor-

nish, Dr. Martin Delany, John Russwurm, William W. Brown, Henry H. Garnet, Theodore Holly, Josiah Henson, and Frederick Douglass (the well-known fugitive slave turned abolitionist) on the cause of black resistance consciousness has not been assessed. To say the least, these children of Africa, who were by the standards of the day in their host societies quite distinguished, contributed immensely to the abolitionist cause (Uya 2007).

Closely associated with the abolitionist crusade were the efforts of those children of Africa in the Diaspora who were part and parcel of the return to Africa movement. Under the auspices of the West Indian Church Association, many of them returned to West Africa, for instance, to champion the cause of education and Christian missionary work. One of the names that readily comes to mind is

‘...Duppont from St. Kitts who went to the Rio Pongas region of present day Guinea Republic in 1855 and with the help of local chiefs and traders, opened a school at Falangia’ (Uya 2007).

Similarly, a number of Africa's children from the Diaspora returned to West Africa and contributed to her development through various human endeavours: traders like Joaquim d'Almeida, Francisco Olympion Silva, Mama Vieryra, Jose Domingo Martins and de Souza established large oil palm plantations; Marcos Augusto Jose Cardoso, a carpenter, who arrived West Africa in 1869, helped in the construction of many educational and religious institutions in Lagos, Ebute Metta, Ibadan (in modern Nigeria) and Cotonou (in the Republic of Benin), and till this day he is still remembered for his work on the Holy Cross Cathedral Church in Lagos. Some of these returnees distinguished themselves in farming. Maxwell Porfeira Assunção Alakija established his large business in Abeokuta in present-day Nigeria, where he planted and processed cotton with his cotton gin. In Porto Novo, Jose Domingos Martins reared cattle and he also was one of those who planted various agricultural crops. In this way 'they passed on new technology of agriculture to the surrounding communities, such as the cultivation of crops... They introduced new varieties of crops like mangoes, coconuts, beans and manioc (cassava)' (Uya 2007).

In the field of missionary education, they helped, for example, in the spread of the Islamic religion in West Africa by constructing mosques in Porto Novo, Whydah, and Ague throughout the nineteenth century. The Imam of Ague was a Brazilian ex-slave, Saidon, who initiated the building of a mosque there in 1850. Similarly, Abdullahi Alechou, the son of a Brazilian ex-slave, was intimately involved with the building of the biggest mosque in Whydah in 1883 (Uya 2007).

Thus, that Sierra Leone and Liberia - established as provinces of freedom to provide homes 'for the dispersed and oppressed children of Africa' - became very important centers for the spread of Western influences within the context of the West African sub-region is easy to appreciate. Some of the distinguished African Diaspora children who lived in these 'provinces of freedom' were Thomas Peters, the great orator and leader of his people, John B. Russwurm, a Jamaican immigrant journalist who established the *Herald* in Liberia in 1830, and Edward Wilmot Blyden, a West Indian who became the most distinguished citizen of Liberia and the foremost nationalist in pre-colonial Africa.

Apart from enjoining educated Africans to take up their responsibility to uphold the righteous development of racial personality, Blyden was convinced that the Black race needed regeneration from the throes of slavery through a process of training which should be from within; that is, an inside-out training instead of a package from outside. It was his position that the racism of the West should not be allowed to detract from the core of Africanness (Chikwendu 1983).

This age-long tradition of ‘expository radicalism by documentation’ in African studies was to be taken to its next level by the African-American leader, William Du Bois, who emerged after the death of Booker T. Washington. Du Bois and another Black leader of thought, George Padmore, used radical social science research and analysis to thrust into the intellectual arena the thesis that Western colonialism had destroyed African civilizations and economic and social formations. Before Du Bois could establish his leadership among African-Americans, another activist, Marcus Garvey, ‘stirred the black world as no one before or since the rise of Kwame Nkrumah and the modern African nationalists’ (Webster and Boahen 1967).

According to one of Nigeria’s foremost nationalists, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Marcus Aurelius Garvey published his inspiring ‘Philosophy of Opinions’ and ‘struck the first blow for a new Africa that would be politically-minded’ (Azikiwe 1970). While Du Bois in his ideas and leadership was more like the West African elite which emerged in the National Congress of British West Africa (N.C.B.W.A.) following World War 1, Garvey’s simple but dynamic ideas, designed first to appeal to the members of the African Diaspora in the New World, his glorification of Africa and the Africans, his belief in the ultimate liberation of the homeland, ‘helped powerfully to counteract the mood of resignation based on a passive acceptance of European superiority to which many Africans had given way’ (Hallett 1974). Garvey’s journal, *Negro World*, was very eagerly read in academic circles throughout the West African sub-region.

Garvey’s ideas were so powerful, and his activism so radical that Blacks of his time everywhere, including African-Americans, became increasingly intolerant of the continued subjugation under which they were forced to live, and new radical leaders began to emerge. Some of the later day leaders, for example, Malcolm X - an African-American Muslim who emerged - and supporters of the ‘Black Power’ movement of Stokeley Carmichael and Rap Brown were far less moderate than the more celebrated Martin Luther King who was committed to the goal of black integration and the means of non-violent civil disobedience. These activists were convinced that, the rehabilitation of the lot of the Blackman around the world would be meaningless unless his lot in the New World was also rehabilitated. On the whole, the critical views of most of these activists and scholars, including the Marxist leanings of some like C. L. R. James, not only led to ‘the radicalization of the revolts against slavery [and racism but also] passed into the anti-colonial or anti-capitalist movements of the twentieth century’ (Uya 2003).

If the works of Du Bois and that of other radicals, like Padmore and James, are less visible in post-independence Africa, their thesis were to be most articulately restated in the post-colonial era by yet another great scholar from the African Diaspora: Walter Rodney. As Oculi rightly points out, even the title of the major work of this Guyanese

intellectual, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, published in 1972, has loud suggestions of the 'ancestors have come back to us', being a continuation of the theme that Du Bois and Padmore had, as the precursors of this academic genre, pioneered in Afro-centric scholarship (in Barongo 1983). Rodney was clearly one of the most solidly ideologically situated intellectuals ever to critique colonialism and black opportunism that was its contemporary heir, and where necessary, condemn them. Yet, Rodney himself was a product of a new Afro-centric consciousness that was aroused by yet another Diaspora African (from the Caribbean), Franz Fanon, who through his studies of the Algerian revolution, synthesized into open wisdom the proposition that colonial violence against colonized peoples *under-develops the personality* of its victims.

Long before the end of the colonial period, hundreds of African students who had begun to flock to European and American cities. One result of this cultural contact and the accompanying struggle, along with its strains of ambivalence and alienation, was the birth of the ideology of Negritude. Defined by Leopold Senghor of Senegal as 'the whole complex civilized values – cultural, economic, social and political - which characterize the black peoples or more precisely the Negro-African world' (quoted in Njoku 2003), the word was invented by Aimé Césaire, a West Indian, who tagged the charter of the movement as 'Return to My Native Land'. In brief, Césaire's main achievement, seconded by his colleague, Senghor, was to turn the inferiority feelings of Africans into positive channels. With Negritude, to be black was no longer a stigma but a privilege. To say the least, this consciousness helped to build a kind of confidence that was needed for the struggle for independence in Africa. A variant of Negritude was to shift from Blackness to *Africaness*; that is, to *Africanite*, in Senghor's version, or to the cult of the 'African personality', as popularized by President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana during the 1950s and 1960s. On the whole, African leaders then insisted that colonialism, and along with it the capitalist penetration of Africa, had led to the alienation and dislocation of the African and his separation from his traditional culture, and his enslavement (Nkrumah 1964; Nyerere 1964; Toure 1959; Senghor 1964).

The proponents of Negritude had founded the magazine *Presence Africaine*, edited by Alioune Diop of Senegal, and published in Paris, that generated an intellectual ferment which eventually led to the first and second World Congresses of Black Men of Culture in Paris (1956) and in Rome (1959) respectively. From then onwards, Negritude was seen by different people from different perspectives. Jean Paul Sartre and Jacques Rabeman-Yara (a Malagasy poet), for example, saw it as a quality of revolt arising from the political and cultural oppression of the Negro.

Traces of Negritude reflected in the Ujamaa programme of the government of Julius Nyerere of Tanzania. However, the truth remains that most African leaders failed to take positive steps to reflect their own African interests, culture and traditions soon after independence, despite the pre-independence emphasis of Negritude on *Africaness*. It is hoped that the current expressions of an African renaissance consciousness by some African leaders, in spite of the many challenges of the African state in a rapidly globalizing world, are expressions of a genuine consciousness located within the context of the age-long Pan-Africanist tradition.

Pan-Africanism soon evolved into an ideological consciousness of many dimensions. In the political realm, Nkrumah's continental federalism found expression in the 1963 establishment of the Organization for African Unity Charter. Like the political class, the radical intelligentsia used their working enterprise, particularly literature, a potent instrument of deconstructing Africa's unflattering political evolution through colonialism and beyond. Thus, it is valid to say that, pioneering African literatures, just like African nationalism, were formulated on deconstructionist ideals and logic. In this regard, references can be made to 'the pioneering literatures of Laye, Ekwensi, Soyinka, Ngugi, Achebe, Nkosi, Sembene and Mphahlele ... Added to this elite team are writers like Jean-Joseph Robearivelo (of Malagasy), Tchicaya U Tam'si (of Congo), Yambo Ouologuem (of Mali) and others' (Arasanyin 2009). These writers formed a kind of literary alliance guided by the singular maxim of ridding Africa of its cultural subordination and colonial syndrome.

And for the Diaspora Africans, this consciousness has now led to an increasing recognition that having a homeland consolidates identity and gives poise to one's personality. Accordingly, one of the latest dimensions of the African Diaspora experience is that, it is no longer politically correct to refer to black people in America as 'Blacks'. They are now called African-Americans, underscoring the importance of mooring one's identity to the prideful heritage of a specific space, culture, and history. Little wonder why many return, during the summer periods, to visit the African homeland and connect with their roots. The 'melting pot' ideology, it has been noted, has given way to the celebration of a new awareness of diversity or multiculturalism.

8.4. The challenge: Problems and issues in the way of the Pan-African project

Even though there has been an ambiguous relationship - once described by Du Bois with the famous concept of 'double consciousness' - between Africans in Africa and Africa's children in the Diaspora, the hope of the return of the glory of Africa through her scions from across the ocean has never dampened even in the post-colonial period. This lingering hope probably flows from the popular view that, '...no one can do as much for us as we can do for ourselves...in this world of concrete interests where blood and race are still dominant factors shaping inter-connectivity and globalization'. It therefore follows that 'the Sphinx must solve its own riddle' (Lynch 1967).

Unfortunately, the facts emerging from the African homeland are disquieting. The political dimension appears worse as the leadership seems to be in disarray, the hope of *the state* becoming a reassuring presence to everybody forlorn, and many of the countries' economic development and integration projects disrupted as they found themselves engulfed in chronic ethnic tensions that often erupted into violent conflicts. The truth has been that, in most cases, such conflicts result from the fact that members of the political class succumb to both the pressures and allure of primordial loyalties/sentiments, sub-national self-interests and personal ambitions. But, to explain Africa's

troubles in the context of the failure of the postcolonial leadership alone has become the conventional wisdom of the internalist interpreters of African history.

Broadly speaking, Africa's development history has, thanks to the expository and radical works of Africanist scholars and writers of yester-years (Bankole, 1982), produced a burgeoning academic and professional literature seeking to establish the causes and potential remedies for Africa's development crisis. Much of the debate runs along an intellectual continuum that can roughly be described as externalist-internalist in character. Externalists tend to place their principal emphasis on the external sources of the problems faced by African countries throughout history. This is the 'white conspiracy theory' – the belief that 'any black person from Timbuktu to Tulsa could trace most of their problems to white people'. The internalist approach, on the other hand, insists that the basic cause of African problems can be found within the African cultural milieu. This approach is seriously flawed. Equally flawed is the externalist interpretation that fails to credit the work of the colonizers with any beneficial results, accidental or otherwise. A balanced study of the African past must assign appropriate weight to the two interpretations (Uzoigwe 2004).

Accordingly, while one could, in the manner of the late radical Africanist historian Walter Rodney, point accusing fingers at Western imperialists and their likes for laying the foundation for the situation of backwardness and under-development in Africa through the instrumentality of the slave trade and colonialism, the truth is that, Africans are, in no small measure, responsible for part of the African predicament, especially since independence. Most of those who dare to write or say anything about Africa fall into a category that swings between what could be called *Africynics* and *Afriskeptics*. In practice, neither category could see much that is good or worthwhile in, or out of, Africa. In the eyes of the *Africynics*, Africa is the land of the noble savage with nothing to hope for, and with no desire or incentive for self-improvement. The noble savage is eternally contented with his or her primitive state and has no higher goals or ambition. He or she has nothing to offer either to civilization or to the global heritage of humankind. The prejudices with which the *Africynics* and *Afriskeptics* regard Africa are fuelled by the roles and vagaries of those that the African scholar, Izu Marcel Onyeocha, once described as *Africlowns*. According to him, *Africlowns* are a very strange type of species of humans in Africa. They are mostly found among certain types of leaders or rulers in Africa. Such types are characterized by a very low type of mentality about anything. They generally do not have much formal education or proper international exposure. They do not seem to have the slightest coherent idea about anything. Having somehow managed to occupy positions of authority, or having found themselves in the corridors of power, they tend to cling to it tenaciously, and would never let go. They do not seem to have any idea of what it means to be a statesman, or of respecting conventions and rules of proper conduct (in Njoku 2008).

Members of this class often start as despots and daily strive to outdo themselves in showing raw power either by mindless autocracy or by excessive brutality. At home they are extremely insecure and unwelcome abroad, except among those who stand to benefit from the largesse that flow from their inept handling of their national resources. To

show that they have really become somebody in human society, they would be seen flaunting ill-gotten wealth, setting up palaces, stashing away huge amounts of money in foreign banks (perhaps, some strange form of foreign relations?) and descending with fury on critics. Generally, they wish to rule for life, and they see an enemy in anyone that dares to ask for explanation or oppose them. Before the international community, they portray Africa as a pack of clowns and political governance as a circus-piece. At home, sometimes they over-dramatize inconsequential(s) with regard to opposition and state security. As leaders, they have nothing to show to the world except an obnoxious presence. *Africlowns* are all over the place in the homeland, and they are among the greatest obstacles in Africa's way of emerging.

No doubt, *Afro-optimism* as a political discourse may point to some remarkable achievements in the political economy of Africa since the late 1990s; but, the fact remains that almost everywhere in the homeland Human Development Indices show that living conditions have continued to deteriorate and that the scourge of poverty has diminished the potential for re-negotiating the moral culture. For instance, in universities in Nigeria, one could hardly expect academics that are, more often than not, owed many months' salaries, or, at best, very irregularly paid to practise academics strictly in line with the ethics of the profession. In simple terms, 'the non-payment of salaries to workers [has] produced a predictably negative effect on the work ethic of public servants' (Nwachuku 2004). Generally, the political elite of the African postcolonial state have become more predatory, corrupt, undisciplined and violent.

Although the literature is diverse in its description of the African state, there seems to be a consensus that the state in Africa is in crisis. Weakened by structural adjustment programmes (SAP), discredited by corruption, contested by the parallel bureaucracies created by the system of international cooperation, it has generally been authoritarian, predatory, and absolutist in terms of monopolization of power by the African political elite (Abubakar 2001). Soon after inheriting power from the colonialist in Africa, these elite privatized the state, using it as the instrument for primitive accumulation and for oppressing the populace, who had to disengage from the realm of the state into ethnic, religious, and other identity-based formations. As Ake makes clear,

Even after independence, the state in Africa has not become a reassuring presence but remains a formidable threat to everybody except the few who control it. It is largely regarded as a hostile force to be evaded, cheated, defeated and appropriated as circumstances permit. Accordingly, most people have turned away from the state to seek safety and fulfillment in their community, ethnic group, and nation (Ake 1994).

Little wonder why the oppressed African populace has been asking the cynical question: '*when will independence be over?*' The disengagement of the populace from the realm of the state has, as it were, led to a legitimacy-deficit for the postcolonial state. It is this process of de-legitimation, along with the imposition of harsh socio-economic programmes (such as SAP), 'that threw up social forces culminating in diverse crises and conflicts across the African continent' (Abubakar 2001). Put differently, because of its inability to rectify internal economic fragmentation and become an agent of development and empowerment for its citizens, often the state in Africa is viewed as hostile,

personalized, and absolutist in the exercise of power (see, Olukoshi and Laakso 1995).

In addition to these realities, the nation-state is of diminishing relevance today as a result of globalization. Over the last decades, studies of modern Africa have driven home the fact that one cannot fully understand current African conditions unless from a transcontinental, global perspective. The global economic order, its new information and communication technologies as well as its transport systems, has greatly enhanced the mobility of capital and labour in Africa, as in other parts of the world. This has triggered international migration on an unprecedented scale. In Africa, many among those whose circumstances do not permit to appropriate the state as instrument for domination and exploitation resort to evading it mainly through international migration. Little wonder why most African countries have continued to experience *push*, or compelled desertion of homelands, rather than mild *pulls*. In fact, massive emigration—quite apart from the exodus of professional Africans—has become an Africa-wide problem.

As for the exodus of professionals, perhaps institutions for higher learning and the medical field have suffered most. In the case of Nigeria, for example, it is alleged that over eight thousand medical doctors work outside the country (Kalu 2008). Nigerian institutions of higher learning, for instance, are critically short of academics because those who refuse to emigrate are condemned to suffer from 'brain hemorrhage' because of a disabling environment that stultifies. The situation has been moving from bad to worse that academics have continued to escape to all manners of places. Kalu records that more than 10,000 faculty members deserted the universities in Africa in the last decade of the millennium (2008). African university academics as well as other

professional Africans are now driving taxis, picking grapes, looking after old people, working in brick-making factories, or packaging chewing gum all over Europe. It is important to indicate that the professionals who migrate do not necessarily find employment in their fields of specialization. Some retrain into new professions; others barely survive (Kalu 2008).

The obvious fact is that, the development of postcolonial Africa is set to suffer by the depletion of highly qualified human resources. Meanwhile, the continent pays a high price to import foreigners. But, migration out of the African continent is not restricted to the highly qualified personnel (HQP). In fact, the continent has sunk deep into the abyss of a migration pattern that scatters rather than consolidates. Every now and then, it has been noted, 'thousands of Africans desert the soft states of Africa, the failed economies, and corrupt political environments' (Kalu 2008). The problem is such that, it is as if the African continent is *spewing out* its people! The more serious matter is what appears like the re-opening of the slave routes of yester-years by Africans who 'sell' themselves—a black mark on Africa's battered image. The great irony of this issue is that, Africans are apparently running away from their roots just when African-Americans seek to recover theirs!

Thus, while it may be useful to revisit the stirring examples from the era of Aggrey, Azikiwe and Nkrumah, among others, who brought the Golden Fleece home, it must be acknowledged, at least for now, that the continentally-based African-African Diaspora multi-nationalist project suffers from generational ideological shifts and contexts. Almost

five decades have passed since the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was formed, and nearly a decade has gone by since the African Union (AU) was established, yet the world is bombarded with media images showing Africans fighting one another along ethnic lines. Recent outbreaks of violence against African immigrants in South Africa and elsewhere raise disquieting questions. The argument by some analysts is that, considering the manipulations of participants in these conflicts and wars by the political elite, these may not be ethnic wars but class wars. The fact of the matter, though, is that victims are identified and attacked by their assailants on an ethnic basis. Given such tendencies, one is persuaded to ask if these conflicts are not an indication that Pan-Africanism is a pipe-dream. In other words, are Pan-Africanism, African Union and African Renaissance elite projects of the past, not backed by current trends among African populations? Or, will Africa, in general, be characterized by new closely entangled meanings of nationalism, xenophobia, or even Afrophobia? Last, but not least, the example of South African violence against African immigrants leads us to question the meaning of the viability of the concept of multiculturalism. Given such developments, are local and national identities in Africa easier to establish than supra-national identity?

8.5. Prospects and proposals

Hopefully, there is the prospect (like the Ghanaian scholar and Pan-Africanist activist, Kwesi Kwaa Prah, believes) that Pan-Africanism may not have reached a dead end. For, as Prah has rightly argued in his *The African Nation – the State of the Nation*, it was to be 'expected that a historical process like this one would encounter mistakes, setbacks, obstacles and hindrances'. Certainly, with the setting up of institutions like the AU, all hope is not lost. After all, during the second European war (World War II), August Weber observed that 'the most important, in fact the decisive reason for the setting up of a European league is the final elimination of the constant menace of war'. One great lesson to learn from this European experience is that, 'doubtlessly, and for not altogether dissimilar reasons, a united Africa would bring an end to African wars. For Africans, the realization of greater European unity and maturity of the European Union are both an inspiration and an opportunity to learn the lessons and benefits of institutionalizing the ideals of unity.' In other words, rather than bemoan the wars and conflicts as proof that Pan-Africanism is impossibility, these should be the very basis of searching for creative solutions and approaching African unity with a sense of urgency. But, like the writer, Simphiwe Sesanti, rightly admonished, 'the African identity and the unity of Africans, though, must not be reduced and limited to continentally-based Africans alone' (Sesanti 2008). The crucial point, however, is that there is need to curb the dysfunctional potential of migration away from Africa, before Diaspora Africa can be harnessed as a tool to assist the development of the homeland.

As Prah has rightly argued, Africans who are in the Diaspora, through slavery or otherwise, need be encouraged to accept full citizenship and the rights and obligations which go with it. This would be beneficial for both the Diasporan community and continen-

tally-based Africans. To back up this argument, Prah has observed that it was the overseas Chinese who financed the 1912 Chinese Revolution. As recently as 2001, China received \$32 billions from non-resident Chinese as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). In Israel there is a law that grants citizenship to any Jew who chooses Israel as his/her home upon arrival and declaration to the effect.

For Indians, there is an important document in their Ministry of External Affairs that states that, 'the Diaspora is very special to India'; it also celebrates the fact that the Diaspora Indians have retained their emotional, cultural and spiritual links with their home country.

It is to nurture this symbiotic relationship to mutual advantage that the government of India, following the express directions of the prime minister, had established a high level committee... with the mandate to make an in-depth study of the problems and difficulties, the hopes and expectations of the overseas Indian community (Prah 2006)

This measure accommodates those Indians abroad who desire to be associated with the country of their origin without necessarily physically coming back home. Drawing from the above, one thinks that, for the realization of the full benefits of the African/African Diaspora multi-nationalism, and for Pan-Africanism not to remain a pipedream, continentally-based Africans should take a cue from the Asians and the Jewish people, and appreciate their own. One says so because any form of advancement in Africa that can stand the test of time has to be generated from continentally-based sources and inspiration.

8.6. Conclusion

It is clear that slavery/slave trade and colonialism played a significant role in the conceptualization of the negative image of Africa in the power relations between Africa and Europe in the pre-Independence period,. Before African independence would gain momentum, the juxtaposition of European civilization and African assumed barbarity, European enlightened paternalism and African desire to ape Europeans as the only way out of his benightedness, and the like, was hardly surprising. Within this context, the destiny of Africa was said to be inextricably tied up with those of Europe. The image of Africa as the 'Dark Continent' waiting to be 'discovered' by Europeans was thus consistent with the Euro-African power relations (Uya 1984).Therefore, when, in the 1950s and 1960s, African nationalist leaders made a clarion call to Africans to embrace Pan-Africanism, the point then was to use it as an ideology and a rallying-point to emphasize African unity for Africa's political, economic and cultural advancement.

With independence achieved, it has become painfully clear that, one of the most significant problems facing African states is how to transform a largely negative race conscious nationalism which carried Africans to independence to a new state-conscious patriotism as a basis for authentic sovereignty and Africanist identity. Perhaps, what is urgently needed to address the crisis of the African postcolonial state is to reconstruct the state in such a way as to embody the various identities that exist within its boundaries, and to

respond, in meaningful and transparent ways, to issues of social equity, human rights, and political and electoral pluralism, a viable economy, and accountable public institutions.

The Kenyan political scientist, Ali Mazrui (1972), has captured the modern African challenge as: how to indigenize what was foreign and idealize what was indigenous; and, how to nationalize what was sectional or ethnic, while emphasizing, at the same time, what was African. Implicit in this analysis is the task of ‘ancientizing’ and ‘modernizing’ at the same time. This kind of task cannot be tackled without a genuine effort to invoke the potency of Pan-Africanism to bring about genuine freedom to Africa. Before this can happen, one thinks that the right thing to do is to first create the enabling environment by addressing, through the instrumentality of the state, the multi-faceted challenges facing the homeland.

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Chapter 9

Transcontinental connections: Theorising on Afro-descendant communities in Asia

by **Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya**

9.1. Introduction

Interactions between Africa and Asia in both easterly and westerly directions has been a continuous process moving people, ideas and commodities. But African continuities in Asia tend to be overlooked. Whilst free movement was an on-going process between the two continents the history of the African and Asian diasporas cannot be written without reference to the uncomfortable narratives of forced migration. Trade and colonisation, have been drivers of involuntary migration, interconnecting people of diverse ethnicity globally. Transcontinental movements resulted in both historic and contemporary Afro-Asian communities. Whilst Afro-diasporic communities in the Atlantic World are well recognised, the Asian counterparts have been hidden. With loss of patronage due to changing political scenarios, African migrants became disenfranchised. Assimilation within the diversity of the Indian Ocean has contributed to their invisibility. The dynamics of their hybrid identities, shaped by strong cultural memories bring

out their diasporic consciousness. In this paper, I argue that performance is a way of enacting the homeland and bringing into focus an otherwise imagined space. Performing arts become a semiotic device to evoke and signal otherness. With the emergence of Afro-Asians from the peripheries, their subaltern voices are beginning to be heard. Rapidity of social mobility, rate of assimilation and the agency of Africans in shaping host societies through political, administrative, religious and cultural avenues characterises the eastwards diaspora. The diversity of Asia tends to obscure otherness. Assimilation and inclusion have been long established traditions in the region. But assimilation is a double-edged sword: African diasporists in Asia are forgotten even though they ruled Princely States of India until her independence. Nevertheless, the majority of Afro-Asians are powerless minorities and in what follows, I theorise how they are moving from the periphery.

9.2. Diaspora and identity

At a conference of the UNESCO Slave Route Project in 2003, Joseph Harris, an African American Historian, drew scholarly attention to Afro-Asian communities. Harris suggested that the field could be moved forward by those who spoke the languages of Afro-Asians. A team of scholars with numerous linguistic skills are needed given the diversity of Asia. But this would be a way of unlocking diasporists memories and mapping their routes to their Asian hostlands. The concept of the African diaspora is built on the triadic relationship between Africa as Homeland, Africans and their descendants and an adopted residence or home abroad (Harris 2003). African diaspora researchers encounter numerous problems which were well articulated at a UNESCO conference in Haiti by Hubert Gerbeau (1978), a French historian who suggested that:

‘A historian studying the African diaspora should at the same time be an archaeologist, ethnologist, a specialist of oral traditions, a biologist, a linguist and a psychiatrist’ [my translation].

The way forward must be interdisciplinary. Recording oral histories and conducting anthropological and ethnomusicological studies before memories of the Afro-Asians fade away is crucial. But field studies do not paint a picture of the historical diasporas. For example, in Sumatra, Java and Malacca, there were African communities but due to assimilation they are not conspicuous today. Afro-Asians, lost in the diversity of cosmopolitan cities and the invisibility of the hinterlands, are becoming visible due to scholarly works. Inter-marriage with locals and merging with groups whose socioeconomic plight is similar to theirs has also exacerbated the problem of identification.

The global African diaspora is posited in the frame of the Atlantic World where movement was linked to major economic activities. Income from the Indian Ocean slave trade did not dominate the economy (Piketty 2014: 158-163). Whilst Africans from both coasts were mobilised to eastern and western destinations, the fates of migrants varied across space, time and place.

Slave ships were not built to transport the enslaved across the Indian Ocean. Eastwards

movement was both by land and by sea. The rapidity of assimilation makes the diaspora hidden and invisible. The story in the Indian Ocean is different to the Atlantic which focuses on the pitiful situation of enslaved Africans in plantations and mines. The rapidity of social mobility and the agency of Africans in shaping the host societies through politics, administration, religion and culture draws the eastwards diaspora apart. A new conceptual framework is needed for the Indian Ocean and my theoretical perspectives are in a paper written for the *UNESCO General History of Africa* (de Silva Jayasuriya 2018). The key to unlocking demands for recognition is historical knowledge of the past events and crimes. This is bound to Human Rights agendas. Recognition is a prerequisite for meting out justice to a victim diaspora that emanated largely due to the slave trade. But it is not a sufficient condition for the development of marginalised Afro-Asian communities.



Fig. 9.1. Afro-Sri Lankan Community in Sirambiyadiya (Northwestern Province)

My interest in the African diaspora began when I met the largest Afro-Sri Lankan community in Sirambiyadiya, northwestern province during fieldwork. As a musician, I was bowled over when I heard their rhythm-driven music. The community were strikingly different to other Sri Lankan villagers. I began to ask myself how, when, why and from

where they came to Sri Lanka. Miguel Goonatilleke (1983: 4) researched this community in the 1970s and during his 'Interview with the Portuguese speaking community in Puttalam', 66 year old Martin Marcus recalled his grandfather's oral narratives. According to Marcus, their ancestors were 'a battalion of Portuguese speaking East African soldiers sailing to Sri Lanka after their victory in the Boer War'. Goonatilleke (1998: personal communication) emphasised that this community were late arrivals to Sri Lanka. In the mid-1970s, the culturalist W B Makuloluwe's interview of this community was broadcast in a documentary called *Sāraṅgi by Rūpavāhini*, a Sri Lankan television channel. M J Elyas, the *grāmasāvaka* (village headman) of Sirambiyadiya, stated that their ancestors came from a large island called Kaffa near southern Africa, to which he attributed their ethnonym – *Kaffir*. Afro-Sri Lankans in Kala Oya (Puttalam district), about 20 kilometres from Sirambiyadiya, had also claimed to be descendants of a regiment that came to Sri Lanka from Madagascar during the Boer War (Hettiaratchi, 1969). Descendants of this regiment had dispersed to Sirambiyadiya, Kundasale (near Kandy), Kurunegala and also to the tea plantations in Nuwera Eliya (Hettiaratchi 1969: 747). Two members of the Sirambiyadiya community, Shireen and her sister, Judin, a retired nurse from the Puttalam Hospital, accompanied me to the site of memory of their relatives in Kala Oya. They took me to St Lourdes Church, Kala Oya, where a community of Afro-Sri Lankans lived until the floods of the 1950s. They stood at the site of their Uncle Bunna's house and narrated stories about his decision to continue as the Caretaker of the church until his disabled son's death. Shireen and Judin searched for their relatives' tombstones in the graveyards but only in vain. Survivors of the flood had moved to nearby Anuradhapura. Dr Roland Silva (2000: Personal Communication), former Commissioner of Archaeology, accompanied Professor Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf, the distinguished Austrian anthropologist and founder of the Anthropology Department, School of Oriental and African Studies, on his visit to the Afro-Sri Lankans in Kala Oya during the 1950s. Professor Haimendorf's notes on the community have not been located yet.

Miguel Goonatilleke informed me (1998: personal communication) that this community had Ethiopian roots. Ethiopian traders were active in Mannar a few miles north of Puttalam, during the fifth century, but there are no known records of Ethiopian settlers. To seek out any Ethiopian ancestry of Afro-Sri Lankans, I consulted the Ethiopianist Richard Pankhurst and our collaboration resulted in a multifaceted book - *The African Diaspora in the Indian Ocean* - which was multi-authored (Edwad Alpers, Helene Basu, Eduardo Medeiros, Jean Houbert, Helen Hintjens, Malyn Newitt, Richard Pankhurst and myself) and viewed the dispersal of Africans in the Indian Ocean from both historical and anthropological lenses (de Silva Jayasuriya & Pankhurst 2003). As Wim van Binsbergen (2017:20) points out, 'the model of ethnography through participant observation under conditions of total social and mental immersion, whatever its merits in terms of local relevance, validity and depth, had the disadvantage of forcing the researcher to invest so excessively in linguistic, cultural and relationship localisation, that the wider geographical (let alone the wider historical) horizons of contact and comparability tend to be obscured in the process'. The pitfalls of following a single academic discipline in constructing the narrative of the African diaspora is well established (de

Silva Jayasuriya & Angenot 2008). Afro-Sri Lankan oral history has changed over the years that I have known them through their exposure to scholars who feed them with their research findings. The ethnicity of slaves was of little importance to those who traded them as commodities. The place of embarkation such as Mozambique was taken for the ethnic origin of the enslaved. Only genetic finger printing will reveal the true ancestry of the Afro-Sri Lankan community regardless of their place of origin.

Diaspora and identity are entwined and should be considered together (de Silva Jayasuriya 2009). Identity is crucial in understanding individuals and their relationships with others, usually based on shared belonging and differences, leading to artificial boundaries. Identity is often taken to be static but it is dynamic and complex, and linked to a territory or homeland, family or kin and experience. Scholars and journalists, some of African descent themselves, are now seeking Afro-Asians. Subaltern voices are reaching a wider audience through films (Shroff 2004; de Silva Jayasuriya 2014).

The Economist-Philosopher, Amartya Sen (2001), cautions against the limitations of the presumption, often made implicitly, in identity politics and identity-based philosophy that a person belongs only to a single community or group. Can anyone be both 'African' and 'Asian'? 'African' and 'Asian' are competing identities. Afro-Asians are able to reconcile the two identities. Afro-Indians say: 'We're African and Indian' (Shroff 2004). Afro-descendants in the Gulf call themselves "Gulfricans", acknowledging their hybrid identity.

Identifying migration streams, points of origin and destination have been part of my work. Easterly African migrations are centuries old and histories are fragmented due to the long duration. Trade and Religion became interwoven with voluntary migration and the slave trade in ways which make it difficult to disentangle them. Following European intrusion in Indian Ocean commerce, the slave trade became a means of obtaining manpower to run imperial enterprises. Without a readily available supply of low cost labour, the high risk long distance spice trade would have been impossible. Colonisation drew upon slave labour to perform a myriad tasks from building roads and fortresses to colonial armies. Quite apart from imperial demands, African concubines, nannies, missionaries, administrators, entertainers, sailors, soldiers, cavalrymen, jockeys, politicians and state-builders were in Asia. As the continent was not called Africa throughout history, they were known by other names such as *Habshis*, *Cafres*, *Sidis*, *Baburu* and *Zanj*. This makes identification within archival sources and even within oral histories problematic (de Silva Jayasuriya 2006a).

Asians with African roots have recently become more visible in Dubai, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Maldives, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Yemen. These marginalised communities are guardians of their heritage and culture. The Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention defines a community as a network of people whose sense of identity or connectedness emerges from a shared historical relationship that is rooted in the practice and transmission of or engagement with their intangible cultural heritage (Curtis 2010). Communities themselves have been included as intangible heritage even though it represents a radical departure from previous practices (Curtis 2010).

9.3. Homeland and belonging



Fig. 9.2. Sidis in Kutch performing *Baithi Damal*

Afro-Indians were known by several terms in the past but today they are better known as Sidis. Their traditional music *goma* (from the Kiswahili word *ngoma* meaning drum or dance) brings out their African roots. Sidis re-connect with Africa through religious and secular performances of *goma*, both informally and formally. *Goma / Dhamal / Damal* is a ritual dance performed in honour of the Sidi Saints – Bava Gor, Mai Mishra and other Sidi Saint. Dhamal is also performed as entertainment during weddings or as an invited performance for dignitaries (Shroff 2016: personal communication). As Farida Al Mubarak, a Sidi who has formed a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) in order to advance the health, economic and social welfare of her community, says in a film produced by Beheroze Shroff – *Sidis of Gujarat* (2011), Sidis perform *dhamal* or *goma* for their own entertainment.

Ethnomusicologists, Nazir Jairazhabhoy and Amy Catlin-Jairazhaboy enabled Sidis to bring *goma* to the world stage (Catlin Jairazhabhoy 2006). Afro-Asians visit African music festivals to perform *goma*; Africans and other African diasporists visit Afro-Asians and the homeland is no longer an imagined entity. The disenfranchised status of Afro-Asians led to assumptions that diasporic consciousness is lacking. But field research is breaking this false assumption. In the southern Indian State of Karnataka, for example, Sidis learnt of Nelson Mandela's visit to India through television, and were too late to

meet him in person but wrote to the President and informed him of the African diaspora in Karnataka. The Sidi leader of the Sidi Development Project (SDP) rejoiced when he received an acknowledgement from Mandela's office.

'Look this was the first time we Siddis contacted another African in Africa and the President came to know about our existence. By now he has forgotten about us but at least it is registered in his office that we Siddis in India exist and that we contacted him' (Camara 2004: 110).

Whilst Sidis are Indian citizens, they have a sense of otherness and identify with sub-Saharan Africans. Increased interaction between Afro-Asians and Africans has heightened awareness of their ancestral land. Affinities in physiognomical features rekindle emotional ties with Africans. A latent consciousness of another belonging emerges when they meet African visitors. A desire to connect with their kith and kin is observed.

Sidis in North Karnataka and in Shaurashtra (Gujarat) - have been officially recognised as socially and economically disadvantaged and have been empowered with Scheduled Tribe status. This is only the start of a process of Human Rights. Scheduled Tribe status entitles Sidis to benefit from assistance programmes that include reservation of places in educational institutions, jobs in government run services (railways, post office, police force), subsidies for housing and other forms of minor financial assistance. But there is a lag time before these empowered Sidis can realise their entitlements. Negotiating their way through powerful bureaucracies has a slow learning curve.

Most Sidis are categorised as 'Other Backward Castes' and fall below the radar. They would all like to be recognised as Scheduled Tribes in order to benefit from the privileges available to those within this special status. Attempts to redress past atrocities and injustices create new inequalities. Sidi entrepreneurs and graduates have developed a sense of social responsibility and are searching for ways to give back to their community. As lawyers, sociologists, entrepreneurs and Non-Governmental Organisations emerge from the empowered Sidi communities, there is a trickle-down effect to those at the lower end of the social spectrum.

The community do not have any items of jewellery or artefacts handed down by their ancestors which might help to identify their origins. As forced migrants, they could not take their belongings with them on the journeys to unknown destinations. Slavers could not, however, rip the enslaved of their cultural memories which emerge through performances of *manhas*. Though marginalised due to loss of patronage and the ending of the colonial era, the community are emerging from the periphery now due to their cultural practices. The community had not expected their oral traditions to become an attraction to others; they simply continued singing in the traditions of their elders. Due to the calls on them to perform *manhas*, they formed a twelve member group called – *Ceylon Kaffir Manhas*, whose name was changed to *Ceylon African Manhas* when the South African Embassy informed them that *Kaffir* was a derogatory term in South Africa. *Kaffir* is also their exonym, a term carried over from the colonial days when the Portuguese called Africans *cafres* (borrowing the Arabic term *qafir* meaning 'non-believer'). The Dutch and British adopted the term to their phonetic systems as *Kaffer* and *Kaffir*. Locally they are called *Kāpiri* (in Sinhala) or *Kāpili* (in Tamil).

9.4. Transcultural continuities



Fig. 9.3: Afro-Sri Lankans - A New Identity

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A few years ago, the Afro-Sri Lankan group performed *manhas* in Johannesburg. They were the only musicians representing Sri Lanka on her independence day celebrations in South Africa. A few hundred Afro-Sri Lankans representing a multi-ethnic country with a population of 21.2 million illustrates the pluricultural nature of Sri Lanka. Afro-descendants are carving out a niche for themselves in the diversity of Asia’s cultural landscape (de Silva Jayasuriya 2015). Mixed identities are both simultaneously depend-

ent and independent of ethnic origins. While a new language and religion came as a package and replaced their African tongues and religious beliefs, they found a vehicle – music and dance – through which they could assert their African identity (de Silva Jayasuriya 2010: 130).



Fig. 9.4: *Kaffrinha* dancing

The agency of Africans surfaces in Sri Lankan popular music called *baila* and *kaffrinha* (de Silva Jayasuriya, 2013). *Kaffrinha*, an Afro-Portuguese genre of dance music to which Sri Lanka Portuguese lyrics have been added, has now been indigenised further through the inclusion of Sinhala lyrics. European, African and Asian elements create a musical collage. Frescoes and paintings in Sri Lankan mansions and temples such as *Naiwela Walawwa* and *Kathaluwe Purvārāmaya* depicting African, European and Asian *Kaffrinha* musicians and dancers remind us of transcultural artistic forms.

Another genre of music that evolved around Sri Lanka's independence in 1948 called *baila* fuses African, European and Sri Lankan elements. Its composer Wally Bastianz was of mixed ethnicity - Sinhala, Dutch and Portuguese - and as I argue in my paper 'Postcolonial Innovations in Sri Lankan Popular Music: Dynamics of *Kaffrinha* and *Baila*' (de Silva Jayasuriya 2013), absorbed various forms of music and composed a new genre that swept post-independent Sri Lanka off its feet. Moreover, Bastianz was a brilliant lyricist and sang in five languages spoken on the island – Sri Lanka Portuguese, English, Sinhala, Tamil, Sri Lanka Malay – reaching out to all Sri Lankans with his balladry. *Baila* unites Sri Lankans in a new postcolonial identity illustrating the innovative capacity of colonised people, spurred by the euphoria of independence following 450 years of colonial contact (1505-1948) (de Silva Jayasuriya 2017a). *Bailas* are oral traditions and I have arranged and scored the *Baila* called *Ran Pota* (meaning 'golden thread') which I play on the piano accompanied by conga drums, guitar and voice. *Baila*, an African-Asian-European melange, juxtaposes three cultures in a seamless whole.

Piano

RAN POTA
"Golden Thread"
(a baila)

Arranged by
Dr Shihan de Silva Jayasuriya

The musical score is written for piano and consists of six systems of music. The first five systems are in 6/8 and 3/4 time signatures, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a simpler bass line in the left hand. The sixth system is marked 'Largamente' and features a slower tempo and a more complex bass line. Dynamics include *f*, *p*, and *ff*.

Transcribed from the handwritten score by Dr Marilyn Herman

Fig. 9.5: Score of a Baila - Ran Pota ("Golden Thread")

The African identity of the community surfaces through *manhas*, and whose characteristics are associated with, but not limited to, African music: syncopations (off beats), call

and response (lead singer and a chorus) and polyrhythms (several rhythms played simultaneously by the group). Lyrics of *manhas* are in Creole Portuguese, a lingua franca of Sri Lanka for about 350 years. The community are associated with the Portuguese as the elderly in the community were mother-tongue speakers of Sri Lanka Portuguese. Whatever African languages - Emakhwa, KiSwahili - spoken along the route of migration from mainland Africa or its islands to Sri Lanka, have been lost in the process of adaptation. Creole Portuguese, the lingua franca, bridged the communication gap between incoming Africans and their colonial patrons. According to the Oxford English Dictionary definition a lingua franca is

‘any language that is used by speakers of different languages as a common medium of communication; a common language’
(<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/327283?redirectedFrom=lingua+franca#eid>).

Portuguese was also an international lingua franca, a language of currency or trade language. But even though the sun set on the Portuguese empire with the handing over of Macau to China in 1999, Portuguese cultural and linguistic impressions continue in Asia. Yet there are Portuguese speakers in Goa, Macau, East Timor and also Creole Portuguese speakers still in India (Daman, Diu), Sri Lanka (Batticaloa, Trincomalee), Malaysia (Malacca), Singapore and Macau. Portuguese was a real advantage in trade relations that connected Continents across the oceans which led to, not only to the transmission of goods, people and ideas but also linked communities that resulted from cross-continental unions and marriages.

Now English is a lingua franca in Sri Lanka and a medium for various ethnic groups to communicate with each other mainly in urban areas. But Afro-Sri Lankans do not speak English. In Sirambiyadiya, Sinhala is a lingua franca and Afro-Sri Lankans have switched to Sinhala. As Sinhala is also my mother-tongue, during participant-observations it was possible to communicate with the community, without any linguistic barriers. Moreover, as the community consists of a larger proportion of women, they were entirely at ease with me during the interviews that I conducted in Sirambiyadiya.

The community cannot give a word for word translation of *manhas* and I used Standard Portuguese as a medium to find the meaning of their songs. My transcription in Roman script and my translation into Standard Portuguese together with the meaning are set out below (de Silva Jayasuriya 2017b). In the *manha* set out below, Rosa, the heroine sings *negiri baila* (‘African song’) (*negiri* <Portuguese *negro* and *baila* <Latin/Italian *ballare* meaning ‘to dance’ but due to the close association of song and dance, the word *baila* is also used for song) reiterating African continuities in Sri Lanka.

Cheru cheru tē minna Amoru chēru tē [Sri Lanka Portuguese: my transcription]

Chorus

Cheru cheru tē minna Amoru chēru tē [Sri Lanka Portuguese: my transcription]

Amoru cheru te

Coro

Doce aroma, doce aroma [Standard Portuguese: my translation]

O cheiro do meu amor é doce

Amor de doce aroma

Chorus

Sweet scent, sweet scent
The smell of my love is sweet
The smell of my love is sweet

[my translation]

Verse 1

Cheru cheru tē minna Amoru chēru tē
Rosa canta negiri baila amoru chēru te

[Sri Lanka Portuguese: my transcription]

Doce aroma, doce aroma
O cheiro do meu amor é doce
Rosa canta canções Africanas
Ela é o amor de doce aroma

[Standard Portuguese: my translation]

Sweet scent, sweet scent,
The smell of my love is sweet
Rosa sings African songs
She is the love of sweet scent

[my translation]

Verse 2

Cheru cheru tē minna Amoru chēru tē
Rosa canta negiri baila fula chēru te

[Sri Lanka Portuguese: my transcription]

Doce aroma, doce aroma
O cheiro do meu amor é doce
Rosa canta canções Africanas
Ela é o flor de doce aroma

[Standard Portuguese: my translation]

Sweet scent, sweet scent,
The smell of my love is sweet
Rosa sings African songs
She is the flower of sweet scent

[my translation]

Verse 3

Cheru cheru tē minna Amoru chēru tē
Rosa canta negiri baila masmo chēru te

[Sri Lanka Portuguese: my transcription]

Doce aroma, doce aroma
O cheiro do meu amor é doce
Rosa canta canções Africanas
Ela é mesmo doce aroma

[Standard Portuguese: my transcription]

Sweet scent, sweet scent,
The smell of my love is sweet
Rosa sings African songs
She is the same sweet scent

[my translation]

Verse 4

Cheru cheru tē minna Amoru chēru tē
Rosa canta negiri baila rōsa chēru tē

[Sri Lanka Portuguese: my transcription]

Doce aroma, doce aroma
O cheiro do meu amor é doce
Rosa canta canções Africanas
Rosa é doce aroma

[Standard Portuguese: my translation]

Sweet scent, sweet scent,
The smell of my love is sweet
Rosa sings African songs
Rosa is of sweet scent

[my translation]



Fig. 9.6: Afro-Sri Lankans: Members of the Afro-Sri Lankan Community (Puttalam, Northwestern Province)

The music is produced with a combination of homemade ad hoc instruments – coconut shells played against a piece of wood, metal spoons against metal vessels, glass bottle and a metal spoon – and local drums providing various resonances. The transcontinental transferences are audible in the rhythms. The level of spontaneous energy when singing in their own compound was strikingly different to the more restrained performance on stage. Is it wrong to commodify one's culture, particularly when caught in the poverty trap? African-influenced forms of music in the Atlantic - *Calypso*, *Reggae*, *Samba*, *Ramba*, *Tango*, *Salsa* - have become world music. African musical continuities in Asia – albeit transformed and hybridised - *Goma*, *Kaffrinha*, *Baila*, *Manha*, *Bodu Beru* - are far less known.

Creole Portuguese became the link language in Sri Lanka, connecting the incoming Africans with their patrons. Sri Lanka was ruled by competing empires - Portuguese, Dutch and British - and Portuguese creole was a lingua franca that also connected the three empires. Dutchmen married *mestiças* (girls of Portuguese and Sri Lankan descent) and also engaged creole-speaking nannies to look after their children. Even

though Dutch was the language of administration and law during the Dutch era (1658-1796), Creole Portuguese continued to be spoken in Dutch households. When the British took over the maritime areas from the Dutch in 1796, Creole Portuguese continued as the lingua franca until English displaced it. Initial administrative and missionary works were conducted in Portuguese Creole by the British who prepared word lists (Fox 1819, 1826; Callaway 1818; 1820) and translations of the New Testament (Newstead 1826).

Even after Abolition of the transatlantic slave trade in 1807, forceful movement of Africans continued in the Indian Ocean region. The acute demand for able and fearless soldiers continued as the British attempted to take over the central mountainous Kandyan kingdom which the Sri Lankans had protected from the Portuguese and Dutch colonisers. The first few British Governors, Frederick North (1798-1805) and Thomas Maitland (1805-1811) strengthened the regiments by indulging in the slave trade. Remembering slavery is painful to the victims. Slaves were bought, freed and enlisted to the British Regiments. Association with the military, on the other hand, is remembered with pride and memories of serving the colonial administration rejuvenate the elderly. The younger generations depend on intergenerational transfer of memories and *manhas* occupy a significant place in the history of present Afro-Sri Lankans. They reveal the latent African-ness of the community, reminding us of the island's colonial past. This is not to imply that African mobility was the result of colonisation alone. Arabs were slave trading in the Indian Ocean before Europeans intervened in Asian trade. And free movement of Africans did not end when the slave trade mobilised Africans unwillingly to far off places in the Indian Ocean. After all part of Africa's coast line is in the Indian Ocean.

The Sirambiyadiya community live in twenty two houses which have been built for nuclear families. The community is not isolated and are well integrated with their Sinhalese neighbours with whom they share the amenities in the village – a Catholic Church, primary and junior schools. Recently, the community has attracted attention from journalists, scholars and visitors both local and international, but they have not become victims of jealousy. They live harmoniously with the other villagers. Nowadays, in-marriage is rare and out-marriage is the norm. The number of females exceed the males and this reduces their presence as the father's ethnicity is the determiner of the child's ethnicity for official purposes. Yet the African physiognomy continues through the women who out-marry with Sinhalese, Tamils and Malays. Afro-Sri Lankans in Sirambiyadiya are Roman Catholics and those marrying into the community convert to Catholicism and according to Peter Luis, a sixty year old member of the community, converts are more pious than themselves. Lena, now in her early fifties, proudly emphasises that their men play a major part during Easter at St Mary's Parish Church. Afro-Sri Lankan women help out by organising the devotees into queues but the men were allowed into the altar to perform the traditional rituals.

9.5. Conclusion

Empowered Afro-Asians are important drivers in the process of rectifying past injustices for those who were uprooted from their homelands. Their ancestors survived the Mid-

dle Passage, but the nature of their dispersal from Africa as people with no human rights, ripped of all their belongings excepting for their cultural memories induced diasporists to recreate Africa in Asia through music, song and dance. Even though Africans transformed and adapted to new conditions, their culture and their cryptic assertions of African-ness emerge during musical performances as they re-connect to Africa on Asian soil. Cultural expressions are symbolic of diasporists' narratives of their silenced histories and play a crucial role in conveying transcontinental connections.

Resistance to total conformity and creation of an African homeland within Asian spaces through expressions of cultural memories differentiate Afro-Asian communities from other ethnic groups. Performance knits communities together and builds collective identities and brings histories to the fore expressing resistance through codes and symbols. African roots surface during performances. Even though migrations are centuries old and Africa is re-imagined, recent visits from Africans rekindle memories of a homeland. Oral histories and cultural retentions reveal hybrid identities and hidden narratives of African continuities in Asia.

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Chapter 10

Prehistoric cultural diffusion reflected in distribution of folklore motifs in Africa

by Yuri Berezkin²⁰⁹

This study is based on the author's electronic catalogue of world mythology and folklore (<http://www.ruthenia.ru/folklore/berezkin>). The catalogue contains ca. 50,000 abstracts of texts (in Russian) arranged according to ethnic groups or small areal clusters of groups (907 in September 2014) and to motifs (almost 2000). The access to maps of world distribution of particular motifs and to the English wordings of motifs is still under a password, this site will become free in late 2015. With new publications processed and the number of the selected clusters and motifs increasing, the system becomes ever more sensitive to tendencies in distribution of motifs. A significant part of the data were presented in my big publication in English (Berezkin 2010b), so I do not cite here most of the sources of texts which are too numerous for a short article. Interested readers are encouraged to address me directly by e.mail (berezkim@gmail.com).

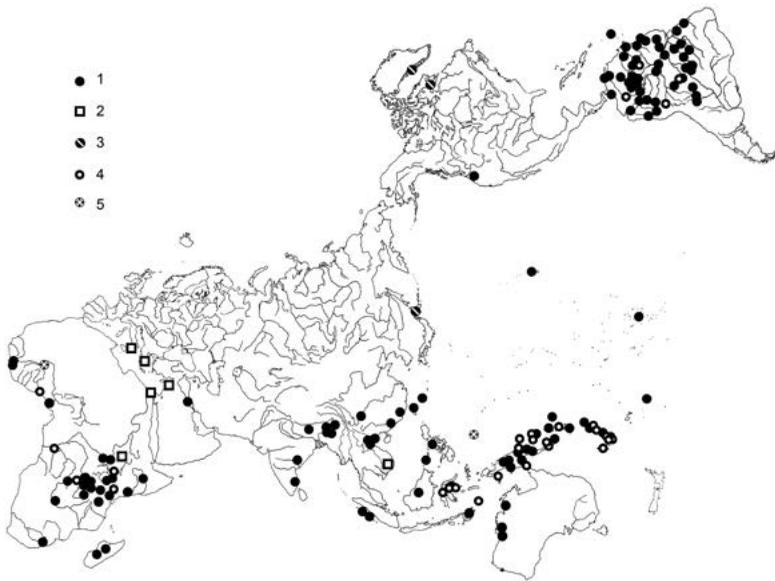
The catalogue was created with the purpose to accumulate the data relevant to research on early migrations and prehistoric cultural contacts. Initially the problem of the peo-

²⁰⁹ This work was supported by Russian Fund for Basic Research (14-06-00247).

pling of the New World was in focus of the studies. After about 2003, when the materials from Western Eurasia and Africa were included ever more intensively, both earlier and later periods of human history were addressed.

Though the very first human myths were probably created in Africa and brought to other continents with the 'Out-of-Africa' migration of early Homo sapiens (Berezkin 2009a; 2009b; 2010a; 2010b), many stories recorded in Equatorial Africa by missionaries, ethnologists and linguists seem to have Eurasian and not African roots. Below I'll address several relevant cases.

10.1. Eurasian protagonists of the 'muddled message' stories

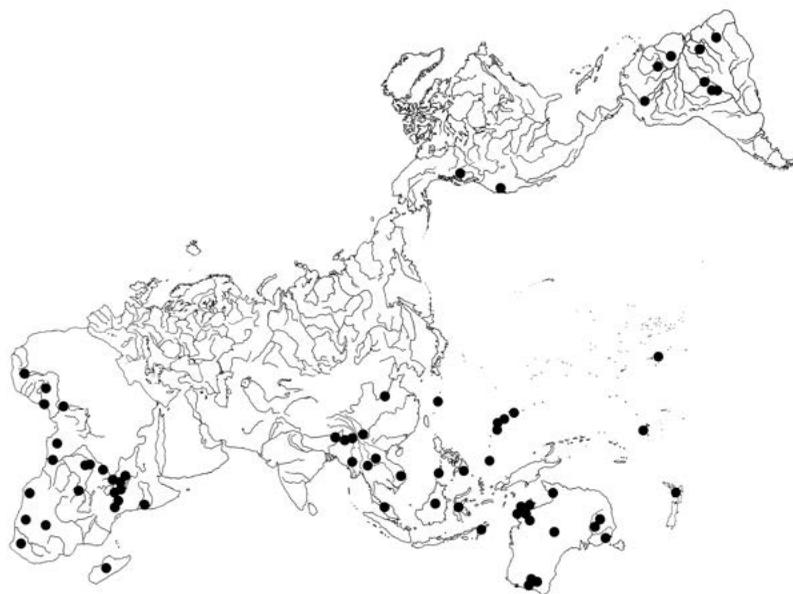


Those who can change their skin become young again. 1. People lost opportunity to shed skin and rejuvenate. 2. Snakes are immortal because they shed their skin (no etiology of death). 3. A particular person sheds his or her skin and becomes young. 4. People do not shed their skin anymore and become young because certain person was bothered during rejuvenation or was not recognized by his family in his or her new guise. 5. As in (4) but rejuvenation is not related to the change of skin.

Fig. 10.1. The shed skin.

The only etiological theme that is well represented in African mythology is the explanation of how and why people lost or not acquired their ability to revive after death. The

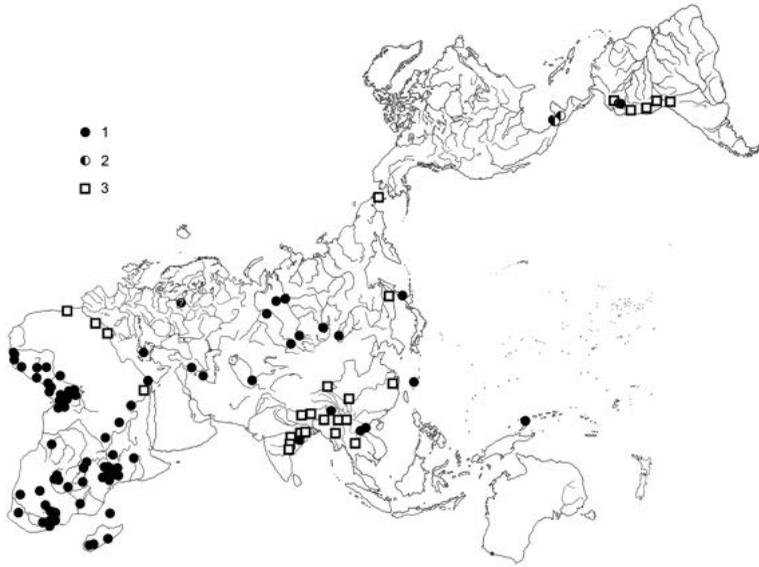
'shed skin' and the 'immortal Moon' are the most widespread motifs (figs. 1 and 2), several other fit the same areal patterns but are more rare. The 'shed skin' is absent in Australia and among the Khoisan-speaking people of Southern Africa but very popular in Melanesia and among the Bantu people. The 'immortal Moon' is popular both among the Koisan and Australian aboriginals. These differences possibly mean that these two motifs are related to different episodes of the peopling of Indo-Pacific region by out-of-Africa migrants, the 'immortal Moon' being related to the earliest one.



Moon, unlike people, rejuvenates every month; or those who live in the Moon are immortal; or the Moon makes decision if people should die forever or regularly revive.

Fig. 10.2. The immortal Moon.

However, among all the motifs that explain the mortal nature of man in African myths, the most widespread is the 'muddled message'. About one third of all African stories that treat such a theme are based on this episode. Unlike other 'mortal' motifs with probable African roots, the 'muddled message' is relatively rarely known in the Indo-Pacific world. It is completely absent in Australia and almost absent in Indonesia, Oceania and Eastern South America. At the same time, it is moderately often found in Northern Eurasia where other 'mortal' motifs with transcontinental distribution are not common (Fig. 10.3).



Person is sent by god to bring instructions or certain objects but distorts, forgets or replaces them. 1. Because of this people become mortal (do not revive after death). 2. Because of this a particular person dies. 3. This has other unpleasant consequences for humans or for certain species of animals.

Fig. 10.3. The 'muddled message'.

Across Africa itself, the 'muddled message' also demonstrates the areal pattern that is different in comparison with other 'mortal' motifs. Protagonists of the stories are also different.

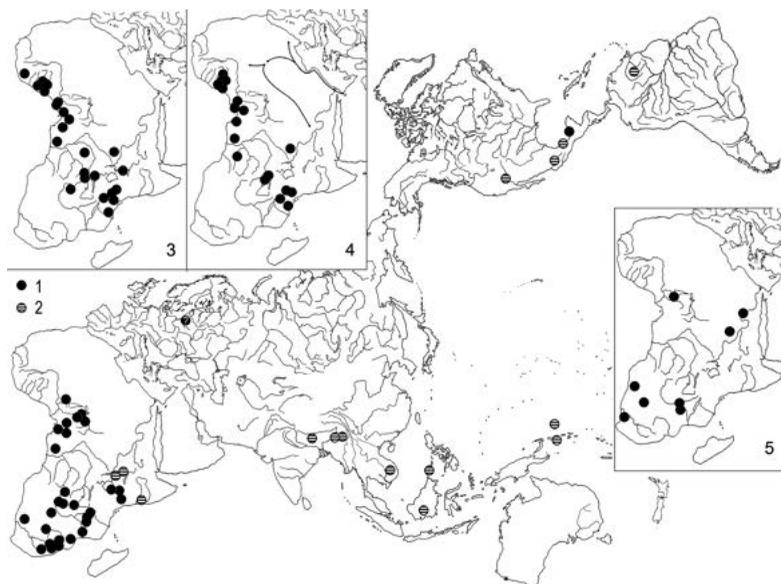
In relatively few of the 'mortal' stories based on the 'muddled message' in Africa the protagonist is the hare (Fig. 10.4 s.v. 5). Most of these stories are recorded among the Khoisan people of South Africa. Three points on my map are those Koisan traditions that I was able to relate to particular groups but the real number of recorded texts is much greater. Quite unexpected is the Hausa version of northern Nigeria that is practically identical to Koisan ones.

Hausa. The Moon sent the hare with a message to the people that they should be like the Moon who regularly dies and revives but the hare told them that they should die forever. The Moon wanted to kill him but only got to split his lip with an axe. The hare scratched the Moon's face, hence the lunar spots (Abrahamsson 1951: 7-8).

Khoikhoi. The Moon sent the chameleon to tell the people that they should die and revive like the Moon. The chameleon forgot the message and came back, so the Moon sent the hare who told the people that they should die forever. The Moon cut the hare's lip. Or the Moon sent an insect with the promise of immortality but the hare came first

and told the people they should die. The hare scratched the Moon's face, hence the lunar spots (Abrahamsson 1951: 28-30).

Language and culture of the Hausa and of the Khoisan people do not share many common features. We can conclude that in northern Nigeria this story survived from the time when the linguistic and cultural map of Africa was completely different from the present one. The early prehistoric continental-wide distribution of the motif of 'the hare as the muddled message protagonist' seems to be rather probable.



Main map: 1. Lizard and/or chameleon in stories based on the 'muddled message' motif. 2. The same but in other 'death' stories. 3. Dog in stories based on the 'muddled message' motif (African area only). 4. Sheep and/or goat. 5. Hare.

Fig. 10.4. Animals responsible for the introduction of death.

Along with the hare, two other animals, the lizard and the chameleon (who is also lizard but a special one), are usual protagonists of the 'muddled message' stories in Africa. They can be as early as the hare in this role because in South and Southeast Asia and Melanesia they are also considered responsible for the introduction of death (though not in the 'muddled message' but in other tales). But besides the hare, the lizard and the chameleon, there are three other popular African protagonists of the stories about the origin of death base on the 'muddled message' motif. These are the dog, the sheep and the goat (Fig. 10.4.3, s.v. 4). All the three were domesticated in Asia and could not appear before Holocene even in North Africa. The earliest sheep bones in Kenya date to the IV millennium B.C. (Lane *et al.* 2007: 78).

It is difficult to say why these domestic species of Asian origin replaced local animals in Equatorial Africa (though not in South Africa). What is certain is that the areal pattern of their distribution (a relatively narrow belt from Liberia to Tanzania) overlaps with the predominant areal distribution of many other African folklore motifs. It seems that folklore and mythology of the people who live across this territory underwent serious transformation relatively recently when the present day patterns were established.

10.2. Northern tricksters in South Africa

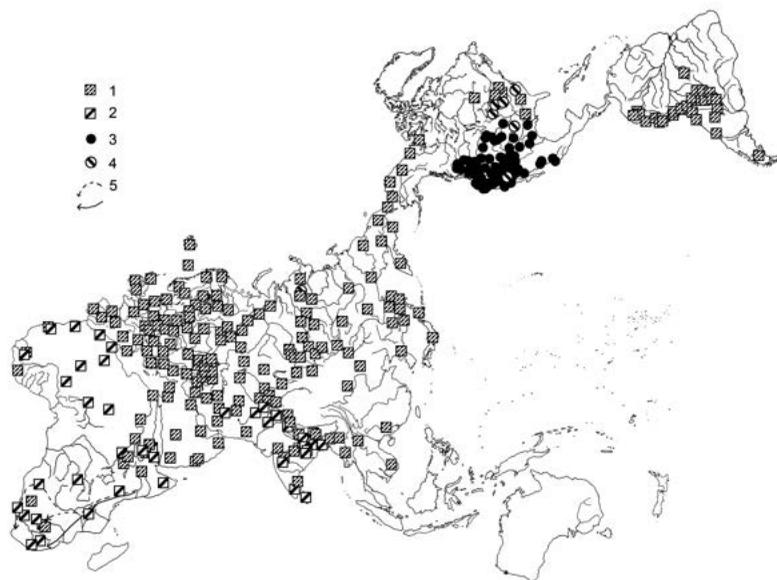


r. 1. Typical, engaged into many episodes. 2. Rare cases, one episode

Fig. 10.5. Rabbit or hare as a trickster.

The hare is the most typical and widespread sub-Saharan African trickster. He is even more popular than the spider not to say about other creatures (Fig. 10.5). The fox, the jackal and the coyote are the main tricksters across most of Northern Eurasia and western North America (all the three species are biologically similar and easily replace each other in tales). However, the fox and the jackal appear again in South Africa, far away from the legitimate northern homeland of the canine tricksters (Fig. 10.6). Difference in world distribution of these two most popular zoomorphic tricksters is seen if we compare figs. 5 and 6 based on the analysis of texts that contain 165 typical episodes with animal protagonists.

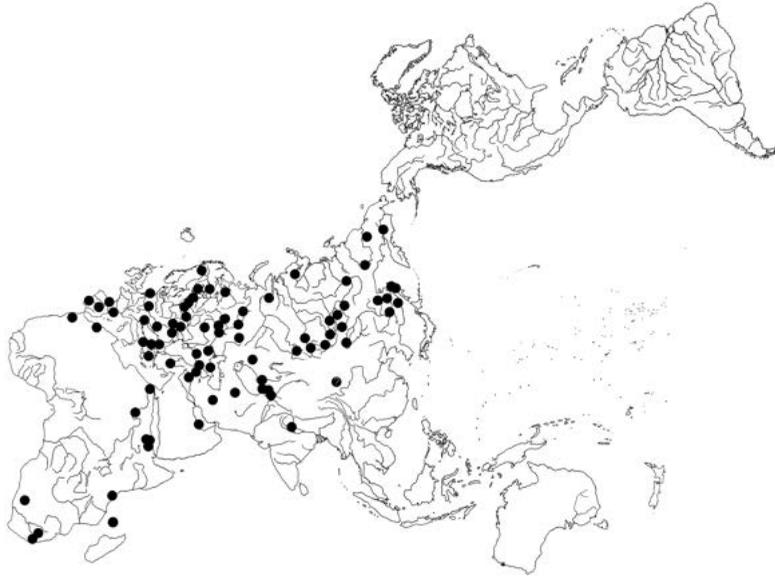
The archaeological data help to understand patterns of African distribution of animal tricksters. The people who possessed sheep, goats and cattle began to migrate from Kenya into the Rift zone at about 4300-3000 B.P. (Lane et al 2007: 78; Robbins 2006: 82). They moved along the tsetse free corridor and their different groups reached South Africa 200 B.C. – A.D. 400 (Orton et al. 2013; Plug, Voigt 1985; Smith 1992: 134-135). It is logical to suggest that these cattle breeders brought with them elements of the northern folklore. In South Africa the borderline between the zone of hare and the zone of jackal/fox is between the Zulu who have trickster hare and the Xhosa who have trickster jackal.



Fox. 2. Jackal. 3. Coyote. 4. Wolf (in North America) or dog (among the Dolgans). 5. The southward movement of East African cattle breeders ca. 2000 years ago, after (Smith 1992, Fig. 1).

Fig. 10.6. The *Canidae* tricksters.

Not only the fox/jackal trickster itself but also some particular stories were brought during these migrations. One of them is about an animal who pretends to be able to cut down the tree, unless a mother bird (or squirrel) will throw down one of her nestlings (or squirrel children) or eggs. Another bird or animal lets mother bird know that the predator is unable to carry out his threat (Fig. 10.7). Across most of Eurasia the protagonist of the story is the fox or jackal. This tale (no. 56A according to ATU system, Uther 2004: 50) is typical for Europe, Northern and Southwestern Asia and North Africa but is not known neither in East and Southeast Asia nor in the New World. The latter fact means that its spread across Eurasia took place after the time when the last groups of the Siberian ancestors of American natives had moved to the New World.



Animal trickster threatens to cut down a tree on which mother bird (squirrel) made its nest unless she will throw down one of her nestlings (squirrel children) or eggs; Another bird lets the mother bird know that the predator is unable to carry out its threat

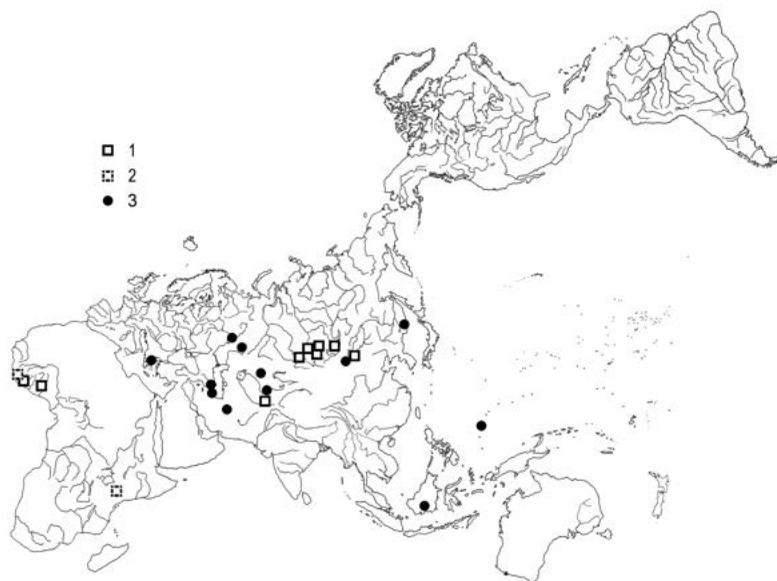
Fig. 10.7. Animal trickster thwarted

In two East African tales (the Swahili and Comoro Islands) the trickster who pretends to be able to cut the tree is the hare (Hatubou 2004: 67-75; Werner 1909: 446-447). It is quite predictable for East Africa where just the hare is the usual trickster but against common sense (hares are not predators). In the Khoikhoi, Sotho and Xhosa tales, however, the protagonist is the jackal (Dähnhardt 1912: 280; Krippel 1992: 42; Werner 1909: 446) like in Eritrea or the Maghreb.

Let us return once again to the stories about the sheep, goat and dog responsible for the introduction of death. If the East African cattle breeders who began their southward movement were familiar with them, we would expect to find such stories among the Khoikhoi and some Bantu-speaking peoples of Southern Africa. However, in South Africa only traditional African participants such as the chameleon, lizard and hare are known. We can conclude therefore that the domestic animals were introduced into the African (at least the East African) tales about the etiology of death after ca. 3000 B.P. when the southward migration presumably began.

10.3. The water of immortality in West Africa

I already directed the readers' attention to the fact that the 'shed skin' and other 'mortal' motifs which great age and African origin look plausible, are absent or rare in West Africa, *i.e.* on the territories where the chameleon, lizard and hare as the protagonists of the 'muddled message' are also unknown. The westernmost case of the chameleon, lizard and hare as the wrong messages are in the Hausa folklore. All the stories recorded in West Africa are about the sheep/goat or dog. Both the 'shed skin' and most of other African 'death motifs' are absent among the bearers of the Mande and Atlantic languages. At the same time the stories with clear Eurasian roots are in this region more numerous than in other areas of the sub-Saharan Africa. It seems that West (and especially the westernmost) Africa was subject to more intensive influences from the north than Central and even East Africa. Here is an example.



1. Water of immortality that should be given to people was spilled on plants who become evergreen, capable for regeneration or fruit-bearing. 2. As in (1) but without motif of plants becoming evergreen, etc. 3. Water of immortality spilled on plants, plans to make people immortal mentioned.

Fig. 10.8. Water of immortality spilled on plants

The motif of water of immortality being spilled on plants and not on humans is especially typical for Southern Siberia and was also absorbed into the Novel of Alexander the

Great (Fig. 10.8). The only African versions that I could find were recorded among the Kraci (the Akan language family) and in Liberia (the precise group not reported). The Kraci story tells that Wulbari sent a dog to bring the life elixir to the people but the dog began to gnaw a bone and did not put attention how a goat spilled the liquid on his 'people', i.e. the grass. Since then people die and the grass grow again every year (Abrahamsson 1951: 6). In the Liberian story people send a cat to the wizard who possessed the water of immortality. On his way back, the cat went to bath putting the elixir on a tree stump and the liquid was soaked in it. That's because the cut down tree gives fresh shoots but people die (Bundy 1919: 408).

The cat in the Liberian myth in the role of the irresponsible messenger looks like a very late replacement of some more authentic African personage and is an additional evidence of the relatively recent northern and ultimately Asian influence on the West African traditions. Another such an evidence is the distribution of the 'obstacle flight' motif treated below.

10.4. Adventure stories of Eurasian origin



When person comes to the water body, waters make way in front of him or her so the persons reaches the other bank walking on the dry ground. If the pursuer tries to follow the fugitive he is usually drowned.

Fig. 10.9. 'Pharaoh's drowned army'.

Among stories based on adventure episodes that have few if any cosmological and etiological motifs many describe the escape of the heroes pursued by the antagonists. This 'escape and pursue' theme is universal but particular versions have different popularity across different regions. The typically sub-Saharan 'escape and pursue' episode is the 'Pharaoh's drowned army': when person comes to the water body, waters make way to him or her so the persons reaches the other bank walking on the dry ground while the pursuer usually drowns (Fig. 10.9). The 'Pharaoh's drowned army' is known in Eurasia, Oceania and the Americas but the corresponding cases are much more rare than other versions (they are somewhat more frequent in India). The 'Pharaoh's drowned army' can be one of the few adventure motifs of sub-Saharan origin. I do not dare to evaluate a possible age of its spread but its use in Ancient Egyptian literature and in the Bible make it one of the few adventure motifs widespread in modern folklore that are directly documented for the Ancient World. Its area partly overlaps the area of another Old Testament motif, the *Tour de Babel*, that was also popular in Equatorial Africa and in South Asia.



K231 in Thompson 1955-1958: Objects are thrown back which the pursuer stops to pick up while the fugitives escape. The objects themselves do not block the pursuer's movement.

Fig. 10.10. 'Obstacle flight, Atalanta type'

The most popular Eurasian motif of the 'escape and pursue' category is the 'obstacle flight'. The Atalanta type is its simplest version known episodically across most of the world besides Australia. According to this variant, objects are thrown back, the pursuer stops to pick them up while the fugitives escape. Major difference with the typical 'ob-

stacle flight' is that objects themselves do not block the pursuer's movement. In Africa the Atalanta type is recorded mostly among the Bantu and among the Khoikhoi, though not among the Bushmen (Fig. 10.10).

More complex versions with transformation of thrown objects into powerful obstacles probably developed in Eurasia. In Africa they are mostly known along the same equatorial belt where the dog, sheep and goat play part in the 'muddled message' tales. Rare South African cases (the Khoikhoi and the Khosa) could be explained with the same cattle breeders' migration as the fox/jackal trickster motif (Fig. 10.11).



Typical versions. 1. Running away from dangerous being, person throws objects that turn into mighty obstacles on the way of the pursuer. In particular, a whetstone turns into a mountain and a comb into thicket. 2. The same but either the whetstone or the comb are thrown. 3. The same but only comb is mentioned and it turns not into thicket or forest but into something else. 4. Neither whetstone nor comb are mentioned. 5. Variants (2) or (3) in those American Indian texts in which the 'obstacle flight' was most probably borrowed from Europeans

Fig. 10.11. 'Obstacle flight', typical versions

Before 10-12,000 B.P. very developed standard versions of the obstacle flight emerged in Siberia. In these tales a whetstone and a comb are always mentioned among the objects, the whetstone turning into a mountain and the comb into a thicket. This combination (whetstone plus comb) is too specific to be invented independently several times (Kroeber 1923: 198-199). We can estimate the approximate *terminus ante quem* for this version. Tales that contain the corresponding details reached the North American Northwest Coast and Plains but not other areas of the New World. If they were known in South America, *terminus ante*

quem would be ca. 15-17,000 B.P. and if not known at all even in North America, *terminus post quem* would be ca. 8-10,000 B.P. Their westward diffusion to Europe took place much later because no cases had been recorded in the early written sources and only the Atalanta type is present in the Ancient Greek myths. In Japan we also have Atalanta type in 'Kojiki' and more developed type in the later folklore.

Many African adventure stories with anthropomorphic protagonists can have Asian origin. Most of them diffused from the North and others were borrowed from the Asian traders who visited the African coast of Indian Ocean during the last 1500 years and possibly earlier. The motif of 'extracted from ogre's finger' serves an example (Fig. 10.12). In Africa stories that contain such a motif have a very restricted distribution in Kenya and the nearby countries. The Asian cases are typical for the Caucasus and Central Asia. I do not know Persian, Arabic or Indian cases but there is a chance to find them because not all relevant collections of fairy-tales have been still consulted. In any case, some of the African and Asian texts share a large series of similar episodes so there is no doubt about their common origin.



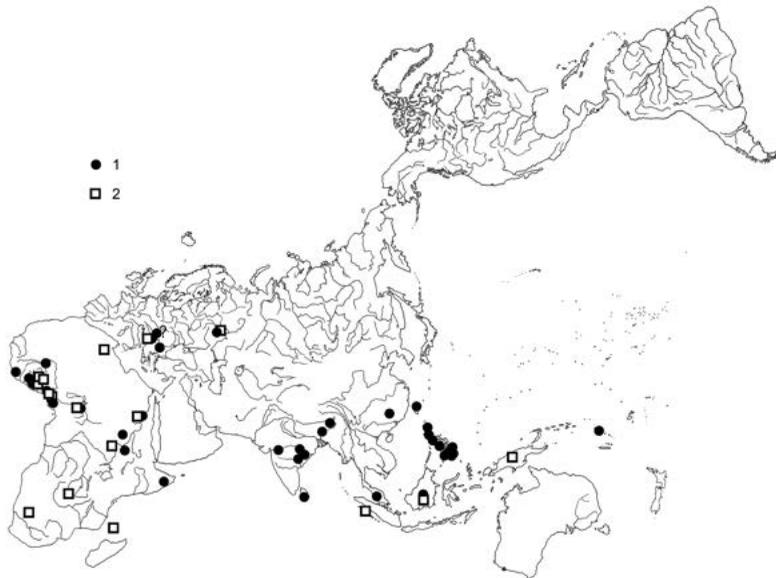
Ogre swallows people, is killed but the people are not found in his or her belly or are found dead. Only when the ogre's finger is cut off, the hero finds inside it a remedy to revive the people or the swallowed up (the hero himself) come out alive from the finger of the ogre

Fig. 10.12. 'Extracted from finger'..

10.5. African – Asian contacts that reflect Neolithic technology

Recent archaeological and linguistic research demonstrates that long before peopling of Madagascar (e.g. since the first half of the II millennium B.C.) boats from South and Southeast Asia reached Arabian peninsula and East Africa bringing with them plants and animals of Asian origin and carrying back some species of African origin (Fuller *et al.* 2011). That the prehistoric exchange of ideas across the Indian Ocean existed was known before (e.g. Jones 1964) but only now the time of particular contacts could be approximately established. People brought with them not only seeds and animals but also stories that later spread far and wide. Here are some examples.

Two motifs that are rather often combined in one text and related to the ideas about the nature of the sky make an example (Fig. 10.13). The first motif is the 'sky pushed up with a pestle'. Originally the sky was low. Pounding seeds or doing some other household work, a person pushes the sky up with a pestle (broom, etc.) and the sky moved away from the earth. Another motif is the 'edible sky'. The sky was of edible substance and people or animals used it for food or medicine.



(1) 'Sky pushed up with a pestle': Originally the sky was low. Pounding seeds or doing some other household work, person pushes it up with a pestle, broom, etc. and the sky moves away from the earth. (2) 'Edible sky'. The sky was of edible substance so people or animals used it for food or medicine.

Fig. 10.13. (1) 'Sky pushed up with a pestle' and (2) 'edible sky'

I have had already an opportunity to address such stories (Berezkin 2009a). Though taking them as possible candidates for the cultural heritage of the early *Homo sapiens* moving out of Africa, I considered the possibility that they could be of much later age. Now after finding more cases at the Balkans, Middle Volga, the North and South Africa, the hypothesis of the early African origin is definitely rejected. The Balkan and Volga stories fit the typical trans-Eurasian areal pattern that most probably began to emerge after the time of Christ, at least hardly earlier than the II millennium B.C. (Berezkin 2010c: 14-20). The Khoikhoi story in which the jackal climbs to the sky to eat a cloud (Bleek in Koropchevski 1874: 14-15) demonstrates parallels with the story recorded among the Berber of southern Tunisia in which the jackal is brought to the sky to eat the Moon (Pâques 1964: 186-187). It looks like another example of trickster motifs brought to South Africa a couple of thousand of years ago.

Another motif related to Neolithic technology is the 'one grain porridge' (Fig. 10.14). Usually it is told that originally one grain of wheat etc. was enough to prepare a meal. A certain person made a mistake to use more and because of it people need big amount of grain to feed themselves. The theme of the 'lost paradise' is known world-wide but for continental Eurasia and America other stories are typical while 'one grain porridge' is a specific link between Africa and Southeast Asia.



. One cereal grain (cob, etc.) was enough to prepare a meal

Fig. 10.14. 'One grain porridge'.

Unlike the potential borrowings from the Muslim traders visiting African eastern coast since late I millennium A.D., 'sky pushed up with a pestle', 'edible sky' and 'one grain porridge' are not found in coastal Kenya or Tanzania and had to diffuse by some other way.

The interpretation of the Pleiades as a hen with chickens is another link between Africa and South and Southeast Asia (Fig. 10.15).



Fig. 10.15. The Pleiades are interpreted (or only named) as a brooding hen, a hen with its chicks, or simply chickens.

In Africa the Pleiades are associated not with the local guinea fowl but just with the chicken, and the late arrival of chickens to Africa is an argument against the local origin of the corresponding name. The chickens were domesticated somewhere in Southeast Asia – Southwest China and reached Mesopotamia via Iran during the III millennium B.C. (Ehrenberg 2002: 53-54). After some time they were adopted in Europe. They spread to the sub-Saharan Africa not before second half of the I millennium A.D (MacDonald, Edwards 1993; Phillipson 2005: 260). In the Maghreb traditional cosmonym for the Pleiades was 'girls' (now mostly displaced by Arabic *Suraya*, 'the lamp'), no 'chickens' are also recorded across most of Iberian Peninsula besides Basque speaking area. Therefore the 'chickens' probably reached West Africa along the Near East and the Nile Valley. In the Upper Nile 'hen with her chickens' as the name for the Pleiades is registered among the Shilluk. In West Africa the association of the Pleiades with a hen, a hen with its chickens, etc. is widespread (Mandjak, Temne, Malkinke, Bambara, Dogons,

Gbunde, Loma, Bassari, Mano, Gio, Ashanti, Yoruba, Igbo, Ewe, Jukun, Baule, Haisa, Ibibio and certainly other groups on which my data are insufficient or absent). Because the cosmonymy of the people who inhabit territories between Nile and Chad is poorly known, we have a reason to suggest that the Shilluk are not a rare exclusion and 'the hen' was common not only in the Western but also in the Eastern Sudan.

There is no 'hen' in the Mediterranean Antique sources and in the Northern Europe the cosmonym is also unknown besides Denmark. During the last centuries it was registered, however, across most of the Western, Central, Southern and Southwestern Europe (Berezkin 2010d). The 'brooding hen', 'chicks' and similar names for the Pleiades are found in South and Southeast Asia (Khasi, some Tibeto-Burman groups of Indian Northeast, different groups of the Thai, Banar, Dayaks, Leti Island and probably Khmers) and this area of the spread of this cosmonym looks like the original one. Daniil Sviatsky, a pioneer of the cosmonymic studies in Russia mentioned the 'sky hen with her chickens' as an Arab name for the Pleiades (Sviatsky 1961: 121). This cosmonym was probably taken from some rare literal source and is not registered in any Arabic folk tradition (Mikhail Rodionov, a specialist on Arabic language and culture, pers. comm., 2007). However, we know practically nothing about Arabic cosmonymy of the pre-Mohammed age. It is highly improbable that such a special name for the Pleiades that coincides with the same cosmonym widespread across the area where chickens had been domesticated would emerge in Africa and Europe without the influence from South or Southeast Asia. It should be noticed that only in Southeast Asia long stories about how and why the hen became to be association with the Pleiades exist. Such stories are absent in Africa and rare in Europe.

10.6. Conclusions

Many dozens of other maps that demonstrate areal distribution of folklore motifs in Africa and beyond can be commented upon but the materials exposed are probably enough to support major lines of my argument. Every time when we find clear areal tendencies in distribution of stories or any other cultural elements we should search for factors responsible for the formation of corresponding patterns. The evidence suggests that ecological, economic or social variables are rarely enough to explain them. The patterns of the areal distribution of folklore elements reflect first of all routes of migration and spheres of cultural interaction. If so, the comparative mythology is an important and indispensable tool for the study of the prehistory. As about Africa, the research on the origin of particular tales and systematic extraction of tales of the Eurasian origin from the sub-Saharan pool would help us to understand early cultural background that dominated the continent before it entered into intensive interaction with other regions.

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PART III. CASE STUDIES

Chapter 11

Contact between China and Africa before da Gama

Historiography and evidence

by Li Anshan

The evidence in China and abroad both indicates that China has a long history of contact with Africa. There was cultural exchange between China and Egypt as early as or even before the Han Dynasty (206B.C.- A.D.220). Du Huan, a Chinese of the Tang Dynasty (A.D.618-907), visited Africa in the 8th century. He is probably the first Chinese who left a written record about Africa (Du Huan, A.D.762?). The great African traveler Ibn Battuta visited China in the 14th century and left a vivid description of the metropolitan life in the Yuan Dynasty (A.D.1271-1368). The Chinese fleet led by Zheng He visited East African coast several times during the 15th century. Interesting enough, two African animals, Zebra and Giraffe, also appeared in Chinese classics of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644, A.D.). There are archeological discoveries as well.

This paper is intended to introduce the Chinese historiography and evidence of the contact between China and Africa. It will be divided into three periods, the period of Pre-Tang Dynasty, the Tang and Song Dynasties, and the Yuan and Ming Dynasties.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ Most materials are taken from Li Anshan's *A History of Chinese in Africa*, China's Overseas Publishing House, 2000, pp. 43-75.

11. 1. The Period of Pre-Tang Dynasty (before the 7th century)

First, the historiography in the history of Sino-African relations is focused on several issues, but the start-point of the contact is the most discussed field.²¹¹

1.1. *Historiography*

Regarding the question when the China-African contact started, there are generally two viewpoints. Some scholars think it began before the Han Dynasty, while others consider the Han was the period when the contact started.

1.1.1. Before the Han Dynasty ((206B.C.- A.D.220).

Zhang Xiang holds that the exchange and contact between China and Africa should have started before Zhang Qian's mission to the West. According to him, Chinese merchantise reached in Bactria (Da Xia, 大夏, present north Afghanistan). It is easy for them to extend to Egypt, since Da Xia and Egypt had bilateral relations before 600 B.C.²¹² His is only a presumption.

Shen Fuwei also holds the same view and made the date to the Spring-Autumn Period (Chun Qiu, 春秋, 770-476, B.C.) and the Warring Period (Zhan Guo, 战国, 475-221, B.C.). He argued that the contact and exchange of goods must have been indirect because of the barrier of transportation. In the official history *Hou Han Shu* (Post-Han History, 后汉书, 25-220 A.D.), there is a place called Dou-le, Shen suggests that Dou-le is Adulis, a famous ancient port city, located in today's Eritrea, and its missionary arrived in Luoyang, the ancient capital of China, which indicates a significant event in the history of China-African relations. Therefore, "The Axum Kingdom of Ethiopia sent its Adulis mission to China, thus became the first African country which established diplomatic relations with China."²¹³

1.1.2. During the Han Dynasty

Zhang Xinglang raised this idea cautiously, based on some names of places mentioned in classics at home and abroad.²¹⁴ Yang Renbian pointed out it was certain that the indirect commerce between China and Africa started from Han.²¹⁵ Chen Gongyuan also supports this view. 'As early as 200 B.C.(Han Synasty in China), Egypt, the African ancient civilization was contacting China indirectly and had commercial in the sea.'²¹⁶

²¹¹ For a general introduction, see Li Anshan, 2000.

²¹² Zhang Xiang, 1987; 1993.

²¹³ Shen Fuwei, 11-12, 70-72.

²¹⁴ Zhang Xinglang, 7-8.

²¹⁵ Yang Renbian, 112.

²¹⁶ Chen Gongyuan, 1.

Zhang Junyan holds that during the Dong Han Dynasty (东汉, 25-220, A.D. also called Hou Han, 后汉) China had the direct communication with Roman Empire by sea through North Africa.²¹⁷ Here, one supports the ‘indirect contact’, the other ‘direct communication’, and both indicate the same period. Other authors also support this view.²¹⁸ Fang Hao, a Taiwan scholar holds the same argument.²¹⁹

The evidence we have really point to the direction, *e.g.*, there is contact between China and Africa before the Tang Dynasty. We can divide the sources into four categories, direct archeological evidence, indirect archeological evidence, direct documentary evidence and indirect documentary evidence.

1. 2. Evidence-Direct archeological one

1.2.1. In 1993, Austrian archeologists discovered something in the hair of a female corp of the Egyptian 21st Dynasty (1070-945 B.C.). Analysis showed it to be a fibre of worm silk. At the time, only China had the technology of producing silk. Therefore, most probably the product was made in China. The product made in China was transferred to Egypt.²²⁰

1.2.2. In 1979, some stone pictures were discovered at Jiawang in Xuzhou. The stone pictures belong to Han Dynasty. In the picture, there are several Kilin (麒麟, Qilin, an imagined animal), at least three of them look very much like Giraffe.²²¹ How could this be? (Fig. 11.1).

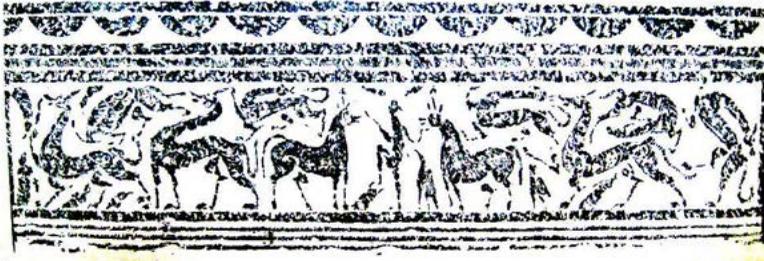


Fig. 11.1. Depiction of the *ki lin* mythical animal²²²

²¹⁷ Zhang Junyan, 11.

²¹⁸ Sun, 142; Ai & Mu, 1.

²¹⁹ Fang Hao, 150.

²²⁰ People's Daily, 1993/4/2.

²²¹ Xuzhou Museum, 1979, p.55.

²²² EDITOR'S NOTE: The Author, Professor Li Anshan, recently retired from Peking University, Beijing, People's Republic of China, and has not been in a position to upgrade the graphic illustrations that accom-

The Kilin is an imagined animal which can bring fortune or good luck in Chinese tradition.²²³ The French Sinologist G.Ferrand suggested that Kilin was a transliteration of 'geri', a Somali word for Giraffe. He suggested that the two words are very similar, only 'Kilin' has a bit nasal sound 'n' at the end. According to his view, the Somali word 'geri' is equal to 'giri', and the Chinese found the pronunciation of 'giri' very similar to Qilin, an fortune animal in the Chinese legend, therefore they put these two in connection.²²⁴ This explanation seems a bit difficult to accept, since the Chinese term 'Qilin' appeared in historical book thousand years ago, and the imagined animal has its concrete form.

1.2.3. The famous South African archeologist Raymond Dart once found some interesting pictures in South Africa by the San people. Figure 9. 'Bushman painting on a stone block, Eliveni, Kei River, depicting a foreigner'; Figure 10. 'Bushman painting in black in cave on White Kei River, Cape Province, depicting a foreigner'.

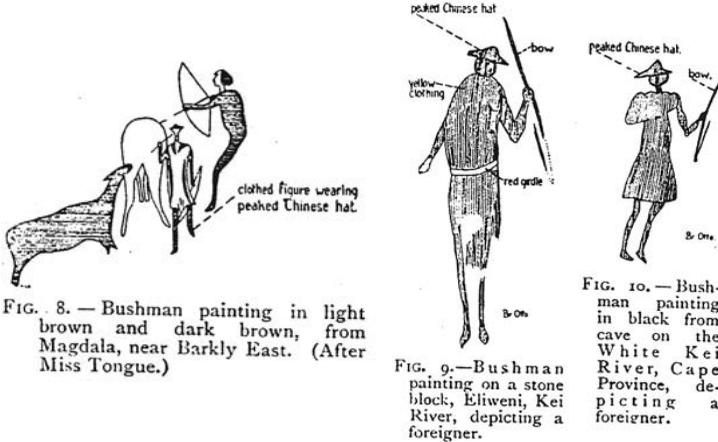


Fig. 11.2. The Chinese hat

What makes it relevant to my topic is that Raymond Dart presumed the hat on the head of both the foreigners is a 'peaked Chinese hat'.²²⁵ We understand the Bushman is the derogatory name of the San people, and the San are one of the indigenous people who settled in the region long time ago, and spread in present Botswana, Namibia and

pany his paper, nor to specify their provenances. We apologise for any inconveniences.

²²³ Qilin (Kilin) is a good animal in Chinese tradition, which appeared in LI YUN (礼记·礼运篇, 西汉人戴圣编定)。Male is called Qi, female Lin.

²²⁴ G. Ferrand, 1918, 155-158.

²²⁵ Dart 1925: 427.

South Africa. Whether the hat is really a ‘Chinese hat’ is not certain, but in the south part of China, this kind of hat is very popular, it can both shield sunshine and rain, it is called ‘Dou Li’ (斗笠) as its formal name.

1.3. Indirect archeological evidence

1.3.1. A very big ancient boat-building site dated around Christ (秦汉时期) was found in Guangzhou in 1975, three building berths were found where a boat as heavy as 50 tons can be built.²²⁶ This indicates that China at the time had the advanced technology of ship-building and it is possible to build a big boat. It is not coincident that Panyu (番禺) became one of the important towns of commerce. This shows the possibility of China to carry out the long distance navigation.

1.4. Direct documentary evidence

1.4.1. In *The Records of the Grand Historian* (Shiji, 史记), finished in 91 B.C. by the famous Chinese historian Sima Qian (司马迁, 145-90, B.C.), there is a place called Li Xian, Paul Pelliot, J. Duyvendak, T. Filesi and some Chinese scholars think this is Alexandria in Egypt.

1.4.2. In *Qian Hanshu* (前汉书, Qian Han, e.g. Xi Han, or West Han, 西汉, 206 B.C.-24 A.D.), there mentioned a place called ‘Yi-cheng-bu State’, Albert Herrmann thinks that it is a transliteration of ‘Ethiopia’, and Zhang Xinglang supported this view, judging from the pronunciation of a dialect in South China.²²⁷

1.4.3. In *Hou Han Shu* (后汉书), there is a place called ‘Da-Qin State’. Friedrich Hirth suggests that this place refers to the eastern part of the Roman Empire which includes Syria, Egypt and Minor Asia.²²⁸

1.4.4. In *Wei Lue* (魏略, 222-), ‘Chi-San’, ‘Wu-Chi-san’ was mentioned, which was regarded as Alexandria in Egypt.²²⁹

The above-mentioned 4 sources are only presumption, which can not serve as pure evidence to support the argument of China-African relations.

1.5. Indirect documentary evidence

Several data indicate that China at the time had started navigation from coastal regions such as Guangdong to islands in the Indian Ocean such as Sri Lanka. There are also quite a few books on astronomy which could provide direction to those seamen who are sailing the Indian Ocean.

²²⁶ Zhang Junyan, 11-14.

²²⁷ Zhang Xinglang, 6-20.

²²⁸ 大秦国全录, 4.

²²⁹ Ibid, 68,78.

Although there is no direct connection with Africa, yet foreign books offered some links. For example, Cosmas talked about some ships from India and Ethiopia went as far as China with different goods.²³⁰ This indicates that during the period of South-North Dynasty, Chinese ships were very active in the commercial activities in the Indian Ocean with Sri Lanka as the center.

As for the China-African relations before Tang Dynasty, we may draw two conclusions.

The first is that people's contact went before official contact; and secondly, indirect contact went before direct contact.

11. 2. The Period of the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.)

From the archeological discoveries in both China and Africa, China's contact with and understanding of Africa transfers from indirect to direct. The academic studies have more data and scholars have dealt with the period in several works.

2.1. Historiography

For the contemporary historiography, there are some studies on the subject. In Zhang Xinglang's works on ancient data, he listed a special chapter of 'Chinese historical works on Africa during the Tang Dynasty'.²³¹ Shen Fuwei also used a chapter to deal with various contacts between China and Africa.²³² Chen Xinxiong, a Taiwanese scholar, studied on the period and made his own conclusion on the subject.²³³ Li Anshan also made a study on the China-African relations in the Tang Dynasty.²³⁴

During the Tang Dynasty, there were three works on some aspects of Africa, Du Huan's *Jing Xing Ji* (杜环: 经行记), Fuan Chenshi's *Youyang Zazu* (段成式: 酉阳杂俎) and Jia Dan's *Gujin Junguo Xiandao Siyi Shu* (贾耽: 古今郡国县道四夷述, Neighbouring Barbarians of Countries's Road in History and Today).

2.1.1. Jing Xing Ji

Du Huan was following General Gao Xianzhi's army, and was captured in the battle of Talas by the Arabs in the year of 751. After more than 10 years, he returned by sea to Guangzhou in 762 A.D. and wrote *Jing Xing Ji*. Although the book itself was missing, yet a paragraph of about 1500 words was kept in an encyclopedia (*Tong Dian*, 通典). In the paragraph, a place named 'Molin' was described.

²³⁰ Zhang Junyan, p.23.

²³¹ Zhang Xinglang, 8-24.

²³² Shen Fuwei, 188-240.

²³³ Chen Xinxiong, 125-159.

²³⁴ Li Anshan, 48-55.

‘We also went to *Molin*, Southwest of *Yangsaluo*. One reaches this country after having crossed the great desert and having travelled 2,000 Li. The people there are black, their customs rough. There is little rice and cereals and there is no grass and trees. The horses are fed with dried fish, the people eat [/////] [word not identified] and also Persian dates. Subtropical diseases [Malaria] are wide-spread. After crossing the inland there is a mountainous country, there are a lot of confessions, Arab religion (大食法, Islam), East Rome religion (大秦法, Catholicism) and Xunxun religion (Xian religion, 祆教, Zenzem, Zoroastrianism?). The followers of the Xunxun religion are the most in being sexually promiscuous regardless of relatives among the barbarians.The followers of Arab religion don't eat the meat of pigs, dogs, donkeys and horses, they don't respect neither the king of the country, nor their parents, they don't believe in supernatural powers, they only perform sacrifice to the heaven. According to their customs, every seventh day is a holiday, when no trade and no cash transactions are done, whereas they drink alcohol and behave casurelly. Within the East Roman confession the medical doctors know diarrhoea - or they recognise it already before the outbreak of the disease, or they open the head and insects come out.²³⁵

Where is ‘Molin’? Except one view that considers it probably refers to north India, most scholars think Molin is located in Africa. So far there are the following views regarding the possible location of Molin, Mauretania or Libya,²³⁶ Morocco,²³⁷ the Maghreb region,²³⁸ Egypt coastal region near Red Sea,²³⁹ Malindi in Kenya,²⁴⁰ Mande in Kenya (near Lamu),²⁴¹ Meroe in the Sudan,²⁴² Axum Kingdom of Ethiopia,²⁴³ the dry desert lowlands in Sudan and Eritrea.²⁴⁴ Wang Ting thinks it is located in West Africa.²⁴⁵

Summarizing the above-mentioned views, we can draw two conclusions. First, Molin refers to a place in Africa. Second, this data represents what Chinese knew or thought of Africa at the time.

²³⁵ Zhang, 1963. Another passage in which Du Huan gives a brief geographical overview has been preserved in another work, the *XinT'angshu* of Ouyang Xiu. In chapter 221 (*Dashi-zhuan*) he notes: "Coming from Fulinz9 (Baizhanting) one reaches, after having crossed the desert in a Southwestern direction and having travelled for 2,000 Li, a country called Molin, respectively Laobosa." Wolbert Smidt, "A Chinese in the Nubian and Abyssinian Kingdoms (8th Century): The visit of Du Huan to Molin-guo and Laobosa," *Chroniques Yemenites* No.9, 2001. In the article Wolbert Smidt mentioned Munro Hay's forthcoming work. <http://cy.revues.org/document33.html>.

吴毅, 《经行记及其重要价值》, 2008.

²³⁶ Quoted from Ai & Mu, 43.

²³⁷ Ding Qian, Quoted from Chen Xingxiong, 131.

²³⁸ Zhang Xinglang, 2-9.

²³⁹ Hirth, 81.

²⁴⁰ Berthold Laufer, 238.

²⁴¹ CASS, 326.

²⁴² Whitley, Quoted in Roland Oliver, 3-193.

²⁴³ Shen Fuwei, 227.

²⁴⁴ Wolbert Smidt, 2001.

²⁴⁵ Wang, 2001.

2.1.2. Youyang Zazu

A scholar with broad knowledge and excellent memory, Duan Chenshi (803-863, A.D.) also wrote about Africa in his *Youyang Zaxu* (酉阳杂俎, *Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang*) in the period of 850-860 A.D. In his book, he described about the special products and customs in Bobali State (拔拔力国). For the place of Bobali, scholars have located it as today's Berbera in Somali. His description is very vivid:

Bobali State is located in the Southwestern Sea, [people] Don't eat five grains, but only meat. They usually stick a needle into the veins of their cattle and drawing out the blood, which they mix with milk and consume raw. They wear no clothes, but merely use goatskins to cover the parts below their waists. Women are white and beautiful. People sell women to foreign merchants and the price is several times dearer. They have ivory The state has never belong to other country..... There are 200 thousand infantrymen, Da Si (大食, Arab Empire) always invades it.'

Zhang Xinglang thinks Bobali State is an equivalent of 'Bibalu' in *Zhu Fan Zhi* of the Song Dynasty. The director of the Tanzanian Museum supported this 'Somali presupposition'.²⁴⁶ Only British scholar Freeman-Grenville considered it as the Masai in present Tanzania and Kenya.²⁴⁷ However, there are two points in the book disagreeable with the reality. The first is the Masai are black people while the women in Youyang Zazu are 'white and beautiful'. The second is that the Masai migrated to Tanganyika only after the 16th century. It seems that Freeman-Grenville's view cannot hold water because of the two facts. Besides, *Youyang Zazu* also mentioned four other places, Xiaoyi State, Renjian State, Xida State and Wusili State. According to Zhang Xinglang, *Xiaoyi* (孝亿国) refers to south Egypt, Renjian (仍建国), Tunisia. Xida (悉怛国) seems to refer to the Sudan while Wusili (勿斯离) is Egypt.²⁴⁸ And there are detailed illustrations of each of them. The description tells us that firstly Bobali is located in Eastern Africa, and secondly, the Chinese at the time had somewhat detailed knowledge of some Eastern African countries.

2.1.3. Jia Dan's Gujin Junguo Xiandao Siyi Shu

Jia Dan's work illustrated a sea route from Guangzhou through Persian Gulf to East African coast. In the work, another place San Lan (三兰) was mentioned, which again caused some discussion. Scholars generally agree with the route yet there is no agreement regarding where San Lan is located. Some suggest that it is Sri Lanka or Aden, yet most think it is in Africa. Zhang Xinglang thought it should be in some place in East Africa coast according to the navigation time and route.²⁴⁹ Others take it as Dar es Salaam,²⁵⁰ Zeila port in Somali,²⁵¹ the region from Tanganyika to Mozambique.²⁵²

²⁴⁶ Fasi, 498.

²⁴⁷ Freeman-Grenville, pp.36-37.

²⁴⁸ Zhang Xinglang, 2-11-12.

²⁴⁹ Zhang, 2-159.

²⁵⁰ Cen Zhongmian, 1935; Ai & Mu, 29-33; Chen Xingxiang, 133-136.

²⁵¹ Chen Gongyuan, 1983.

Besides the three books, many other books (旧唐书、唐会要、册府元龟) in the Tang Dynasty also mentioned some black servants or slaves, described as 'curly hair and black skin', or 'black skin with red lips and white teeth'. The Tang Dynasty is a prosperous period with Arab merchants coming and going and the Arab world carried out the slave trade much earlier than the Triangle Trade. It is natural for those Arab merchants to bring some black or white slaves to China. During the trade, the Arab merchants could bring black slaves to China through three ways. First, when they dealt with Chinese merchants, they could use black slaves as commodity. Second, they could send black slaves as gift to Chinese businessmen in trade. Thirdly, they could present blacks to the Chinese court as gift. It should be noted that the 'Kunlun Nu' (昆仑奴) or 'Zengzi Nu' (僧祇奴) could be indigenous Southeast Asians with dark skin.

2.2. Evidence

The evidence during this period includes the china discovered in Africa, the currencies found in the East African coast, a pottery figure of black and black figures in the picture of the Tang Dynasty.

2.2.1. Porcelains

A large quantity of pieces of china are now stored in the 富斯塔特 in the south suburb of Cairo. In the year of 642, the Arab invaded Egypt and established this city, which served a center of politics and commerce for a long time. In 1168, it was destroyed during the second Crusades.²⁵³ The study of the explorations in the city has been more than one century and about 20 thousand pieces of china were excavated there, which now spread and stored in museums in Egypt, Sweden, Italy and Japan. The pieces of china excavated in the city are characterized by four features, large quantity, good quality, last long and many kilns.²⁵⁴ Some of the pieces are products of the Tang Dynasty, which were also found in other places in Africa, such as north Sudan, Manda Island in Kenya, Comoro Island, etc. The pieces of china found in Africa are mainly four types, Yue Kiln, white china in Xing Kiln, Changsha Kiln and Tangshancai.²⁵⁵

2.2.2. Currencies

Besides the china, few Tang currencies are also found in Africa. According to the statistics, five currencies were found in Africa, four from Zanzibar,²⁵⁶ another in Mogadishu, yet without detailed information. There are also other reports about the discoveries in Kilwa and Mafia, but their details remain to be definitely identified.²⁵⁷

²⁵² Shen Fuwei, 208-213.

²⁵³ Xia Nai, 1963.

²⁵⁴ Ma Wenkuang & Men Fanren, 4.

²⁵⁵ Ma Wenkuang & Men Fanren, 37-55.

²⁵⁶ Zhang Tieshen, 1972, 49.

²⁵⁷ Chen Xingxiong, 147-148.

2.2.3. Black Pottery Figure

In 1954, in Madam Pei's tomb in Xi-an, one black pottery figure was discovered. The pottery is 15 centimeters high, with black skin, curly hair, thick lips and other features of the black, which can be easily identified as a black figure. Besides, some black figures also appeared in ancient pictures in China, such as the paintings by famous artists like Yan Liben and Zhou Fang. Yet it is not certain whether they are blacks from Africa.²⁵⁸ In the Dunfang frescoes, there also appeared some figures with identical black features.²⁵⁹

From the historiography and evidence above-mentioned, we can make the following presumptions.

First, during the Tang Dynasty, only few people went Africa. Otherwise, there should be some traces in written work.

Second, it seems that China's ships had not been to Africa yet. Although there is the record of a sea route between Sanlan Guo and Persian Gulf, yet the route is described in detail how it goes from Sanlan Guo to Persian Gulf, not vice versa.

Thirdly, those pieces of china should be the the commodities of indirect commerce or as ballast. If they are the goods of direct trade, there should be other commodities.

Fourthly, it seems that Egypt is the first stop of those indirect goods, and the pieces of china in other places in Africa must be transferred from Egypt.

Fifthly, the middle-men of the trade between China and Africa should be the Arab merchants with a long history of commercial activities who had the better geographical position and rich experience in navigation.



Fig. 11.3. African pottery figure

²⁵⁸ Chen Xingxiang, 149.

²⁵⁹ Zhang Junyan, 92.

11. 3. The Song (869-1279 A.D.) and Yuan (1271-1368 A.D.) Dynasties

During the Song and Yuan Dynasties, the contact between China and Africa deepened, which is expressed in two aspects. First, the transportation by the sea became the fact, which is reflected by Zhou Qufei's (周去非) *Lingwai Daida* (岭外代答, written in 1178), Zhou Rukuo's (赵汝适) *Zhu Fan Zhi* (诸蕃志, written in 1225) and the Yuan scholar Wang Dayuan's (汪大渊) *Dao Yi Zhilue* (岛夷志略, written in 1349). Secondly, Non-official and official relations were developed in some way.

3.1. Historiography

3.1.1. Lingwai Daida

The book divided the sea into several big areas and mentioned several places in Africa, such as Wusili (勿斯离), Mulanpi, Kunlun Cengqi, Moga (默伽) and Tuopan Di (in Egypt). However, there are more detailed description about Molanpi and Kunlun Cengqi. According to *Lingwai Daida*, there were big ships in Molanpi, one could hold several thousands people. Sheep were very big in Molanpi. Zhang Xinglang thought that Molanpi was the mispronunciation of Maghreb, it not only referred to Morocco, but North Africa as a whole, even West Europe.²⁶⁰ Other scholars generally support his view.

There is a place called 'Kunlun Cengqi' in volume three in *Lingwai Daida*. Several things unique are mentioned. The big bird with a huge wing, which can eat the wild camel. There were ostriches, ivory and rhinoceros horn as well. He also mentioned 'wild men' with black skin, whom were trapped and sold as slaves. For the location of Kunlun Cengqi, opinions differ. Some suggest that it referred to the East African coast in general.²⁶¹ Others think it is present Madagascar and its neighbouring region.²⁶²

3.1.2. Zhu Fan Zhi

The names of African places in *Lingwai Daida* are used in *Zhu Fan Zhi*. Zhao Rukuo (1170-1232), the author of the book *Zhu-Fan-Zhi* (诸蕃志, written in 1225) had never been abroad, but he worked for a long time as an official of the port in South China, thus had many opportunities to get contact with foreigners. He mentioned 57 places in the book, including more than 10 African places. The most valuable is the description of East Africa.

Cengba Guo (层拔国). The population of the island is mainly the people of Arab, who have followed the Arab religion. There are quite a few special products in the island,

²⁶⁰ Zhang Xinglang, 2-31.

²⁶¹ Zhang Xinglang, 2-30.

²⁶² Ferrand, 32; Duyvendak, 23.

such as ivory, gold, etc. This place is identified as Zanzibar.²⁶³ *Lingwai Daida* and *Zhu Fan Zhi* both mentioned Kunlun Cengqi. 'Cengqi' seems to be the transliteration of Persian word 'Zenj', which means 'the black'. 'Bar' means 'coast' and 'land', therefore 'Zanjibar' is the 'land of the blacks', referring to the coast region of East Africa. 'Cengba' seems to be the transliteration of 'Zanjibar'.²⁶⁴ the non-governmental and official contact between China and Africa was further improved. This was mainly because both governments paid more emphasis on foreign trade. By the Yuan Dynasty, there were three routes on the sea between China and Africa.²⁶⁵

'Zhongli Guo' (中理国) is another place in the book. The description includes the dress, house, special products, customs, and social classes as well. The place is next to Bibalo (Berbera). The Chinese word '中' could be the miswriting of '申', thereafter 'Shenli', which is identical to 'Somali'. Therefore, Zhongli Guo is generally considered as present Somali. Three points should be stressed. First, the details indicate that China knew the place pretty well and there were much conduct between China and Zhongli Guo. Second, Zhongli Guo placed an important role in this region.

Zhu Fan Zhi also mentioned some animals such as elephant, hipo and African ostrich.

3.1.3. Daoyi Zhilue

Both Zhou Qufei and Zhao Rukuo wrote the books based on the materials taken from others, while Wang Dayuan travelled by sea several times by himself. His book *Daoyi Zhilue* mentioned some names of countries and places, such as A-shi-li, Ma-na-li, Ceng-yao-luo, Jia-jiang-men-li. Besides the former-mentioned places, the book also mentioned places in Egypt and Mozambique. Jia-jiang-men-li is a place in Mocambique that was first mentioned in a Chinese literature. In the description, the gathering of Muslims and the trade of 'black children' (黑囡) were mentioned.

3.2. Evidence

3.2.1. Porcelains from China

According to the study of Ma & Meng, more and more pieces of china of this period were discovered in African countries, including Egypt, Sudan, Morocco, Ethiopia, Somali, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Madagascar. For example, in Great Zimbabwe, 43 pieces of china belonging to 13 articles were found in one cave.²⁶⁶ Ibn Battuta also mentioned in his book that china in China is as cheap as porcelain in our country, or even cheaper. The pieces of china were transported to India, or the Maghreb, and they are the best among porcelains.²⁶⁷

²⁶³ Feng Chengjun, 53-54.

²⁶⁴ Zhang Tieshen, 19-20.

²⁶⁵ Ai Zhouchang and Mutao, Ibid, pp. 53-54.

²⁶⁶ Ma & Meng, 3-6, 8-14, 18-23, 26-29, 31-32, 35. Also refer to R. Oliver, 203, 206, 215-216, 225.

²⁶⁷ Ma Jingpeng's translation, 546.

3.2.2. Currency

Hirth in his works once mentioned that the British discovered in 1888 currencies of the Song Dynasty in Zanzibar, and the German also found the currencies of the same period in Somali in 1898. The most significant discovery is the one in Kazengwa (卡珍格瓦) in 1945, 176 currencies were found at the time. Four of them are of the Tang Dynasty. Besides 8 are unidentical, the rest are of the Song Dynasty.²⁶⁸ And the archeological discovery indicates that East African merchants went to Quanzhou during the Song. Chittick led the archeological excavation in Kilwa remains in Tanzania, and found more than 20 pieces of currencies from the Song to the early Ming (1368-1644, A.D.).²⁶⁹

3.2.3. Sea Route

During the Song and Yuan, both non-official and official contacts increased. This is closely linked to the government policy to encourage the foreign trade which give a big push to more commercial activities during this period. During the Yuan, there were three sea routes between China and Africa.

From China to North Africa: China—India—Aden—Egypt.

From China to East Africa: China—Maldives—East Africa.

From China to Madagascar. Divided into two sub-routes.

China—Socotra Island—Madagascar;

China—Malabar Coast—Madagascar.

3.2.4. Ibn Battuta's Visit to China

In 1346, the famous Moroccan tourist Ibn Battuta came to China. In addition to staying in the capital, he travelled to Quanzhou and Guangzhou in the south. He stayed in China for one year and the prosperity of China left him a deep impression. He dictated his experiences in China after going home and others put his oral accounts into the publication of *Travel Notes of Ibn Battuta*. (The initial name was Yiyu Qiwen Lansheng.) The book mentioned Chinese political systems, legal systems, local customs, construction style, local products, communication, economic life, monetary systems and a very detailed description of the structure of Beijing city and the internal conflict within the royal court.²⁷⁰ The introduction of China in the book had a great influence on Arabic North Africa back then.

3.2.5. Maps

China's understanding of Africa also improved during that period. Zhu Siben (1273–1333) in the Yuan Dynasty drew a rather accurate African map in the world, with south-

²⁶⁸ Zhang Tieshen, 49-50, note 5.

²⁶⁹ Ma & Meng, 25.

²⁷⁰ See chapters “Chinese china”, “Some information about Chinese”, “Paper currency in communication”, “Chinese virtuosity” and “Laws on ship registration” in *Travel Notes of Ibn Battuta*, translated by Ma Jinpeng, (Yinchuan: Ningxia People Press, 1985), pp. 545-549.

ern Africa in it and one angle pointing to the south. It is a pity that the map drawn by Zhu Sibei was lost and it could only be traced in *Guangyutu* (Broad World Atlas) by Luo Hongxian (罗洪宪) of the Ming Dynasty. However, another map drawn by geographer Li Zemin (李泽民) who was in the same period with Zhu Sibei, also includes Africa and Europe.²⁷¹ In the maps by contemporary Arabians and Europeans, the southern part of Africa was drawn to the east, and it 'continued until the mid 15th century,' noticed by the famous British sinologist Joseph Needham.²⁷²

3.2.6. Diplomatic Contact

In the Song and Yuan Dynasties, the official contact had also strengthened. Here are some of the records.

The Song dynasty (1008)—China established diplomatic relations with the Fatima dynasty. Then both sides sent ambassadors to each other.²⁷³

Song dynasty (1073)—Yulu (俞卢) and Digu (地国) in East Africa (as Kipulu and Gedi in Kenya) sent envoys to China.²⁷⁴

The Yuan dynasty (1282)—China sent envoy Adan to Alu Qianbo Guo (阿鲁乾伯国) and established relations with the Mamluk Dynasty of Egypt.

Yuan dynasty (1283)—Ancient Danu (Gandala in Ethiopia) 'was willing to be a tribute to the Yuan Dynasty, owing to the words brought by Awei.'

Yuan dynasty (1291)—China sent envoys to Madu (Ethiopia).

Yuan dynasty (1328)—Yaji (Ethiopia) sent envoys to China.²⁷⁵

In addition, according to the records of Marco Polo, the Chinese emperor Kublai Khan sent envoys to visit Madagascar.²⁷⁶

In sum, we can draw a conclusion that during the Song and Yuan dynasties, China's understanding on Africa further improved and there was an increased trend of communication between China and Africa.

More African place names were mentioned in Chinese literature in this period than that of Tang dynasty. The description of some African states and regions was more detailed and more specific.

²⁷¹ Shen Fuwei, *Ibid*, pp. 385-387.

²⁷² Joseph Needham, *China's Ancient Civilization*, Vol. 3, London: Cambridge University Press, pp.552-555.

²⁷³ Shen Fuwei, *Ibid*, pp. 252-258.

²⁷⁴ Zhang Junyan, *Ibid*, p. 118. Regarding the records of the envoys of Dashi to Song dynasty, Zhang Junyan had listed a form and there were 54 times in total, pp. 11-17.

²⁷⁵ Shen Fuwei, *Ibid*, pp. 374-378.

²⁷⁶ *Travels*, book iii, ch. 26, London, 1918. R. Coupland, *East Africa and Its Invaders*, p. 19. Zhang Tiesheng, *ibid*, p. 26. Some scholars believe that "Madagascar" mentioned by Marco Polo was actually "Mogadishu". See Shen Fuwei, *ibid*, pp. 380-381.

Chinese scholars had a deeper understanding on African states, from geographic position and local products to customs, mode of production and social systems.

The marine communication between China and Africa has been a fact, various kinds of trade grew, and a few new sea routes to the coasts of East Africa was established.

The direct non-governmental communication between China and Africa had been realized. Wang Dayuan's visit to Eastern Africa and Ibn Battuta's visit to China strengthened mutual understanding.

The official communication was strengthened, peaceful diplomatic relations developed between China and Africa, and there were records that both sides sent envoys or merchants who acted as diplomatic envoys to each other.

11. 4. The Period of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)

By the beginning of the Ming dynasty, Sino-African communication had further improved. It is embodied in two aspects. First, Sanbao Eunuch General Zheng He travelled to the West Oceans; he passed through the west Indian Ocean and reached the Eastern coast of Africa. Second, a few important works about Chinese-foreign communication were published, including *Xingcha Shenglan* (星槎胜览) by Fei Xin, *Yingya Shenglan* (瀛涯星览) by Ma Huan and *Xiyang Fanguo Zhi* (西洋番国志) by Gong Zhen. The three people were on Zheng He's trip to Africa, therefore their works were more detailed in the description of African states and regions and had a higher historical value.

4.1. Historiography

4.1.1. Fei's *Xingcha Shenglan*, Ma's *Yingya Shenglan* and Gong's *Xiyang Fanguo Zhi*

Works on Ming dynasty's voyages provide us with relatively accurate knowledge about Africa. The works of Fei Xin, Ma Huan and Gong Zhen were more specific and detailed than the older ones because they themselves took part in Zheng He's voyages. Fei Xin's *Xingcha Shenglan* mentioned Zhubu, Mugu Dushu and Bolawa. Among these the record of Zhubu was worth citing.

Zhubu locates adjacent to Mugu Dushu. There are few villages and the cities and houses are made by stone. Their customs are simple and honest and both men and women have wavy hair. They do not expose their skins with cloth on them; women use cloth to hide their face. There are rare rain and the land is yellow with no grass or wood. People there live on fishing. There are lions, leopards and ostriches.

Some ostrich is 6-7 chi tall and its feet are like tuoti. Products such as tuzhu, duanjuan, gold and silver, chinaware, pepper and grain. Local chiefs pays local products as tribute to Ming.²⁷⁷

Zhubu is generally identified as the mouth of Juba River in Kenya. In addition to Zhubu's location, houses, climate, production, custom and products, the article mentioned that local chiefs were moved by the gifts that Zheng He's fleet gave them and paid their local products as tribute

²⁷⁷ Jilu Huibian Ben has a more detailed version of the paragraph, see Feng Chengjun, *Xingcha Shenglan Jiaozhu* (Houji), p. 20.

to establish a friendly relation with Ming. Ma Huan's *Yingya Shenglan* mentioned 'Mixi' (Egypt) only in 'there are business in Dawan and Mixi' in its 'Jixing Poem'.²⁷⁸ Gong Zhen's *Xiyang Fan-guo Zhi* mainly discussed southeast Asia.

4.1.2. African place names

No.	Literary source				Proposed modern equivalent
	Lingwai Daida	Zhufan Zhi	Daoyi Zhilue	Zheng He's voyages	
1				Ge'er Defeng	Cape Guardafui
2				Sugu Dala (also Xuduo Dayu)	Socotra island
3		Bipiluo Guo			Berbera in the north of Somali
4		Zhongli Guo			Somali coast including Socotra island
5				Mugu Dushu (also Mugu Du)	Mogadishu of Somali
6				Bolawa (also as Bolawa, or Bila)	Brava of Somali
7				Manbasa	Mambrui (also as Mombasa)
8				Sunla	eastern Africa ?
9				Zhubu	The end of Jumba river in Somali
10		Cengbo Guo	Cengyao Boluo		the south of Somali
11			Manali	Malin (also as Malindi)	Malindi of Kenya (also as Kilwa)
12			Jiajiang Menli		The end of Zambezi river in Mozambique
13	Kunlun Cengqi Guo	Kunlun Cengqi Guo			Madagascar and its coast
14	Wusili Guo	Wusili Guo (Mixuli)			Egypt
15		Egentuo Guo			Alexandria of Egypt
16	Tuopandi Guo	Pandi			Damietta of Egypt
17	Mojia Guo	Mojialie Guo			Morocco
18	Mulanpi Guo	Mulanpi Guo			Northwest of Africa and south of Spain
19	Pinuoye				Tunisia and Tripoli of Libya
20				He'er	South of Hafuni, Ell of Somali
21				Muer Liha Bier	Huoer Dier
22				Muluwang	Merca [Mecca?]
23				Menfeichi	Mombasa
24				Moer Ganti	Meileika
25				Lasi Nahe	Laascaanood
26				Hafuni (also as Hafuer)	Cape Hafun
27				Zheji Laha Zela	Jiale Hajiaer

Sources: Zhang Xun, *Ancient China's Communication on the Sea*, Beijing: Commercial Press, 1986 (revised edition); Feng Chengjun, *Zhufan Zhi Jiaozhu*, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1956; Su Jiqing, *Dao Yi Zhilue Jiaoyi*, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1981; Xiang Da, *Maps of Zheng He's Voyages*, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1982 [1961].

Table 11.1. Names of African Places in various written sources.

²⁷⁸ According to Feng Chengjun, "Mixi is Misr in the 332th volume of History of Ming Dynasty." See Feng Chengjun, *Yingya Shenglan Jiaozhu*, Changsha: Commercial Press, 1938, p. 2.

4.2. Evidence

Ming Taizu attached importance to foreign communication even before he established Ming dynasty. Early in the 27th year of Yuan Shundi (1367), the first year that Zhu Yuanzhang (Ming Taizu) took Hangzhou and changed the title of his reign, he established an institution ‘Shibo Tiju Si’ (市舶提举司). According to *Zhiguan Zhi* (职官志) of *History of Ming Dynasty*, the institution was set up to ‘in charge of foreign tribute and foreign trade’. During the period of Hongwu, Ming Taizu sent many envoys to promote mutual trade and relation in both land route and sea route; later, because of the Japanese pirates, Ming Taizu forbade the trade on sea in order to prevent the coastal ‘bad citizens’ who colluded with Japanese pirates.

After Ming Chengzu Zhu Di took the throne, he reopened the sea route and encouraged to develop foreign relation. More envoys and merchants came to China as Ming Chengzu carried out policies that encouraged foreign merchants to engage in trade. In the third year of Yongle (1405), Ming Chengzu set up hotels at ‘Shibo Tiju Si’ in three coastal cities to welcome foreigners. The three hotels were Laiyuan Yi (Fujian Guan), Anyuan Yi (Zhejiang Guan) and Huaiyuan Yi (Guangdong Guan). Meanwhile, Ming Chengzu sent large numbers of envoys to build a harmonious relation with neighboring states. From the first year of Yongle (1403) to the 18th (1420), he sent envoys for 29 times on the sea route. Except for the 4th (1406), 8th (1410) and 17th (1419) year of Yongle, there were envoys sent to South Ocean; sometimes there were 7 times in one year.²⁷⁹

4.2.1. Zheng He’s Voyages



Fig. 11.4. Zheng He (1371-1433)

Six of Zheng He’s seven voyages to the West Ocean (1406-1433) took place in the period of Yongle, which was not accidental. Below we list the time of seven voyages of Zheng He:

- The first voyage: 3rd-5th year of Yongle (1405-1407)

²⁷⁹ Zhang Junyan, *ibid.*, pp. 182-184.

- The second voyage: 5th-7th year of Yongle (1407-1409)
- The third voyage: 7th-9th year of Yongle (1409-1411)
- The fourth voyage: 11th-13th year of Yongle (1413-1415)
- The fifth voyage: 15th-17th year of Yongle (1417-1419)
- The sixth voyage: 19th-20th year of Yongle (1421-1422)
- The seventh voyage: 6th-8th year of Yongle (1431-1433)

Zheng He's old family name was Ma, and he was born in Hedai village of Baoshan, Kunyang county of Yunnan Province (Jinning district today). He was kidnapped into the palace and became a eunuch. 'At first, he served Yan King at king's house, followed the king and was promoted for his performance.' 'Zheng' was granted by Ming Chengzu in the 2nd year of Yongle (1404). Zheng He was tall and handsome, therefore being chosen as the principal envoy for the voyages to the West Ocean. From the 3rd year of Yongle (1405) to the 8th year of Xuande (1433), Zheng He travelled to the foreign states 7 times with the Ming Chengzu's order, including Southeast Asia, the peninsula of South Asia, Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf, Arabic peninsula and the coast of East Africa.

In general, scholars believe that Zheng He arrived in Africa for the first time on his 4th trip. *E.g.*, from 1413-1433, lasted for 20 years.²⁸⁰ Shen Fuwei argues that Zheng He sent a fleet to Mogadishu on his 3rd trip; therefore, the first time Zheng He's fleet reached Africa was between 7th to 9th year of Yongle (1409-1411) on his 3rd trip.²⁸¹ Shen Fuwei based his argument on the sea routes recorded in the 3rd volume of *Shuyuan Zaji* by Lu Rong.

Lu Rong lived in Taicang, the place where Zheng He's fleet stayed, and he assumed the office of Yanfeng Si in the Board of Personnel and Zhifang Langzhong in the Board of War. Fei Xin, the author of *Xingcha Shenglan*, accompanied Zheng He on this visit, so Lu Rong is very possible to have access to the earliest edition of *Xingcha Shenglan*. His records had his proof. Besides, 'Zhubu' (a place near Juba River of Somali) was in the article. According to *Biography of Zhubu in History of Ming Dynasty*, 'Zhubu is next to Mugu Dushu. It paid tribute to Ming during the mid of Yongle. There were not so many people there and the people were simple and honest, Zheng He used to be there.' The records of Zheng He's next 4 voyages did not mention 'Zhubu'. Therefore, Zheng He may have reached Somali on his 3rd voyage. 'Bolawa' in the article is Brava in Somali, 'Mugu Dudong' should be 'Mugu Dushu', which is in today's Mogadishu in Somali.

In the 10th year of Yongle (1412), Ming Chengzu ordered Zheng He to start his fourth mission. Zheng He prepared for more than one year and chose many talents including Ma Huan, the author of *Yingya Shenglan*. There were two different records in *Mingshi Lu* (A Record of Ming Dynasty's Events) about the route of the fourth trip. Volume 134 records:

²⁸⁰ Zhang Tiesheng, *ibid*, p. 26, footnote 1; Chen Gongyuan, Zheng Yijun.

²⁸¹ Shen Fuwei, 2005, 493.

‘On Bingshen Day of November in the 10th year of Yongle, (Ming Chengzu) sent Zheng He the eunuch to go to Manlajia, Java, Sumatra, Alu, Kezhi, Guli, Nanboli, Pengheng, Jilandan, Jiayile, Jilumosi, Bila, Liushan and Sunta and grant their kings thin silk and leno.’

According to this record, Zheng He seemed to reach only one African countries on this travel, Dabila (Brava). However, volume 128 in *Mingshi Lu* had a different record about envoys from African countries. These envoys came to China together with Zheng He on his way back.

‘On Renzi Day of November in the 14th year of Yongle, kindoms including Guli, Java, Manlajia, Zhancheng, Sumatra, Nanwuli, Shali Wanni, Pengheng, Xilanshan, Mugu Dushu, Liushan, Nanboli, Bulawa, Adan, Malin, Lasa, Hulu Mosi and Kezhi and the Office of Pacification Commission of Jiugang sent envoys to pay tribute such as horses, rhinoceros, elephants and local products to Ming dynasty.’²⁸²

In sum, on his fourth voyage, Zheng He visited Mugu Dushu of Somali (Mogadishu), Malin (Malindi) and Bulawa (Brava).

On his 5th voyage in the 15th year of Yongle (1417), Zheng He sent the envoys of Mugu Dushu back to their states and paid a visit to these states. According to *Nanshan Sibeiji*, ‘Zheng He led the fleet to the West in the 15th year of Yongle. Hulu Mosi paid lions, leopards and Daxi horses as tribute. Adan paid kylins, also called Zulafa²⁸³, and Mahashou with long horns. Mugu Dushu sent Huafulu²⁸⁴ and lions as tribute. Bolawa sent camels and Tuoji²⁸⁵.’

On his 6th voyage, Zheng He’s main mission is to send envoys from other states back and paid a visit to these states. He carried out a friendly visit to Mugu Dushu and Bulawa when he sent envoys of the two states back to their home.

Ming Renzong Zhu Gaozhi took the throne after Ming Chengzu died in July of 22nd year of Yongle (1414). Ming Renzong took Xia Yuanji’s advice of opposing spending money on remote oceans who was the then Minister of Revenue and order ‘ships for sailing to the West oceans stop going abroad.’ Renzong took the throne for only one year and then died; Xuanzong Zhu Shanji took the throne. In the 5th year of Xuande (1430), he ordered Zheng He to start his 7th voyage to the West. Feixin, Mahuan and Gongzhen accompanied him.

Zheng He’s fleet visited more than 20 states on this voyage including Mugu Dushu (Mogadishu) and Bulawa (Brawa).

²⁸² According to the record of volume 103 of Ming Chengzu Shilu, “On Dingmao Day of December in the 14th year of Yongle, kingdoms including Guli, Java, Manlajia, Zhancheng, Xilanshan, Mugu Dushu, Liushan, Nanboli, Bulawa, Adan, Sumatra, Malin, Lasa, Hulu Mosi, Kezhi, Nanwuli, Shali Wanni and Pengheng, and the Office of Pacification Commission of Jiugang left China and were granted clothes made in silk and leno.” The names listed here were same with volume 182 of Mingshi Lu.

²⁸³ In Arabic, it is Zarafah; in English, it is giraffe; it is called “Changjinglu” now in Chinese.

²⁸⁴ Zebra.

²⁸⁵ Ostrich.

4.2.2. Sea Routes between China and Africa

There were many routes to reach Africa from China through the ports of Indian Ocean according to Zheng He's route to the West. Zhang Tiesheng thought that there were two routes on the sea for China to go to Eastern Africa: 1) Along the Arabic Sea Coast—Northern Coast of Somali—Socotra islands—Eastern Africa Coast; 2) Across the Indian Ocean—Islands of Maldives (Male), or Xiaogelan of India (Quilon), or Bieluoli of Sri Lanka (Beilie Jiamu).²⁸⁶

Some scholars believed that there were 3 routes:

- Maldives—Aden Gulf—Egypt;
- Xiaogelan—Mogadishu;
- India—Hormoz—Aden—Cape Guardafui—Eastern Africa Coast.²⁸⁷

Some scholars believed there were 5 routes:

- Sumatra—Maldives—Egypt;
- Sumatra—Maldives—Mogadishu;
- Xiaogelan—Maldives—Mogadishu;
- Bieluoli—Maldives—Mogadishu;
- Bieluoli—Brava.²⁸⁸

In fact, the above classifications had the same basic routes. There were at least three sea routes from China to eastern Africa coast.

- China—Quilon of India—Mogadishu.²⁸⁹
- China—Bieluoli of Ceylon (or Male of Maldives)—Brava.²⁹⁰
- China—Male of Maldives—Mogadishu.²⁹¹

Zheng He's fleet could also sail from Aden (or Egyptian ports) and Cape Guardafui to the coast of eastern Africa.

4.2.3. Porcelains from China

Because of the sea routes between China and eastern Africa, Chinaware were trans-

²⁸⁶ Zhang Tiesheng, *ibid*, pp. 96-97.

²⁸⁷ Ai Zhouchang and Mu Tao, *ibid*, p. 75.

²⁸⁸ Shen Fuwei, *ibid*, p. 462.

²⁸⁹ "It took 20 days from Xiaogelan if the wind was favorable." Feng Chengjun, Xingcha Shenglan Jiaozhu (Houji), Beijing, Zhonghua Book Company, 1954, p. 21.

²⁹⁰ "It took 21 days from Ceylon Mountain and Bieluoli to the south." Feng Chengjun, Xingcha Shenglan Jiaozhu (Houji), p. 24.

²⁹¹ "???" Xiang Da, *Maps of Zheng He's Voyages*, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1982 [1961], p. 57.

ported to Africa in large numbers. Blue and white porcelain, which were mainly made in Jingde Zhen, was the mainstream product of chinaware at that time; the production of blue and white porcelain made a big progress during the Xuande Period, in glaze, color, shape and emblazonry. Therefore, chinaware that were sold to Africa in Ming dynasty was mainly blue and white porcelain. According to the statics of a Japanese scholar Koyama Fujio, there were 1656 pieces of blue and white porcelain in the remains of Fustat in Egypt, while there were fewer pieces of Longquan celadon and only 7 pieces of color porcelain.²⁹² In addition, chinaware of Ming dynasty was also found in other areas of North Africa, East Africa and middle-south Africa.²⁹³



Fig. 11.5. Great Ming Atlas (1389 A.D.)

²⁹² Ma Wenkuan and Meng Fanren, *ibid.*, p. 50.

²⁹³ In addition to the works of Ma Wenkuan and Meng Fanren, see R. Oliver, ed., *The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. 3, pp. 574-575, 579-580.

4.2.4. Trade between China and Africa

Sino-African trade also made a great progress in Ming dynasty. Zheng He's voyages to the West definitely promoted the trade. According to *Xingcha Shenglan* by Fei Xin, the fleet exchanged local products with Chinese products. In Zhubu, '(people) use tuzhu, duanjuan, gold and silver, porcelain, pepper and grain.' In Mugu Dushu, '(people) use gold, silver, seduan, sandalwood, grain, porcelain and color silk.' In Bolawa, '(people) use gold, silver, duanjuan, rice, beans and porcelain.'²⁹⁴ China imported local products from Africa, such as ivory, rhinoceros horn, mastic, red sandalwood, zishu, shengjin, ya-zuidanfan, and moyao.

4.2.5. Maps

In the Ming Dynasty, the Chinese had a better image of African map. There is one atlas made by colorful silk (3.86X4.75 meters) in 1389, with identical rivers (the Nile and the Orange), and mountain (Drakensberg) in southern Africa.

4.2.6. African Animals



Fig. 1.6 Zebra and Giraffe in an Early Modern Chinese source

²⁹⁴ Cited from Jiluben Huibian, see Feng Chengjun, *Xingcha Shenglan Jiaozhu (houji)*, p. 20, p. 23, p. 25.

Various goods from Africa and porcelains from China indicate the bilateral communication and trade activities between both sides. What's more, China also imported some African animals such as giraffe, ostrich and zebra. Here are pictures of two African animals, Zebra and Giraffe, which appeared in Chinese literature and paintings. In the literature, Giraffe is called 'Ju-la' (徂蜡), which appeared in the explanation of 'Bibaro State' (弼琶罗国), e.g., Berbera, a place located at the middle belt of today's Somali.²⁹⁵ 'Ju-la' is a transliteration of Persian word 'zurnāpā', which in Arabic is 'zarafa'. Therefore, Ju-la is a literary translation of Giraffe. With the Zebra, the two Chinese characters 'Fu-lu' (福鹿) are 'happy' (or 'good fortune') and 'deer', therefore, the ancient Chinese took Zebra as 'fortune deer'.

Did Zheng He arrive in Kenya and the south of Tanzania? According to current research, no direct evidence could be found to prove that Zheng He had been to the south of East Africa or South Africa. However, some western historical materials seem to provide something for deduction. When Vasco da Gama arrived at the coast of Mozambique after rounding the Cape of Good Hope in 1498 for the first time, he and his crews sent local Africans some gifts including clothes and food. To their confusion, local people did not really seem concerned about their gifts and told them that some whites²⁹⁶ navigated the same kind of ships like theirs from the place where the sun rises.²⁹⁷ This indicates, from one aspect, that Chinese may have come there. In addition, when anthropologists carried their survey in Pate island of Kenya, they found that local Shanga's ancestors came from Shanghai according to oral legends of Shanga and that it was where the name of Shanga came from.²⁹⁸

Geographical works by western missionaries who came to China during this period mentioned Africa. It played a role in introducing Africa.²⁹⁹ In sum, we can get the conclusions below about Sino-African relation in Ming dynasty.

China and states in North African and East Africa developed a pretty close relationship. They often sent envoys and gifts to each other.

From the aspect of official relation, China took the leading position and at least they felt so. The fact that some African states took the initiative to sent envoys and gifts to the court of Ming dynasty may illustrate the idea.

²⁹⁵ Zhao Rukuo, Zhu Fan Zhi.

²⁹⁶ I have been to Ghana before and stayed at the house of an African friend. They usually regarded Chinese as whites, instead of yellows.

²⁹⁷ Philip Snow, *The Star Raft*, p. 35.

²⁹⁸ *Report on Shanga Excavation*, 1980, by Mark Horton of Cambridge University, cited from Philip Snow, *The Star Raft*, p. 33.

²⁹⁹ Such as Matteo Ricci's Great Universal Geographic Map, Giulio Aleni's Zhifang Waiji and Ferdinand Verbiest's Kunyu Tushuo. See Chen Yulong, "The Introduction of Posthumous Manuscripts of Mr. Xiang Da—Zi Mingchu zhi Jiefangqian (1405-1948) Zhongguo yu Feizhou Jiaotong Shiliao Xuanji Shuoming", Yan Wenru and Chen Yulong, eds., *Festschrift of Mr. Xiangda, Urumqi: Xinjiang People Press, 1986*, pp. 22-45.

Zheng He's voyage to the West was a great event of world significance. It reflects not only China's national power and navigation skill, but also make the occasional non-governmental trade relation between China and Africa develop into regular official relationship.

Zheng He's voyage to the West enabled China's understanding of Africa to have a qualitative leap. In several literatures that recorded Zheng He's fleets' routes, there were as many as 16 names of African states or regions which were mentioned.

With Zheng He's voyage to the West, Sino-African business relationship further strengthened, which could be seen from the excavated materials from Africa and China's imported goods.

Unfortunately, the peaceful and friendly diplomatic relation between independent states that own sovereignty did not continue. After Ming Renzong, the attack of conservative bureaucrat and the policy of isolation greatly handicapped the Sino-foreign relations and China's foreign trade. Sino-African relations were also influenced.

11.5. Concluding remarks

It is worth mentioning that although there were records of 'Kunlun Nu' (black slaves) in old Chinese literatures, more Africans started to come to China after Western colonists invaded Africa and China. At that time, Portuguese colonists brought some black slaves to China's coastal areas. According to the records, there were 7,000 people in Aomen and 5,100 of them were slaves, mainly African black slaves. There were black soldiers in Zheng Zhilong's army. In 1661, to defend China's territory Taiwan, Zheng Chenggong had a fierce fight with Dutch colonists. During the fight, black soldiers fought bravely together with Zheng Chenggong and helped to defend the territory successfully.³⁰⁰

That is a new page of the contact between China and Africa after Da Gama.

³⁰⁰ Philip Snow, *The Star Raft*, pp. 39-40.

Chapter 12.

The Assyrian factor in West African history

The founding of Ancient Near Eastern successor states in sub-Saharan Africa

by Dierk Lange³⁰¹

12.1. Introduction

For more than half a century African history has been a recognized academic field all over the world. Similar to its European forerunner, it takes account of developments reaching far back into the past and exceeding the continental horizon. For a number of years, however, research has been more and more restricted to modern and contemporary history and rarely includes transcontinental perspectives. In the absence of new historical research in premodern periods, the standard works on African history, though

³⁰¹ For additional information, see the author's recent publications at: <http://dierklange.com/>

still covering a wide chronological spectrum, tend to rely for the ancient and medieval periods on selected previous research, on rare contemporary written sources and on some new archaeological data. The emergence of states and empires and the rise of social complexity are still prominent topics, but owing to their marginality with respect to the current focus on recent periods of African history, they are dealt with casually and on the basis of insufficient evidence. Previous historical research relying on oral traditions and comparative anthropological data in addition to the standard sources is either ignored or dismissed on account of its emphasis on long-distance migrations and influences from Near Eastern societies.³⁰² The result is a new canon of African history insisting on purely internal lines of development.³⁰³

It is not surprising that in the first half century after the achievement of African political independence African history was oriented by assumptions of independent development in state-building, urbanism and metal technologies. Being in conformity with African nation-building and nationalist historiography, these approaches provided guidelines for important archaeological, linguistic and historical research. Alternative models of explanation that include transcontinental dimensions and foreign agencies are often discounted, with reference to the ill-famed Hamitic hypothesis which reduces contacts, borrowings and influences to racial categories (Zachernuk 1994: 427-455; Law 2009: 293-314). Though certainly necessary for the decolonization of African history, the criticism addressing the Hamitic hypothesis is sometimes extended to sober and evidence-based research guided by cultural and not racial perspectives (Law 2009: 294-5; Henige 2008: 265-9). In a period of intense globalization and in view of the generally recognized need for world history the exclusive quest for internal roots of African civilizations becomes a stumbling block for significant progress in the study of transcontinental connections and global communities.

By dealing with the Assyrian factor in West African history, the present paper explores a number of internal African sources with respect to the transcontinental horizon in ancient times. It uses recent results of archaeological and linguistic research concerning the societies of the Lake Chad basin and it considers the major Central Sudanic traditions of origin in connection with the newly elaborated Assyrian hypothesis. It takes advantage of methods such as philology, onomastics and transcontinental comparative studies that are rarely used by African historians, and points to precise connections with ancient Near Eastern history. On the basis of the new evidence derived from this unfamiliar approach, it attempts to assess the validity of the Assyrian hypothesis according to which the Central Sudanic states were founded by refugees from the fallen Assyrian Empire towards 600 BCE. Such an attempt includes the investigation into the composition of the groups of putative migrants and into the more general problem of the type of organizational systems possibly transferred in one way or another from the ancient Near East to sub-Saharan Africa. If in fact such a movement took place, the subsequent state-founding process does not necessarily imply that

³⁰² Frobenius 1912: 607-634; Baumann 1939: 56-58; Oliver/Fage 1962: 44-52.

³⁰³ Iliffe 2007: 17-99; Ehret, *Civilizations* 2002: 227-23; Collins/Burns 2007: 40-95.

specific organizational forms were introduced to Africa *en bloc* and without major transformations or innovations. By examining the putative refugee groups with respect to their origin, the enquiry addresses by extension the broader question, whether the pioneer state builders – in case their origin from the collapsed Assyrian Empire can be confirmed – restored the power structure of the Assyrian state in the Central Sudan or whether they replaced it by new forms of possibly anti-despotic states.

12.2. The Assyrian hypothesis

The Assyrian hypothesis has recently been put forward in some minor publications and it will be explored in greater detail in a forthcoming book.³⁰⁴ In view of its novelty and its unfamiliarity, it would be irrespective of its plausibility premature to designate it otherwise as a hypothesis. For the purpose of the present publication it may be useful to begin with its rough presentation by providing some information concerning deportations in the Neo-Assyrian Empire, the fall of the Empire at the end of the seventh century BCE and the supposed subsequent migrations to West Africa.

General features: Exodus after the fall of Assyria in 609 BCE

From Arab and African evidence it appears that some cataclysm in ancient Near Eastern history resulted in mass migrations from Syria-Palestine to various parts of sub-Saharan Africa and in particular to the Central Sahel – traditionally called the Central Sudan, a concept including also regions further south. Onomastic evidence provided by Central Sudanic king lists suggests that the people involved in the exodus from Syria-Palestine were members of various ancient Near Eastern communities deported by the Assyrian authorities some time during the second half of the eighth and the seventh centuries BCE. Coming mostly from the eastern parts of the Assyrian Empire, the deportees were settled in Syria-Palestine in exchange for people who had earlier been deported to their own areas of provenance. An estimated number of four million people were deported from the time of Tiglath-pileser III (744-727) to that of Assurbanipal (668-627) (Oded 1979: 19-22). The deportees were well treated by the Assyrian authorities and they could reach important positions in the Assyrian administration and army. Nevertheless they lived in their own communities, kept their own national traditions over several generations and upheld the memory of their own collective suffering. In spite of their initial violent uprooting and mistreatment, the deportees developed a certain degree of loyalty towards their Assyrian oppressors. They were not slaves but favoured subjects of the Assyrian

³⁰⁴ Lange 2008: 86-94; 2009a: 376-380; 2010a: 103-7; 2011a: 31-38.

king, and were granted considerable opportunities for integration and advancement in the new society. Since they were in many ways in a more advantageous position with regard to the Assyrian society than the autochtones in their neighbourhood, they were not in good terms with them. In fact, these neighbouring autochtones were their major enemies, whose land they occupied by decision of the Assyrian authorities. Without regard for their suffering as uprooted deportees and their own partial dissociation from the despotic regime, the indigenous people considered them as intruders on their own land and henchmen of their Assyrian oppressors, willing to contribute to the suppression of all movements of local disobedience (Oded 1979: 18-115; Na'aman 1993: 104-119).

The Assyrian decline began after the death of Assurbanipal in 627 BCE when succession struggles within the ruling class weakened the Assyrian leadership. The Assyrian protagonists of these conflicts sought the support of subjugated nations, such as the Chaldeans in Babylonia and the Medes in Iran. However, when the succession conflict was settled in 623 by the elimination of one party, the Chaldeans and the Medes continued to fight and the succession conflict turned into a combat for national liberation. Foreseeing the danger of the rise of a new power in the Near East, Egypt intervened in Syria-Palestine in 616 in order to assist the Assyrians in their struggle for survival against their powerful enemies. After concluding an alliance in 614, the Babylonians and the Medes began to attack the main cities in the Assyrian heartlands of northern Mesopotamia. In 612, the allies conquered Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, and killed the last Metropolitan Assyrian king. The crown prince, Assur-uballit II, fled westward to Harran where, under Egyptian protection, he was installed as the Assyrian king and turned out to be the last representative of an illustrious line of rulers, staying in power from 612 to 609. After some minor victories scored by the allies, Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptian-Assyrian forces decisively in Syria in two great battles, Carchemish and Hamath, in 605. Immediately after his victory the Babylonian king, Nabopolassar, died and public order broke down in Syria because Nebuchadnezzar, a son of Nabopolassar, had to hurry back to Babylon in order to secure his succession to the throne (Roux 1992: 305-378; Oates 1991: 166-184). The remaining Egyptian and Assyrian troops fled to Egypt, followed by many of the resettled deportees. The latter wanted to escape from the fierce attacks of their local neighbours, who were trying to take revenge for the Assyrian oppression and reappropriate their ancestral land. In view of the four million deported people during the Neo-Assyrian Empire, the Assyrian hypothesis stipulates that up to one million deportees, coming mainly from Syria-Palestine but also from the Assyrian mainlands, fled first to the west and then to the south to Egypt and further on to sub-Saharan Africa (Lange 2009a: 375-7; 2010a: 104- 7; 2011a: 3-38).

Arab historians: Migration from Babylon to sub-Saharan Africa

Contemporary sources provide little evidence for a mass exodus from Syria-Palestine, but this is not surprising since they are extremely rare and uninformative. Herodotus deliberately refrained from providing details on the fall of the Assyrian Empire because he intended to offer information on this topic in a later book which he never wrote (I: 106). Assyrian royal inscriptions indicate the number of deportees, their country of origin and their place of resettlement but they come to an end at the beginning of the reign of Sin-shar-ishkun (623-612) (Oded 1979: 18-40, 115-135). The Babylonian Chronicle records the major battles between the Babylonian army and the Egyptian-Assyrian forces and thus traces the main stages of the Assyrian downfall but offers no information on events concerning the civil population. In turn, the biblical Book of Kings mentions encroachment from Babylonians and Arameans in Judah during the final years of the seventh century but fails to indicate the provenance of these people.³⁰⁵ Written accounts referring to refugees from the ancient Near East to sub-Saharan Africa are only provided by the much later Arab historians. Formerly disregarded because they trace the ancestry of the exodus people to the legendary figures of Ham and Noah, these narratives should be given serious attention owing to the combination of legendary biblical and factual data common in African traditions on which they seem to be based.

Quoting an earlier account from the beginning of the eighth century, Ibn Qutayba writes in 880 in Baghdad that Ham left Mesopotamia with his children for the south, where he settled on the shore of the sea. Ham's descendants are said to have multiplied and to have become the Nuba, the Zanj, the Fezzan and the Zaghawa (Levtzion & Hopkins 1981: 15).

Writing in 873 in eastern Iran, al-Ya'qūbī claims that the descendants of Noah by Ham dispersed from Babylon by marching first westwards and then southwards to the bilād al-Sūdān where they created the kingdoms of Kanem, Hausa, Kawkaw or Gao and Ghana, among others. Relying on his illustrious predecessor, al-Mas'ūdī adds a few details on people and places (Levtzion/Hopkins 1981: 21, 31). Al-Ya'qūbī is one of the earliest and most important Arab historians and modern scholars consider him to be quite reliable. He also describes other peoples of the world, rarely connecting them to the sons of Noah, and when he does so he never provides any detailed story of migration. In spite of his adoption of the biblical classification of mankind by the sons of Noah, there is no reason to suppose that he himself or anybody else invented a story of migration without any evidence in order to bolster a purely fictive line of descent. Since traditions tracing people's origin to Noah, without necessarily referring to Ham, are still current in the Central Sudan,³⁰⁶ it would rather appear that learned Arab traders who had travelled to sub-Saharan Africa transmitted to relevant people or the authors themselves what they had heard at royal courts or elsewhere. Similar traditions of origin

³⁰⁵ Glassner 2004: 218-229; 2 Kgs 24:2. Evidence for the mass migration to sub-Saharan Africa is mainly provided by oral and dynastic traditions in the Central Sudan.

³⁰⁶ Frobenius 1912: 607-8; Palmer 1928 III: 98 n. 1; Lebeuf/Masson-Detourbet 1950: 29-30.

current in the region nowadays have usually an updated geography, indicating Baghdad instead of Babylon as the point of departure of the great migration, or they refer to the Near East only in general terms.³⁹⁷

From descriptions provided by Arab geographers of the early Islamic period it appears that the kingdoms of the Sahelian belt were fully developed by the ninth century CE. Arab traders noted their specific features, such as the seclusion of the king, the great influence of the Queen Mother and human sacrifices at the burial of the ruler.³⁹⁸ Some kingdoms such as Kanem, Kawkaw/Songhay and Ghana seem to have been great empires controlling large territories situated between the Atlantic Ocean in the west and Darfur in the east.³⁹⁹ On account of the dysfunctionality connected with the most significant offices – such as royal seclusion and the great authority of the Queen Mother –, it is hardly conceivable that these developments were as often supposed solely the result of the intensification of the trans-Saharan trade in consequence of the Arab conquest of North Africa in the second half of the seventh century as stipulated by historians.³⁹⁰ It rather appears that the similarity of the pre-Islamic institutions of sacred kingship is indicative of a common origin (Baumann 1939: 56-64; Oliver/Fage 1962: 44-52).

Archaeological and linguistic evidence: Urbanization in the Lake Chad Basin 500 BCE

Recent archaeological research in the southern Lake Chad basin has substantially contributed to improving our knowledge with respect to the rise of urbanization and the beginning of the Iron Age in Africa. On the western and southern fringes of the clay plains of Lake Chad, German archaeologists have recently discovered proto-urban settlements dating from about 500 BCE. The excavations have revealed a number of significant features, indicating in particular a sudden increase in social complexity in the mid-first millennium. The size of the settlements was between 12 (Zilum, Maibe) and 30 hectares (Malankari); the population of the individual sites reached an estimated number of three to six thousand inhabitants; in some cases protective fortifications, indicated by trenches up to one kilometre long and three metres deep enclosing the sites, attest the proto-urban character of the settlements; new crops were introduced including in particular cow peas; storage pits and large thick-walled pots, later called Sao pots, point to the considerable increase in agricultural production; remnants of craft workshops and tanning pits situated in precise quarters attest the existence of craft specialization; isolated iron objects found at some sites, and elements of iron production unearthed in

³⁹⁷ For instance the Kisra/Kishera traditions collected by Frobenius, the Bayajidda legend in Daura, Kano Chronicle and the Aisa legends in Bornu (Frobenius 1912: 535-7, 607-616; Palmer 1928 II: 51, 133).

³⁹⁸ Levtzion/Hopkins 1981: 81 (al-Bakri – human sacrifice), 171 (al-Muhallabi – seclusion), 294 (Ibn Battuta – Queen Mother).

³⁹⁹ Levtzion/Hopkins 1981: 21 (al-Yaqubi – Kawkaw/Gao), 80-81 (al-Bakri - Ghana), 171 (al-Muhallabi – Zaghawa/Kanem).

³⁹⁰ Vs. Fage 1988: 68-71; Iliffe 2007: 50-53; Collins/Burns 2007: 78-89.

sites of the Chad basin further east and also dated to the mid-first millennium BCE, seem to show that iron technology was effectively used in some sections of the same cultural complex.³¹ It is remarkable that the different innovations and the sudden emergence of a surplus economy associated with the onset of the Early Iron Age are roughly dated to the period of the supposed mass migrations from the collapsed Assyrian Empire (Lange 2008: 86-104; 2010a: 104-7; 2011a: 23-27).

The linguistic situation in the Lake Chad region is characterized by the juxtaposition of Afroasiatic and Nilosaharan languages, the former having ramifications in the Near East and the latter being confined to sub-Saharan Africa. It cannot be excluded that the spread of Chadic, which is a subfamily of Afroasiatic, either as a whole or at least in its most recent layer is connected to the important innovations of the middle of the first millennium BCE revealed by archaeology (cf. Lange 2008; 91-95; 2011a: 18-23).

Considering words as linguistic guide fossils, we note the occurrence of a number of historically significant loan words in various languages of the Central Sudan. With respect to urbanism some Afroasiatic roots deserve special attention. Most significant is the root **bīr-* meaning 'fortress, citadel' in Akkadian, Hebrew and Aramaean which occurs in various Central Sudanic languages in the form *birmi* designating a 'walled town'. Remarkable also is the root **ger-* meaning 'town' in Hebrew and which is found in different forms within the same semantic field in Chadic languages, in Tuareg and in Kanuri.³² Noteworthy is *ālu* meaning 'town' in Akkadian and which is found in Yoruba as *ile* designating the same phenomenon. Independently of any supposition of a foreign loan, the term *birmi* is sometimes used as a distinctive designation for the sophisticated Hausa and Kotoko urban cultures (Trimingham 1962: 127; Lange 2008: 93-104). The fact that it can be traced to Hebrew-Aramaic antecedents and hence also to the language spoken in the Assyrian Empire is probably indicative of the provenance of the associated urbanism itself (Lange 2011a: 18-27; 2012: 140, 142, 156).

Terms designating rulers of kingdoms are also revealing with regard to the rise of social complexity. Turning our attention once more to Chadic, we note that there are four roots for 'king', attested in more than one branch of the language family, which have Semitic cognates. With respect to **mai* the donor language could be Hebrew which has *māyīh* the 'anointed'; with respect to **mlb* it is possibly the Semitic root *ml(k)* (with an additional *ba'li* - 'the king, my lord'); with respect to **mkm* one may think of the Canaanite and Phoenician term *miqim* (*elīm*) 'resurrector of a deity' designating a major magistrate of the Phoenician city-state; with respect to **srk* the original form may have been the Assyrian title *šarr kiššati* (or *KIŠ*) designating the 'ruler of the totality' (or the ruler of Kish).³³ These examples could be multiplied and extended to culturally important terms such as 'horse', 'camel' and 'iron'. Although sometimes loans from Arabic have been suggested, in view of the deep rooting of these elements in the societies of the

³¹ Gronenborn 1998: 225-6, 250; Magnavita 2004: 85-94; 2006: 163-8; Breunig 2006: 257-268.

³² Jungrauthmayr/Ibrizimow 1994: I, 34; II, 72-3; Lange 2011a: 19-20.

³³ Orel/Stolbova 1995: n° 359, 1012; Lange 2011a: 18-20.

Central Sudan it is far more likely that the introduction of the horse, the camel and of iron in the Central Sudan was related to the rise of complex society.³⁴⁴

In tracing cultural loanwords to ancient Near Eastern languages we have to address the important problem of the badly documented Aramaic language. Contrary to Sumerian and Akkadian, Aramaic was not written on clay tablets but on perishable materials and therefore has not been preserved. Since Aramaic became the spoken and the written language in the Assyrian administration in the seventh century BCE, most of the documentation for that period, written on papyrus and leather, has completely disappeared (Joannès 2004: 20; RLA, I: 138-9). The cognate languages of Akkadian, Hebrew and Arabic provide very insufficient substitutes for the vanished Aramaic documentation. Moreover, the bewildering multitude of Semitic roots for the same meaning observable in Chadic and other Central Sudanic societies does not necessarily indicate different layers of influence. They might reflect a single wave of migration comprising different Semitic and other peoples, such as the stipulated one resulting from the fall of the Assyrian Empire and succeeding local accommodations (Lange 2011a: 31-38; 2011c: 589-593).

The precisely dated emergence of proto-urban settlements and the associated rise of social complexity in the southern Lake Chad basin bear witness to an innovative thrust in the mid-first millennium. In addition, significant cultural loan words traceable to ancient Semitic languages of the Fertile Crescent suggest the existence of long-distance cultural diffusions from the ancient Near East. Though archaeologists are reluctant to consider transcontinental influences, initial comparisons of artefacts such as big storage and burial pots, and the almost simultaneous beginning of the Early Iron Age, in turn buttress the notion of important innovations brought by people from the ancient Near East to the region of Lake Chad (Lange 2008: 94, 102-3; 2011a: 26-27). Archaeological and linguistic indicators can therefore be correlated to the scenario of a putative exodus of Semitic and other peoples to the Central Sudan, which followed the collapse of the Assyrian Empire between 612 and 605 BCE.

12.3. Traditions of origin: Exodus from the Near East

Traditions of origin are nowadays rarely taken into account for the reconstruction of ancient African history. Owing to the influence of written material on their content, archaeologists and most historians consider them to be unreliable. While it is certainly correct to distinguish between the original form of a tradition and its later modification by elements of *feedback*, it would be erroneous to discard a whole tradition on account of certain changes produced by input from Arabic and other writings. In fact, it seems to

³⁴⁴ Jungrauthmayr/Ibrizimow 1994: I, 28, 95. For “camel” we note *gamlā* and *gāmāl* in Aramaic and Hebrew and for “horse” *fārāš* in Hebrew and *fīr* in Aramaic (HALAT, I, 189; II, 919), while for “iron” there is *barwzāl* in Hebrew, *parzillu* in Akkadian and **bir-* “metal” in some Chadic languages (HALAT, I, 148-9).

be more appropriate to analyse such traditions in terms of an *interpretatio Arabica* which considers Arabic influences as being mainly interpretative – and not constitutive and fundamentally manipulatory or fraudulent. Instead of dismissing traditions of origin as being largely fabricated and thus reflecting only recent attitudes and events, our approach seeks to uncover a previous, more authentic form of the tradition beneath its Arab-Islamic reinterpretative overlay. We further contend that, in spite of their widely different forms and names of their heroes, major West African traditions of origin reflect an important exodus from Syria-Palestine at the end of the seventh century BCE which had far-reaching consequences for the history of the region.³⁵

12.3.1. Yemenite legends: Provenance from an arabized ancient Near East

The progress of Islamization in the societies of the Sahelian belt south of the Sahara progressively changed important aspects of the local cultures. With respect to the traditions of origin, a similar modification due to Arab influences took place. Once Arab and Berber itinerant trader-scholars began to spread notions of pre-Islamic Arab history, court historians found out that their own traditions claiming Near Eastern origins were similar to Arab legends dealing with the pre-Islamic history of Yemen. Indeed, according to these legends supported by the accounts of Arab historians, Yemenite kings dominated not only Yemen but also Arabia and even Mesopotamia. The Arab bias in these legends and written accounts is so strong that early Yemenite kings – who were properly speaking not Arabs – are presented as if they had sometimes achieved world domination. In fact, there are good reasons to believe that the written accounts provided by Arab historians of the Yemenite expansion to Mesopotamia and beyond, are based on a combination of ancient Mesopotamian transmitted locally and more recent South Arabian traditions transmitted by Arab historians.³⁶ On the basis of their own ancient Near Eastern written accounts, historians of Kanem amalgamated these two sets of traditions without realizing that most information provided by the Arab-Yemenite traditions referred to a far more recent period than their valid biblical legacy (Lange 2011a: 5-11; 2011b: 84-100). Similarly, oral traditionists in various kingdoms of the Sudanic belt tried to update their own national legends of origin in order to ensure their comprehensibility within an Islamic environment. In consequence they substituted well-known place names from the Arabic world – Yemen, Mecca, Medina and Baghdad – for older names in their traditions which nobody was able to localize precisely. Yemen, being the most comprehensible and least religiously suspect geographical designation, enjoyed special favour among local scholars, trying to dissociate history from religion.

The best known Yemenite tradition is that of Songhay, according to which the capital city of Gao is said to have been founded by two brothers who came from Yemen in a pitiful state. Reflecting well the condition of refugees having undergone considerable hardships, the tradition only insists on a spectacular side aspect of the arrival of the fugitives from the Near East. In view of the early Islamization of the Songhay kings of

³⁵ Lange 2009a: 359-367; 2011c: 582-4; 2011b: 212-224; 2012: 140-154.

³⁶ Al-Yaqubi 1960 I: 195-8; al-Tabari III: 28-29; IV: 78-80.

Gao towards the end of the tenth century, deep-rooted notions of Yemenite origins are not surprising (al-Saʿdī 1998: 4-5/tr. 6-9; Lange 2004: 505-6).

Different oral traditions in Kanem-Bornu trace the dynastic origins to the country of Yemen, to the ancient *Tubbaʿ al-awwal* rulers of Yemen or to the ruling Himyarites in Yemen (Palmer 1928 II: 84, 112, 116; III: 20). The royal Chronicle, known as the *Dīwān*, offers a variant of the Yemenite legends by identifying the dynastic founder, Sef, with the Yemenite prince Sayf b. Dhī Yazan in the second half of the sixth century CE. This interpretation based on homonymy can be shown to be erroneous because the great Sef of the Kanem-Bornu traditions is described as 'the king of the world in its four quarters', while Sayf b. Dhī Yazan was a minor Yemenite prince in the second half of the sixth century CE (Lange 1977: 66; 2011a: 12). In addition, the dynastic founder is claimed to have been the son of the king of Baghdad, an ascription which localizes him in Mesopotamia and not in Yemen. Other written traditions likewise trace the dynastic origins of Kanem-Bornu to Baghdad and Syria and sometimes even to Babylon (Smith 1983: 44-49; Lange 1977: 65). The Yemenite bias of the tradition and the name of the Abbasid capital in the context of authentic biblical names – not borrowed from Arab sources – are good examples of misleading Arab-Islamic reinterpretations of valid ancient information (Lange 2009b: 588-597; 2010b: 84-100; 2011a: 5-11).

Other Yemenite traditions are those of the Nubian kingdom of the Middle Nile, the Barma kingdom of Bagirmi, the Wandala kingdom of Mandara, the Bolewa kingdom of Fika, and the Soninke Empire of Wagadu/Ghana. In all these cases, claims of Near Eastern origins are supported by tales concerning the migration and often also by ancient onomastic elements in the dynastic traditions.³⁷ Though the uniform Yemenite overlay of the traditions resulted from independent reinterpretations of local traditions in the light of Arab historical knowledge, the underlying notion of a great exodus from the ancient Near East leading to the rise of these kingdoms is still recognizable (Lange 2010a: 104-107; 2011b: 209-226).

12.3.2. *Bayajidda legend: Migrations from Palestine and Baghdad*

The Bayajidda legend is the tradition of origin in the kingdom of Daura, the cultural centre of Hausaland. It traces the provenance of the people to Palestine and Canaan and suggests a migration route passing through the neighbouring Kanem-Bornu Empire. It is also known in some of the other Seven Hausa states, but it is rivalled there by independent traditions of provenance which likewise point to migrations from the Near East.³⁸ In addition to its nature as a historical source, the Bayajidda legend provides mythological explanations for the state festivals and it has the function of a constitutional charter limiting the power of the king. Its re-enactment by the highest officials of the state during the Islamic festivals in prominent places of the town bears witness to the primordial interconnection between the structure of the state offices of Daura and

³⁷ Nachtigal 1881 II: 694; Dieterlen/Sylla 1992: 6, 11; Lange 2011b: 209, 223.

³⁸ Palmer 1928 II: 74-79, 97-100; Lange 2012: 157-163.

the content of the Bayajidda legend. Therefore it is quite likely that both refer back to the same original founding event at a precise point in history (Smith 1978: 57, 83, 123).

The Bayajidda legend testifies to two different migrations, the first originating from Canaan and concerning the bulk of the people under the leadership of the Queen Mother, Magajiya, and the second originating from Baghdad and referring to an army which got lost under the leadership of Bayajidda, the dragon-slayer and official dynastic founder of the state of Daura. While the first group followed a route of migration via North Africa and the Central Sahara, the second group is noted by its stay in Bornu. In all likelihood the distinction between the two different waves of migration corresponds to two groups of people sharply distinguished from each other by their identity as Near Eastern collectivities. The first group consisted apparently of refugees from the Assyrian Empire whose ancestors were depretees resettled by the Assyrians in Syria-Palestine and who themselves had to flee after the defeat of the Egyptian-Assyrian alliance in 605 BCE. The second group comprises seemingly the Assyrian troops which were able to retreat from Nineveh after the conquest of the town by the Babylonians in 612 BCE and which joined their Egyptian allies in Syria. It was led by the hero, *i.e.* the Assyrian king, who after the loss of his troops to his Bornuan allies, *i.e.* Egyptians, is said to have come alone with his horse to Daura. Here he supposedly killed the dragon in the well, married the Queen Mother, who had earlier arrived with her people, and fathered with the slave-maid of the Queen Mother the progenitor of the Seven Banza states and with the Queen Mother herself the progenitor of the Seven Hausa states (Palmer 1928 III: 132-4; Lange 2004: 289-295; 2012: 140-154).

Building on the Israelite descent scheme, the Bayajidda legend basically reflects the biblical tradition of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar and hence the distinction between the patriarch's Israelite and Arab descendants. In the context of the founding of the state of Daura, it seems by a slight distortion of the original meaning to echo the collapse of the Assyrian Empire, the final struggle of the Assyrian army and the new beginnings of the refugees in sub-Saharan Africa. By insisting on the dragon killing and the marriage with the immigrant queen, the legend apparently refers to the fundamental elements of ancient Near Eastern legitimate rule: re-enactments of the conflict of creation and of the holy marriage. However, having previously fled from Baghdad, the hero seems to epitomize the military might of the Assyrian Empire which progressively vanished.³¹⁹ In this sense the Bayajidda legend is not a haphazard amalgamation of various elements of foreign traditions, but a coherent narrative supported by various re-enactments bearing witness to entirely new developments resulting from the state-building activities in the Central Sudan of different Near Eastern communities and their need for historical legitimacy.³²⁰ Corresponding to a foundation charter for different peoples and an oral testimony deeply rooted in the social and political organization of Daura, it refers by transfiguration to a succession of precise historical events. As such it bears witness to a process of pioneer state-building set in motion by different refugee groups from the

³¹⁹ Frankfort, *Kingship*, 227-8, 295-9; *Gen* 16-49.

³²⁰ Lange, *Kingdoms*, 215-242; *id.*, "Bayajidda", 138-167.

collapsed Assyrian Empire which was later artificially provided with the veneer of Assyrian legitimacy.

12.3.3. *The Kanta legend: Migration from Madayana beyond Mecca*

The Kanta legend is the sole legend of origin in Kebbi, the greatest of the Seven Banza states of the Hausa tradition. It is also known north of Kebbi in the Hausa region of Ader, and it appears residually in Songhay popular traditions. In Kebbi, the Kanta legend is transmitted in various forms in different sections of the society: at the royal court, among the royal clans competing for power, among the professional clans such as the fishermen, and among the cattle-herding Fulani.³²¹ An important element of the legend is re-enacted during the enthronement ceremony in Kebbi, aiming at the new king's embodiment of Kanta, his illustrious predecessor.³²² In addition to the different versions of the Kanta legend, Kebbi history is preserved by three different written texts: a long and a short list of Kebbi kings and a Kebbi Chronicle. Composed probably in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Chronicle combines the notion of a Near Eastern origin of the Kabawa, the people of Kebbi, with the onomastic information of the slightly distorted long king list.³²³

According to the different versions of the Kanta legend, the Kabawa came from Madayana, Mecca, Medina or Egypt.³²⁴ Similarly, the Kebbi Chronicle affirms that the Kabawa originated from a town situated in Arabia beyond Mecca and called Madayana. Its Arabic version makes it clear that Madayana was a fortified city and that the Kabawa left it all at once (Lange 2009a: 363-4; 2011c: 584). The Chronicle distinguishes between four different phases of the migration: the first from Madayana to Mecca, the second from Mecca to Egypt, the third from Egypt to Fezzan and the fourth from Fezzan to the Central Sudan. Following the general concept of a great migration leading from the Near East to the later region of Kebbi and therefore situating the reigns of most of the ancient kings according to the pilgrimage route in Egypt, the Chronicle comprises some elements of obvious Islamic *feedback*: the reference to Medina and Mecca, the etymological connection of the name of Kebbi with that of the Ka^caba in Mecca, the tracing of the ancient kings to the well-known localities of the pilgrimage route and hence their misplacement from the Near East to Egypt, Fezzan and Katsina.³²⁵

The main body of information provided by the Kanta legend concerns the story of Kanta describing the rise of the hero from of cattle herder to the ruler of an empire. The first set of episodes concerns the hero's modest origins: his status as an orphan who became the slave of a Fulani cattle herder, his compliance with a prediction overheard

³²¹ Lange 2004: 323; pers. Field notes 1989, 1990.

³²² Harris 1938: 26-29, 229-235; Lange 2004: 188, 323-330.

³²³ On the sources of Kebbi history see Lange 2009a: 361-2.

³²⁴ Versions of the Lekawa (Galadima), the Lailabawa (Sule), the Dankanawa (Dan Ayi) and others (Argungu, 1990); Lange 2009a: 363.

³²⁵ Harris 1938: 230-4; Hogben/Kirk-Greene 1966: 238-240; Lange 2009a: 363-6.

from a travelling *malam* (teacher) and his excellence in boxing. The second set of episodes describes his rise to power by defeating all his adversaries in boxing competitions, by his liberation of all other slaves of the Fulani and by his final overthrow of the Fulani master.³²⁶ In all likelihood, these elements reflect different reminiscences of ancient Near Eastern history, a contention born out by the analysis of onomastic data briefly presented below.

With respect to Madayana the great primordial city of the Kabawa mentioned in several versions of the Kanta legend and in the Arabic version of the Kebbi Chronicle, it is tempting to consider its name to be related to the Aramaic term for town, *madīnāh*, and to suppose that parallel to the biblical term 'great city' (*ha-^cir ha-gedōl*) it designates the Assyrian capital Nineveh.³²⁷ In that case the indications of provenance in the Kanta tradition and the Chronicle would trace the origin of the Kabawa to the retreat of the Assyrian army from Nineveh in 612 BCE. It would therefore refer to the same decisive event inaugurating the final collapse of the Assyrian collapse as the Bayajidda legend and the Oyo-Yoruba tradition (Lange 2012: 151-4; 2011c: 583-4).

The different episodes of the Kanta legend concerning the rise of Kebbi state founder seem originally to have referred to two different figures. Those dealing with the modest origins of the hero and his miraculous rise to power seem to correspond to an adaptation of the Sargon Birth Legend to the Sahelian environment of Kebbi. The first empire builder in world history, Sargon of Akkad, ruled in the second half of the third millennium but his legend was subsequently kept alive in northern and southern Mesopotamia. It was particularly cherished by the Neo-Assyrian king Sargon II (722-705) who adopted the name of the illustrious king and who increased his forerunner's fame by having the texts of his legends copied and spread. From that time until the end of the Assyrian Empire a hundred years later, the Sargon legend was a central component of the royal ideology in Assyria.³²⁸

An important argument in favour of the identification of Kanta with Sargon of Akkad is based on the interconnection between the oral Kanta legend and the written king list. The long king list of Kebbi mentions Muhammadu *na* Makata (Muhammad of Makata) in its second section, after two rulers corresponding to Dumuzi, an antediluvian king of Sumer, and Lugalzagesi, the only king of the Uruk III dynasty and predecessor of Sargon of Akkad (Harris 1938: 231; Lange 2009a: 370, 373). Since the dynastic versions of the Kanta legend refer to the father of Kanta as Makata, it can hardly be doubted that the name Muhammadu has been substituted for that of Kanta.³²⁹ As we will see below, the Kebbi king list offers at this point a chronological exact outline of ancient Near Eastern history based on written sources. Therefore the identification of the dynastic ancestor, Kanta, with Sargon of Akkad (2334-2279) rests also on documentary grounds.

³²⁶ Harris 1938: 26-28; Lange 2004: 323-7; oral versions of the Kanta legend (1990).

³²⁷ Jon 4:11, Jth 1:1; Lange 2009a: 364; 2011c: 584.

³²⁸ Lewis 1980: 101-7; Sommerfeld, "Sargon I.", RLA XII: 44-49.

³²⁹ Galadima/Lekawa, Sule/Lailabawa (both recordings 20/4/90); Lange 2009a: 374-5.

The later episodes in the Kanta legend concerning the hero's overthrow of his Fulani master and his final empire-building seem to reflect reminiscences of Nabopolassar's conquest of Assyria and the founding of the Babylonian Empire. Nabopolassar was a Chaldean military leader of non-royal birth who first cooperated with the Assyrians but later opposed them. In the course of the civil war raging in Assyria after the reign of Assurbanipal (668-627) he eventually got the upper hand and together with his Median allies he later conquered Nineveh, brought about the death of Sin-shar-ishkun (623-612) and expelled the remaining Assyrian troops from metropolitan Assyria.³³⁰ Thus becoming the liberator of the people oppressed by the Assyrians, he is gratefully remembered in different dynastic records of Central Sudanic kingdoms.³³¹ Kanta's description as a 'black slave of the Fulani' appears to echo the initial situation in Mesopotamia, the name of the Fulani being perhaps derived from Ful, the short name of Tiglath-pileser III (744-727), the great Assyrian conqueror of Syria-Palestine.³³² The presently in Kebbi very much contested notion of Kanta's slavehood with respect to his Fulani master should therefore be considered only in terms of ancient Near Eastern not of local Kebbi history, 'black' in this connection connoting Babylonian as against Assyrian origin.³³³ The hero's subsequent prolonged fighting as a boxer against different enemies appears in turn to rely on memories of the confused clashes between Nabopolassar and various Babylonian and Assyrian enemies. Finally, the overthrow of a previous king who is not clearly distinguishable as the hero's initial Fulani master might refer to Babylonian victory over the Egyptian-Assyrian troops in the battles of Carchemish and Hamath in Syria in 605 BCE (Oates 1991: 182-3; Lange 2009a: 365, 376-7).

In addition, the composite figure of Kanta seems to include by its filiation to a Katsina mother a third element reflecting ancient Near Eastern history. According to this element commemorated by an exchange of gifts between the kings of Kebbi and Katsina, Kanta was the son of an immigrant father and of a local Katsina princess.³³⁴ One might have thought that parallel to the Daura-Bornu connection in the Bayajidda legend this relationship refers to the Assyrian alliance with Egypt (Palmer 1928 III: 133; Lange 2012: 153-4). In view of Katsina's identity as a Hausa state and the Israelite component of its dynastic tradition, it seems however to be more likely that the Katsina connection epitomizes the association of an Israelite element with the Babylonian element of the Kanta tradition. As such it appears to indicate that in addition to the Assyrian and Babylonian antecedents of the state founders of Kebbi Israelite influences should also be taken into account.

³³⁰ Oates 1991: 171-184; Brinkman, "Nabopolassar", *RLA IX*: 12-16; Schaudig, "Sin-šarru-iškun", *RLA XII*: 523-4.

³³¹ Lange 2009a: 374; 2011a: Founding, 13-14; 2011c: 374-5.

³³² Delafosse believes that the name of the Fulani is derived from the biblical Futh (Gen 10:6) but in connection with the Assyrian hypothesis a derivation from Ful, the abbreviated form of the name of Tiglath-pileser III, is more likely (1912 II: 199-200; 2 *Kgs* 15:19).

³³³ Harris 1938: 27-28; Hogben/Kirk-Greene 1966: 240.

³³⁴ Harris 1938: 233-4; Hogben/Kirk-Greene 1966: 239-241.

With respect to the implications of the Kanta legend for local state-building it should be noted that the Kebbi Chronicle emphasizes the existence of a third Kanta, called either simply Kanta or Muhammadu Kanta as in the short king lists, who is clearly localized in Kebbi.³³⁵ Though Muhammadu Kanta corresponds to the person depicted by the Kanta legend and thus largely to a composite figure, some attention should be devoted to his either Babylonian or Assyrian antecedents. Contrary to the oral traditions describing the hero with the traits of the Babylonian conqueror Nabopolassar, the third Kanta of the – restored – long king list, Maru-Kanta (son of Kanta) follows Maru-Tamau (son of Tamau/Dumuzi) or Nabopolassar and thus corresponds to the last Assyrian king (Sölken 1959: 141; Lange 2009a: 374-5). Therefore, we note the existence of a striking difference between the oral tradition which depicts the putative local state founder in commemoration of the Babylonian conqueror of Assyria, while the written records present him as a successor of Assyrian kings. In order to be able to evaluate the conflicting evidence of the two sources, we have to consider the long king list in greater detail below. Another local implication of the Kanta legend concerns the female connection with Katsina. If it is correct that this tradition commemorates the Israelite contribution to the founding of the state of Kebbi, this would provide important additional evidence referring to the local history of the Kabawa. In comparison with the Bayajidda legend, it therefore appears that the Kebbi sources in spite of their emphasis on the deportee groups also give some prominence to the Assyrian factor.

Other peoples cherishing extensive and well-structured legends and tracing their origin to particular places in the Near East should be briefly mentioned: the Tunjur in the eastern Sudan to Arabia, the Kotoko south of Lake Chad to the 'black river near the Red Sea', the Gobirawa from Gobir to Surukal 'east of Mecca', the Achifawa to Dima / Damascus 'beyond Egypt', the Borgawa to Birnin Kirsra/Kishera in Arabia, the Ede from Benin to Egypt, the Zarma to Arabia and the Soninke of Ghana to the 'direction of Mecca'.³³⁶ In spite of obvious Islamic *feedbacks*, the analysis of these legends seems to indicate their basic validity. In some cases it even confirms the notion of an exodus from Assyria in consequence of the Babylonian conquest (Lange 2011b: 211-226; 2012: 159-160).

12.4. Dynastic traditions: Exodus from Assyria as a consequence of the Babylonian conquest

Dynastic traditions consist mostly of Arabic king lists, but there are also examples of chronicles written in Arabic, and of well preserved orally transmitted poetic records. It is generally assumed that chronicle writing began in Central Sudanic societies with the spread of Islam and Arabic. However, some traditionists are convinced that their immi-

³³⁵ The Arabic version has Kanta and the Hausa version Muhammadu Kanta (Lange 2009a: 365).

³³⁶ Lebeuf/Masson Detourbet 1950: 29; Stewart 1993: 398; Lange 2011b: 211-224; Mounkaila 1988: 166; Dieterlen/Sylla 1992: 6.

grant ancestors once knew how to read and to write and that this knowledge became lost at a certain stage.³³⁷ From the reevaluation of the records of Kanem-Bornu and Kebbi it appears that this tradition might reflect a realistic idea of past achievements (Lange 2011a: 12; 2009a: 373-9). Even with respect to the extremely well preserved poetic tradition of the Oyo-Yoruba, some indications tend to show that its outline was originally conceived on the basis of written documents (Lange 2011c: 586-8). In fact, in connection with the Assyrian hypothesis there is nothing improbable in the theory that Mesopotamian list science in combination with Hebrew historical thinking gave rise to an early incipient African historiography mainly concerned with ancient Near Eastern origins and local state-building.³³⁸

12.4.1. Kanem-Bornu: Descent from Sargon of Akkad and from Hammurabi

The Chronicle of the Sefuwa kings of Kanem-Bornu, the *Dīwān*, constitutes a highly informative historical source. In what concerns the verifiable Islamic period, its well-proportioned coverage of reigns extends over eight centuries. Its considerable chronological reliability can be established by eight synchronisms provided by data from contemporary Arabic and European sources between the thirteenth and the nineteenth centuries. From these data it appears that the chronology based on reign lengths is accurate within the range of five to eight years (Lange 1977: 83-94; 2004: 552).

Recent philological research on the pre-Islamic section of the *Dīwān* has shown that Arabic chronicle-writing in Kanem most likely began with the translation of an original text written in Hebrew (Lange 2009b: 595; 2011a: 12). This conclusion is suggested by a number of specific features of the text which previously went unnoticed. A first set of arguments concerns the patriarchal names included in the prelude. With the exception of one figure omitted owing to the Yemenite misinterpretation of Sefuwa origins, the list of patriarchs from Adam to Abraham is complete. It diverges from the canonical biblical version, and hence also from its Arabic translations, by four compound names which correspond to authentic Israelite additions to the well-known Priestly genealogy in Gen 5:21-27. These supplements to the list of biblical patriarchs rely on the Yahwist patriarchal genealogy (Gen 4:17-24) and on extra-textual knowledge which can be shown to be genuine. Since any borrowing of these names from Arabic sources must be excluded, an ancient transfer from Syria-Palestine at the period of state-founding and a subsequent internal line of transmission seem to be very likely.

The theory of an ancient Israelite authorship of the list of patriarchs included in the *Dīwān* is confirmed by an orthographic specificity known in Hebrew as the *he locale*. Consisting of the addition of a final *-he* to certain nouns, this feature is current in biblical Hebrew – possibly also in Aramaic – but unknown in Arabic. In the Arabic writings in Kanem-Bornu we find it up to the sixteenth century, but subsequently it was pro-

³³⁷ Frobenius 1912: 609 (Nupe), 613 (Kanem); Lebeuf, Principautés, 72 (Afadé); Fabunmi 1969: 9 (Ife).

³³⁸ Lambert, "Götterlisten", RLA III: 473-9; Table of Nations (Gen 10:1-32); Lange 2011a: 18.

gressively abandoned.³³⁹ Therefore it appears that the Arabic orthography in Kanem-Bornu was, at the time of Islamization at the end of the eleventh century, deeply influenced by Hebrew. Such influence is hardly conceivable otherwise than by the early presence of Israelites who brought their knowledge of genuine patriarchal names and of writing in Hebrew with them from ancient Palestine. The insertion of patriarchal names as the major dynastic ancestors in the state chronicle, and the existence of a restricted literacy in Hebrew, suggest that Israelites played an important role in the founding of the state, in the transmission of historical knowledge referring to the ancient Near East, and in the beginning of chronicle-writing in Kanem.

Other features pointing to an ancient Near Eastern background of chronicle-writing in Kanem are the name of the Chronicle and its form. Though the written text bears the Arabic title *Dīwān*, this and other chronicles in the region of Lake Chad are designated orally as *gīrgam*. In all likelihood the word is derived from the Sumero-Akkadian term *girginakku* designating a 'box of tablets' and a 'library'. The Arabic name *Dīwān*, which is quite unusual for a chronicle, means in particular a 'collection of written leaves or papers' and thus seems to correspond to a *verbatim* translation of the Akkadian term *girginakku* into Arabic (Lange 2004: 245; 2011a: 12). In fact, by its form and content the *Dīwān* resembles the biblical Book of Kings, which follows a chronological order by reigns including some extra information, rather than any Mesopotamian chronicle insisting on military expeditions. Each description of a reign has stereotyped regnal formulae, indicating at the beginning paternal and maternal descent and at the end the regnal length and the place of burial.³⁴⁰ Similar information is provided by the *Dīwān* in a strange formulaic language characterized by repetitions (Lange 1977: 16-18, 24-58). Such stereotyped language insisting on the same elements as the Israelite chronicle preserved in the biblical Books of Kings provides another strong argument in favour of a Hebrew origin of the scholarship which gave rise to chronicle-writing in Kanem.

A fourth and last noteworthy element suggesting the existence of an ancient written precursor chronicle of the *Dīwān* is the title of Sef, the eponymous founder of the Sefuwa dynasty: 'King of the World in its Four Quarters'. It is identical to the most prestigious ancient Near Eastern royal title assumed by the Akkadian and by the Assyrian kings: 'King of the Four Quarters (of the universe)'. In the Arabic form of the title one finds the unexpected word *qibla* which normally means 'direction of the prayer, south' and not 'region' or 'quarter'. In fact, in this epithet the Arabic *qibla* is a near-homonym of the Akkadian *kibrāt* suggesting that Akkadian or the related Aramaean was the original donor language of the title translated into Arabic (Seux, 'Königtum', RLA VI: 143; Lange 2011a: 12). Such a prestigious title clearly disproves the former theory of a modest local beginning of the state of Kanem in the early medieval period, stipulating instead that the state founders relied on the model of illustrious rulers of the ancient Near East and that they lived long before the beginning of the Common Era.³⁴¹ Therefore a critical reader of the *Dīwān* and other dynastic records of Kanem-

³³⁹ Gen 4:18-23; Lange 2009b: 591-7; 2011a: 12.

³⁴⁰ Holloway, "Kings, Book of 1-2", ABD IV: 69-81.

³⁴¹ Hogben-Kirk-Greene 1966: 89-91; Lange 2011a: 12-13.

Bornu should be aware of the existence of a chronological gap resembling the floating gap in oral traditions between the ancient pre-Islamic and the Islamic kings of the Sefuwa.³⁴² Extending over nearly one thousand seven hundred years, this concealed chronological discontinuity contributed significantly to the distortion of the early history of Kanem.

The prelude and the first annalistic section of the *Dīwān* are characterized by considerable ambiguity with respect to origins. Though they clearly indicate that the dynastic ancestors lived in the Near East - in Baghdad and in Mecca -, that they descended from the biblical patriarchs and that Abraham was among the early kings, they do not provide any indication of a migration to the region of Lake Chad. Instead, a casual reader, ignoring the biblical and Arabic genealogical information provided in the prologue, gets the impression that the twelve Sefuwa kings said to have ruled before Dunama (13) were local kings from the ninth to the eleventh centuries CE.³⁴³ In order to be able to evaluate the source material properly, we need to know that the *Dīwān* is only an extract from a more complete chronicle (Lange 1977: 6-14; 2011a: 4-9). A number of versions of an Early Sefuwa Chronicle which have come to light recently provide valuable complementary information to the *Dīwān*, presumably derived from the same original source. They indicate that most of the twelve first kings mentioned in the dynastic records conquered different countries and peoples in the Fertile Crescent (Palmer 1928 II: 93-94; Smith 1983: 44-50). The Near Eastern location of the early Sefuwa kings is partly confirmed by the *Dīwān*, which describes the dynastic founder, Sēf or Sayf, first as 'the son of the king of Baghdad' and later as 'King of the Four Quarters (of the universe)'. Other information provided for the early Sefuwa kings such as maternal ascent and burial places can only be tentatively referred to the ancient Near East; it certainly does not designate persons or places in the region of Lake Chad.

With respect to the great exodus from the Near East to the region of Lake Chad the versions of the Early Sefuwa Chronicle attribute this important event to three different rulers: Duku (3), Fune (4) and Jīl/ʿAbd al-Jalīl b. Siyu (11).³⁴⁴ The *Dīwān*'s reference to the fourth king's death in Kanem seems to correspond to an indirect indication of a migration which has been deliberately transfigured in order to give the impression that the early Sefuwa kings were local kings of Kanem. Apparently lacking any detailed information concerning the pre-Islamic period of Kanem history, the translators of the *Girgam* into Arabic insisted on different aspects of early Sefuwa history: the dynastic origins in Mesopotamia which were shifted to Yemen under the influence of Arab historiography, Israelite antecedents, a long period of local rule in Kanem and a gapless line of kings up to the beginning of Islam. Disturbed by the incompatibility of these different aspects, and owing in particular to the lack of background information concerning the pre-Islamic kings of Kanem, they continued to be convinced of Near Eastern origins but were uncertain about the particular ruler who led the great exodus, whence they came and at what time (Lange 1977: 65-67; 2011a: 9-11).

³⁴² On the notion of a floating gap in oral traditions see Vansina 1985: 23-24.

³⁴³ Hogben-Kirk-Greene 1966: 91; Lange 1977: 130-154.

³⁴⁴ Palmer 1928 II: 94; Smith 1983: 50; Lange 2011a: 9.

From onomastic and comparative research it appears that the first twelve kings mentioned in the *Dīwān* and other dynastic records of Kanem-Bornu were ancient Near Eastern rulers. Their names and descriptions were cogently arranged in order to transmit a coherent idea of the ancestral history before the great exodus. The determination of the ethnic identity of the twelve kings and the examination of some details of their reigns suggest that the early chronicler was familiar with Mesopotamian historical thinking and list science. He drew an outline of ancient Near Eastern history in conformity with the new situation created by the founding of the state of Kanem. Following a chronological order and calling the main rulers by oral nicknames, the chronicler cogently gives an idea of the major developments which led to the great exodus. He begins with Sargon of Akkad (2334-2279) whom he calls *Sēf* (1) and ends with the Neo-Babylonian conqueror Hume (12)/Nabopolassar (626-605), the additional Semiramis (10) being a concession to oral tradition. By subdividing the first twelve reigns into four sections, we realize that he perceives the founding of Kanem as an event in line with precise historical developments in the ancient Near East.

The first section, comprising three reigns, indicates the historical precedents to which the state founders of Kanem looked back independently of the Assyrian oppression endured later at the time of the deportations. It begins with the unifying figure of the Akkadian empire founder, Sargon of Akkad, continues with the biblical Abraham, in order to associate the Israelites with the state-building enterprise, and ends with Hammurabi, the Babylonian empire builder, whose nickname *Duku* is in the plural form *Duguwa* applied to the eleven ancient kings of the *Sefuwa* (Lange 2011a: 35-39).

The second section of the *Dīwān* has four names referring to the last period of independence enjoyed by the Near Eastern nations before the Assyrian expansion. It begins with Punamu I (790-750), the seventh king of Sam'al, an Aramean city-state in northern Syria, and continues with the kings of three other nations later subjugated by Assyria. Referred to by the names of their outstanding kings, these nations were Urtu, Elam and Babylonia.³⁴⁵

The third section of the *Dīwān* begins with Tighlath-pileser III, the ruthless organizer of mass deportations and resettlements, and continues with two other male and one female Assyrian ruler, Sargon II, Semiramis and Assur-uballit II. Apparent also from the insistence of the Aisa legends on an ancient princess as the patroness of the refugee state founders (Palmer 1928 II, 51, 133), the reference to an heroic queen provided historical legitimacy for the key constitutional role attributed to the Queen Mother.

The fourth section of the *Dīwān* has only the name of Hume (12) but it links up with an important preceding passage mentioned after the reign of *Jil* (11). Focussing on the Chaldean conqueror of the Assyrian Empire, Nabopolassar, it is of great relevance. The crucial passage indicates a dynastic discontinuity between the rule of the Banu *Duku* and that of the Banu Hume, the *Duguwa* and the *Humewa* (Lange 1977: 31, 68). It appears from the previous analysis that the disruption between the two types of rulers does not refer to the history of Kanem as usually supposed but to the fall of the Assyrian Empire in the Near East at the end of the seventh century BCE. By contrast the subse-

³⁴⁵ Instead of Assyrian rulers the section mentions pre-Assyrian kings (cf. Lange 2011a: 13-14).

quent accounts deal with local history. Thus a story about Bir (14) legitimizes the constitutional role of the Queen Mother to restrict the power of the king.³⁴⁶

N°	Kings in the <i>Dīwān</i>	Ancient Near Eastern kings	Identity of the kings in the Ancient Near East
I. EARLY IMPERIAL PERIOD			
1	Sēf/Sīpa	Sargon of Akkad (2334-2279)	Founder of the Akkadian Empire
2	Ibrāhīm	Abraham	Legendary Israelite patriarch
3	Dūkū	Hammurabi (1792-1750)	Founder of the Amorite Empire
II. INDEPENDENT NATIONS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST			
4	Funē	Panamu I (790-750)	7 th king of Sam'al
5	Arsū	Rusā/Ursā I (730-713)	6 th Urartian king
6	Katūr	Kudur-Nahhunte III (1155-1150)	Elamite conqueror of Babylonia
7	Buyūma	Nabu-Mukin-Zeri (731-729)	Babylonian king
III. NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE			
8	Bulū	Pûl/Tiglath-pileser III (744-727)	108 th Assyrian king, a great conqueror and organizer
9	Arkū	Sargon II/Arkeanos (721-705)	110 th Assyrian king, a great conqueror
10	Siyū	Queen of Assyria, legendary foundress Babylon (810-6)	Sammuramât/Semiramis
11	Jil/ ^c Abd al-Jalīl	Assur-uballit II (612-609)	119 th and last king of Assyria
IV. OVERTHROW OF THE NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE			
12	Hume	Nabopolassar (626-605)	Bab. conqueror of Assyria

Table 12.1. Ancient kings of the Sefuwa

The most important information provided by the last pre-Islamic section of the *Dīwān* concerns the circumstances of the departure of the pioneer state founders of Kanem from Syria-Palestine. By mentioning the Assyrian refugee king Assur-uballit II before the Babylonian conqueror Nabopolassar, the author of the *Girgam* written in Kanem shortly after the founding of the new state apparently intended to preserve in a reduced form the memory of an important succession of events: the liberation of the resettled deportees from the Assyrian oppression, the overthrow of the Assyrian Empire, the rise to supreme power of Nabopolassar and the exodus of the deportee communities to sub-Saharan Africa (Oates 1991: 172-184; Lange 2011a: 32-33). This re-

³⁴⁶ Lange 1977: § 14, p. 69-70; Smith 1978: 57, 83, 123.

construction of the events preceding the great exodus dates the departure from Syria to a time prior to Egyptian defeat in the battles of Carchemish and Hamat in 605 BCE.

The chronicler insinuates by his onomastic summary history of the ancient Near East that the Assyrian hegemony began at a relatively late period with Tiglath-pileser III (744-727). With respect to the fall of Assyria, he takes care to add the name, Jil^c/Abd al-Jalil, of Assur-uballit II in order to give an idea of the final pettering out of the formerly powerful Assyrian Empire. Even the Islamic name for the Assyrian refugee king is most likely only the result of an onomastic similitude.³⁴⁷ It is indeed between the reigns of Jil (11) and Hume (12) that the *Dīwān* has the crucial note about the great disruption in the Near East, pointing out that the Banu Hume replaced the Banu Duku, i.e. the Babylonians the Assyrians (Lange 1977: 31, 68). By indicating that Duku/Hammurabi – and not Sef/Sargon of Akkad himself – was the main ancestral figure of the first dynasty of the Sefuwa, the chronicler seems to emphasize the importance of the Babylonian element for the founders of the state of Kanem. At the same time he may have intended in a not yet clearly understood way to designate the Assyrians as Banu Duku. As for the the recognition of Assur-uballit II as the last Assyrian king and effective leader of the resistance against the Babylonian incursions into the Western Assyrian provinces it does not involve any feeling of loyalty towards him. Tracing the ancestry of the ancient rulers of Kanem primarily to Babylonian and not to Assyrian figures, the author of the *Girgam* clearly mirrors the general attitude of the formerly deported people towards their oppressors. Led by distrust and profound uneasiness towards the Assyrians, he mentions the role of the last Assyrian king, but he takes care to emphasize the more positive contributions of two Babylonian figures – Sargon of Akkad and Nabopolassar – to the Near Eastern history of the pioneer state founders of Kanem.

12.4.2. *Kebbi: Descent from Sargon of Akkad and from Babylonian kings*

The most important information on the ancient Near Eastern ancestry of the Kabawa is included in the extensive king list of Kebbi. This long Kebbi King List survives in two different forms: as a list of names without any other information and as a text incorporated in the nineteenth century Kebbi Chronicle (Rattray 1913: 16-21; Harris 1938: 230-5). The Chronicle has the advantage of offering explicit information on the origins of the people of Kebbi and thus of setting the onomastic information in the Kebbi King List into a clear historical perspective. Though tracing the provenance of the Kabawa to Madayana beyond Mecca, it claims that nearly all the thirty three ancient kings ruled in Egypt. Apart from the general notion of a constitutive migration from the Near East and certain details with respect to the circumstances of departure and the supposed occurrences at the arrival in the Central Sudan it provides only scant historical information.

By contrast, the onomastic material of the Kebbi King List unaffected by later modifica-

³⁴⁷ Most of the unorthodox king list call the predecessor of Hume by the name of Jil (Palmer 1928 III: 87, 94; III: 36, 42).

tions offers precious source material for the reconstruction of the ancient Near Eastern prehistory of the founders of the Kebbi state. From the list as a whole, and from several of its composite names in particular, it can be concluded that its composer had at his disposal precise historical texts from the ancient Near East: the Sumerian King List written at the beginning of the second millennium BCE, the Babylonian Royal Chronicle from the middle of the eighth century, the Assyrian King List from the end of the eighth century and the Babylonian King List A from 623 BCE.³⁴⁸ On the basis of such valid historical documents, the author of the Kebbi King List provides in five sections a skeleton history of the ancient Near East from the perspective of the pioneer state founders of Kebbi.

The first section of the king list includes fourteen royal names standing for precise ethnic groups (Sölken 1959: 139; Lange 2009a: 369-373). These groups contributed to the formation of the Kebbi state after the settlement of numerous refugees from the fallen Assyrian Empire in the Central Sudan towards 600 BCE. From the Kassite king, Burunburun/Burnaburiash, mentioned in the first position it appears that Kassites played an important role in the founding of Kebbi. Further ethnic groups indicated by specific royal names are Urartians, Aramaeans, Babylonians and Assyrians. The king lists of other Central Sudanic states point to the same ancient Near Eastern ethnic groups mostly by using different royal names (Lange 2011a: 13-15; 2012: 157-164).

The second section of the Kebbi king list comprises five royal names indicative of the period of empire-building in Mesopotamia in the second half of the third and the first half of the second millennium. Pointing to the rise of the Akkadian Empire – also referred to by the official Kanta legend – it begins with the Babylonian epoch ruler Tammuz, continues with a short name of Lugalzagesi, the only king of Uruk and predecessor of Sargon, then provides a substitute name of Sargon himself and finishes with the names of two Babylonian rulers, Shulgi (2091-2047) and Hammurabi (1792-1750). This section therefore traces the beginning of major developments in Mesopotamia to Sargon of Akkad and Hammurabi, and by this combination clearly reflects a Babylonian and not an Assyrian perspective with regard to Near Eastern antecedents of the state builders of Kebbi.³⁴⁹

The third section of the list has eight royal names standing for early kings of the Fertile Crescent prior to the rise of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Most remarkable in this section are the first three kings who are among the semi-legendary Assyrian rulers datable to the end of the third millennium BCE. Apparently the author wants, after the developments in Babylonia dealt with in the previous section, to refer here to the chronologically later expansion of the Assyrian Empire in northern Mesopotamia.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁸ For these texts, see Glassner 2004: 117, 126, 136, and Grayson, “Königslisten”, RLA VI: 86-135. It is not impossible that otherwise unknown texts reached the Central Sudan.

³⁴⁹ Sölken, “Geschichte, I”, 139; Lange, “Successor state”, 373.

³⁵⁰ Sölken, “Geschichte, I”, 141; Lange, “Successor state”, 374-5-591.

N°	Kings in the Kebbi list	Ancient Near Eastern kings	Identity of the kings in the ANE
I. ANCIENT KINGS REPRESENTING THE STATE BUILDERS OF KEBBI			
1	Burunburun I	Burnaburiaš I	10 th Kassite king (c. 1510)
2	Argūji	Argišti I	4 th Urartian king (785-760)
3	Tabāri	Tabrimm4n	2 nd ruler of Damascus (c. 890)
4	Zartai	Sarduri I	1 st Urartian king (c. 840-830)
5	Gūbarau	Gabbaru	Dynastic founder of Sam'al (10th cent.)
6	Dundun-fānu	Didānu, Xanû	9 th and 10 th legendary king of Assyra
7	Gātāmā	Gandaš (Gadaš)	1 st Kassite king (c. 1740)
8	Bardau	?	?
9	Kudamdān	Kadašman-(Enlil II ?)	25 th Kassite king (1279-1265) ?
10	Shiryā	Šagarakti-šuriaš	27 th Kassite king (1255-1242)
11	Bādaui	?	?
12	Karfau	?	?
13	Dur-kushi	Simu-dār	23 th king of Kish (c. 2370)
14	Kututuru	Kuter-Nahhunte	28 th Elamite king (1730-1700)
II. KINGS OF THE EARLY MESOPOTAMIAN EMPIRES			
15	Tāmau	Dumuzi/Tammūz	5 th antediluvian king of Sumer
16	Zaudai	Lugalzagesi	Only king of Uruk III dynasty (2350)
17	*Kantā na Makāta	Šarru-kīn/Sargon	Founder of Akkadian empire (2334-2279)
18	Sulaymāna	Šulgi	Major king of Ur III dynasty (2094-2047)
19	Hamar-kūma	Hammurabi	6 th king of Babylonia (1792-1750)
III. EARLY KINGS OF THE FERTILE CRESCENT			
20	^c Abdū dan Bawaka	Abazu, Belû	13 th and 14 th legendary kings of Assyria
21	^c Alû	Xalê	18 th legendary king of Assyria
22	^c Usmān	Samāni	19 th legendary king of Assyria
23	Tasgari	Tazzigurumaš	6 th Kassite king (c. 1650)
24	Burunburun II	Burnaburiaš II	19 th Kassite king (1359-1333)
25	Mawāshī	Meli-šixu	33 rd Kassite king (1186-1172)
26	*Kantā Karfi	Šarru-kīn I/Sargon I	35 th Assyrian king (c. 1880)
27	Batā-Mūsa	Moše/Mūsā/Moses	Legendary leader of Israel

IV. KINGSOFTHE NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE			
28	Fūmi	Pūl/Tiglath-pileser III	108 th Assyrian king (744-727)
29	Kotai/Kulai (Kanta)	Šarru-kīn II/Sargon II	110 th Assyrian king (721-705)
30	Ganbi	Aššur-bāni-apli/ Ashurbanipal	113 th Assyrian king (668-627)
31	Sakai	Sarakos/ Sīn-šarra-iškun	116 th Assyrian king (627-612)
V. FALL OF THE NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE			
32	Maru-Tāmau	Nabopolassar	1 st Neo-Babylonian king (626-605)
33	Maru-Kantā	Aššur-uballit II	117 th and last Assyrian king (612-609)

Table 12.2. Ancient kings of the Kabawa

The fourth section of the list comprises the names of six kings of the Neo-Assyrian period in nearly exact chronological order. It begins with Tiglath-pileser II, the founder of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, and ends with the very last Assyrian king; in the third position it has a short name for Assurbanipal, the last great king of Assyria; and in the fourth position we find the name of the last king of Metropolitan Assyria. Most likely the fourth section provides onomastic indications of the importance of the Neo-Assyrian Empire for the state builders of Kebbi: at the beginning of this period their ancestors were deported from their original homes and resettled in Syria-Palestine, and although subsequently they were firmly integrated into the Assyrian Empire, their loyalty to the oppressive state was limited (Oded 1979: 75-115; Van de Mieroop 2007: 268).

The fifth and final section has Nabopolassar (626-605) in the first and Assur-uballit II (612-609) in the second position, and therefore indicates by onomastic means the fall of the Assyrian Empire and the cause of the exodus in the same way as the *Diwān* of Kanem-Bornu: the Babylonian conqueror expelled the Assyrian crown-prince from his capital and thus forced the Assyrians to retreat to Syria, their western province (Sölken 1959: 139-141; Lange 2009a: 374-5). In combination with the Kebbi Chronicle these onomastic elements allow us to understand the reasons for the mass migration of the ancestral Kabawa to sub-Saharan Africa, leading to the foundation of the Kebbi state. Relying on the Kanta tradition but ignoring all details of ancient Near Eastern history, the nineteenth century chroniclers attribute the leadership of the exodus to Kotai/Sargon II and to the last metropolitan Assyrian kings, Gabi/Assurbanipal and Sakai/Sin-shar-ishkun; they confer on Katsina the role of an ambiguous ally comparable to that of Pharaonic Egypt with respect to the retreating Assyrians and they describe the state founding in terms of the prowess of an epoqne ruler modelled on that of Kanta/Sargon of Akkad.³⁵¹ Although this garbled reconstruction of historical events misses the real causes of the

³⁵¹ Only the Arabic version of the Chronicle has the rebel element of the oral versions of the Kanta legend (Ta'rikh, f. 4).

exodus, it clearly and unmistakably points to the origins of the state founders in the Near East, and it suggests on the basis of information referring to the Fertile Crescent that the founding of the state resulted from the conquest of a previous local people.

A critical evaluation of the onomastic and oral historical data leads to more solid conclusions with respect to the conditions prevailing in the ancient Near East at the time of the departure of the Kebbi state builders from Syria-Palestine. After mentioning the Neo-Assyrian kings in the fourth section, the ancient author of the Kebbi King List adds a fifth section and inserts a nickname of Nabopolassar between the penultimate and the ultimate Assyrian king. He thus interrupts the sequence of five Assyrian names and indicates the Babylonian leadership in the overthrow of the Assyrian Empire. By letting the last Assyrian king follow the Babylonian conqueror of Assyria, he certainly intends to point out a chain of cause and effect: Nabopolassar rose to power, consequently the Assyrians were defeated and the great exodus was set in motion. Assur-uballit II is in the ultimate position because he fled with the remaining Assyrian army from Nineveh to Syria, where he fought the final battles against the invading Babylonian troops. He was the last leader remembered by the uprooted communities of resettled deportees who sought refuge in sub-Saharan Africa (Oates 1991: 182-4; Lange 2010a: 27-31). Additionally this reconstruction of events can also rely on the parallel skeleton account of ancient Near Eastern history offered by the author of the original Hebrew chronicle of Kanem-Bornu, the *Girgam*, who finishes his outline of Kanemi prehistory by mentioning precisely the same royal figures.

One might have thought that people claiming the parentage of Assur-uballit II rather than that of Nabopolassar were Assyrians who had built an Assyrian successor state in Kebbi (Lange 2009a: 375-380; 2010a: 106-7). However, the sequence of the previous ancient rulers mentioned clearly shows that the author of the king list considered ancient Near Eastern history from a wider angle than from the Assyrian perspective. Taking Sargon of Akkad as a Babylonian rather than as an Assyrian figure, and placing the names of numerous kings standing for the deported nations in the first section, he clearly looked at previous historical events from an anti-Assyrian position. Moreover, by insisting on the slave status of Kanta, his liberation of other slaves and his state-founding by the overthrow of their oppressive master, the oral Kanta tradition depicts a very negative image of Assyrian domination. Although the Kebbi King List attributes the name of Maru-Kanta, 'son of Kanta (Sargon of Akkad)', to Assur-uballit II, the Kanta tradition adds to the Sargon legend the supplementary notion of a generalized rebellion against the former master and thus emphasizes the importance of the Babylonian achievements. The legendary Kanta, who rises from the position of a 'slave of the Fulani', i.e. of the Assyrians, to that of an overthrower of Fulani domination, represents Sargon of Akkad only by his sonship with respect to Makata and as an orphan but otherwise his figure is patterned on that of Nabopolassar, the founder of the Neo-Babylonian dynasty.³⁵² Similar to the Bayajidda legend which depicts the last Assyrian king as a powerless prince who lost all his troops and yet attributes to him dragon-

³⁵² The previous analysis of the Kanta legend should be modified accordingly (Lange 2004: 323-357).

slaying and hence state-founding, the Kebbi King List acknowledges the importance of Assur-uballit II as the last ancient king without attaching any local significance to him. By somewhat reversing the chronological order, it mentions the locally important immigrant state-building communities at the beginning not at the end of the list.

Kebbi traditions therefore refer more clearly than the traditions of Kanem-Bornu to the former Assyrian rulers as oppressive kings who dominated over the Fertile Crescent only for a limited period before they were overthrown by the Babylonians. Aversion towards the Assyrian tyrants and gratefulness towards the Babylonian liberators from the Assyrian yoke were certainly the dominant feelings among the early Kabawa and other pioneer state builders of the Central Sudan. Therefore it cannot be expected that the collapsed Assyrian state served as a suitable model for the refugees in sub-Saharan Africa.

12.4.3. Oyo-Yoruba: Descent from Sargon of Akkad, Israelite kings and Nabopolassar

The dynastic traditions of the Oyo-Yoruba consist of well-structured royal poems transmitted by palace bards dealing with the reigns of twenty-nine kings who ruled some time before the Fulani Jihad. Although there exists no real synchronism for any of these kings, it has generally been supposed that they were rulers of the Oyo Empire whose reigns immediately preceded the period of the Jihad which began in 1804. This assumption neglects the chronological gap which we have seen to follow the rule of the ancient Near Eastern kings in Kanem-Bornu and Kebbi dynastic records. With respect to Oyo history, it can be shown that all previously proposed eighteenth century synchronisms are fallacious (Law 1977: 53-54; Lange 2009c: 591). Therefore Oyo dynastic traditions may be affected by the same extensive gap of more than one thousand and six hundred years between the ancient distant rulers and the recent local kings.

According to the palace tradition of Oyo, the Yoruba originated from the Near East, either from Mecca, Medina or Mondiana. Their first king, Nimrod, was supposedly killed during a religious uprising led by Braima/Abraham, but his son, Oduduwa, was able to escape with his people and reach the Central Sudan (Johnson 1921: 3-5; Law 1977: 27-28). Though the association of Nimrod with the story of Abraham places him at an early period of Mesopotamian history and suggests an equation with Sargon of Akkad (Lange 2004: 343-4; 2011c: 585), the killing of Nimrod in a popular uprising and the insertion of his son into the Yoruba tradition of provenance indicate a more recent setting. Apart from the prelude dealing with the migration from the Near East, the Oyo dynastic tradition consists of four more sections dealing with the previous Israelite-Assyrian history.

The prelude of the Oyo tradition comprises two names, Nimrod and Oduduwa, whose form betrays Western Semitic and in particular Israelite influences. In the context of the oral tradition of provenance, the figure of Nimrod appears to be used particularly to designate Sin-shar-ishkun (623-612) who succumbed in the flames of his palace during the combined Babylonian and Medean assault, while that of Ouduwa apparently refers in this context to the Assyrian refugee king Assur-uballit II (612-609) (Oates 1991: 180-3; Johnson 1921: 3-5).

N°	Kings in the Oyo trad.	Ancient Near Eastern kings	Identity of the kings
Yoruba tradition of provenance: LAST KINGS OF ASSYRIA			
1	Namudu/ Lamarudu	Sin-shar-ishkun (Sin-sharra-ishkun)	Last metropolitan Assyrian king (623-612)
2	Oduduwa	Assur-uballit (Ashshur-uballit)	Assyrian refugee king (612- 609)
I. ISRAELITE AND ASSYRIAN KINGS UNTIL THE CONQUEST OF ISRAEL IN 722 BCE			
3	Oranyan	Jacob/Israel, son of Isaac	Israelite legendary figure
4	Ajaka	Isaac, the son of Abraham	Epoch ruler of the Omrid dynasty (884-841)
5	Sango Omo-sanda Ajaka	Shalmaneser III (<i>Shulmanu-ashared</i>) Jehu b. Nimsi Isaac, the son of Abraham	103rd Assyrian king (858-824) 11th Israelite king (841-815) Epoch ruler of the Omrid dynasty (884-841)
6	Aganju	Shamshi-Adad V	103rd Assyrian king (824-811)
7	Kori	Adad-nirari III	104th Assyrian king (811-781)
8	Oluaso	Joash	13th Israelite king (804-790)
9	Olugbogi	Jeroboam I	14th Israelite king (790-750)
II. EXILED ISRAELITES IN THE KHUBUR REGION UNDER ASSYRIAN KINGS 722 – 627			
10	Ofiran/ Omoloju	Sargon II (<i>Sharru-kin</i>)/ Son of Ululaju	104th Assyrian king (721-705)
11	Eguguoju	Sennacherib (<i>Sin-akhekhe-eriba</i>)	11th Assyrian king (704-681)
12	Orompoto	Naqi'a	Assyrian queen (680-678)
13	Ajibojede	Esarhaddon (<i>Ashshur-akha-iddina</i>)	113th Assyrian king (680-669)
14	Abipa	Assurbanipal (<i>Ashshur-bani-apli</i>)	113th Assyrian king (668-627)
III. FINAL STRUGGLE OF THE ASSYRIAN KINGS FROM 627 TO 612 BCE			
15	Obalokun	Hoshea	20th and last Israelite king (732-722)
16	Ajagbo	Assurbanipal (<i>Ashshur-bani-apli</i>)	113th Assyrian king (668-627)
17, 22	Oderawu/Ojigi/ Timi	Assur-etil-ilani (<i>Ashshur-etelli-ilani</i>)	114th Assyrian king (627-623)
19,20	Jayin, Ayibi	??	??
21	Osinyago	<i>Hallushu-Ishushinak</i>	4th king of the Neo-Elamite dynasty (699-683)
23	Gberu/Gbonka	Nabopolassar (<i>Nabû-apla-usur</i>)	Founder of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (626-605)
24	Amuniwaiye	Sin-shum-lishir (<i>Sin-shumu-lisher</i>)	115th Assyrian king (623)
18,25	Karan/Onisile	Sin-shar-ishkun	116th Assyrian king (623-612)
IV. BABYLONIAN VASSAL KINGS UNDER ASSYRIAN DOMINATION: 744 TO 612 BCE			
26	Labisi Gaha	Nabonassar (<i>Nabû- nasir</i>) Tiglath-pileser III, Sin- shar-ishkun	Inaugurator of the Bab. Nabonassar era (747-734) Despotic Assyrian Vizier (744- 727, 623-612)
27	Awonbioju	<i>Marduk-apla-iddina</i> II	5th king of the Bab. Nabonassar era (721-710)
28	Agboluaje	Bel-ibni	8th king of the Bab. Nabonassar era (702-700)
29	Majeogbe	Mushezib- <i>Marduk</i>	11th king of the Bab. Nabonassar era (692-689)
V. FALL OF ASSYRIA IN 612 BCE			
30	Abiodun	Nabopolassar (<i>Nabû-apla-usur</i>)	Founder of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (626-605)

Table 12.3. Ancient kings of the Oyo–Yoruba

The first section has seven names beginning with that of Oranyan/Jacob and ending with that of Olugbogi/Jeroboam II (790-750) in correct chronological order. Although it includes the names of three Assyrian kings, it mentions six Israelite figures and therefore has its primary focus on Israel (Johnson 1921: 159-167; Lange 2011c: 585-6).

The second section deals with the Assyrian exile of deported Israelites in Igbo/Khubur, a region for which there is a local substitute situated east of the capital town of Oyo. The five kings in this section are Assyrian rulers from Ofiran/Sargon II to Abipa / Assurbanipal, mentioned likewise in correct chronological order.

The third section comprises the names of eleven kings who are mostly Assyrian rulers from the period of decline. Here we find some chronological inconsistency apparently due to the usage of overlapping sources.

The fourth section offers a remarkable shift in perspective insofar as it adopts the point of view of the Babylonians. It begins with Labisi/Nabonassar (747-734), the founder of the Neo-Babylonian kingdom, who was subjected by Gaha/Tiglath-pileser in 745 BCE, and continues with three Babylonian kings who endured the Assyrian oppression.

The fifth section has only the name of Abiodun/Nabopolassar (626-605). It describes the insurrection of Abiodun/Nabopolassar (626-605), his overthrow of the Assyrian domination and his establishment of peaceful rule, ending the period of ancient and prosperous kings. Likewise adopting the Babylonian perspective, it seems to extend the reign of the great Babylonian ruler from the ancient Near East to sub-Saharan Africa (Johnson 1921: 143-196; Lange 2011c: 582-591).

The dynastic traditions of Kanem-Bornu, Kebbi and Oyo offer summary accounts of ancient Near Eastern history relevant to the Central Sudanic state builders in similar terms. They begin with the pre-Assyrian period, emphasize the importance of Assyrian domination, insist on the beneficial effect of the Babylonian conquest of Assyria and finish by pointing to an exodus from the Near East in consequence of the total collapse of the Assyrian Empire. Though only the Oyo tradition clearly indicates the humiliating effects of the despotic oppression endured by several Babylonian kings, its radical shift of perspective operated at the end of the ancient section is paralleled by the Kebbi tradition, which describes Kanta as a heroic rebel king overthrowing the slave system of the Fulani. By attributing the leadership of the exodus to the Assyrian epoch ruler Oduduwa, the Oyo tradition follows the general trend apparent in all four great traditions of the Central Sudan – that of the Kanuri, the Hausa and the Kabawa – of depicting the Assyrians in spite of their oppressive regime as the major rallying point for the pioneer state builders in the Central Sudan. However, by describing Abiodun/Nabopolassar, the very last king of the ancient Near Eastern rulers, as an ideal African king, the dynastic tradition is based on the prestige accorded to the Babylonian liberator from the Assyrian oppression and its radiation to sub-Saharan Africa (Johnson 1921: 186-7; Lange 2011c: 590-1).

The available evidence shows that the few Assyrians who might have escaped the massacres after the final collapse of their state were, despite some ambiguity in the attitudes towards them, unable to restore their former dominant position among the pioneer state builders in Africa. The focus on a Babylonian figure may in Oyo as in Kanem and

Kebbi either point to the great reputation enjoyed by the Babylonian conqueror of Assyria or to some kind of Babylonian pre-eminence among the pioneer state builders. As for Oduduwa his role as the leading traditional figure among all Yoruba kingdoms seems by contrast to reflect the Assyrian hegemony in the ancient Near East.

However, similar to Bayajidda in the Hausa tradition he does not appear to indicate an effective rule of Assyrians in sub-Saharan Africa but rather the desire to benefit in a situation of uncertainty of future developments in Africa from the legacy of Assyrian statesmanship in the Near East (Bascom 1969: 9-12, 30-35; Lange 2004: 355-362).

12.5. Conclusion

The Assyrian hypothesis is based on evidence provided by different disciplines: history, archaeology, linguistics, philology and ancient Near Eastern studies. Its elaboration has benefitted from the results of ethno-historical research carried out by German and Scandinavian anthropologists in the first half of the twentieth century.³⁵³ However, contrary to previous diffusionist theories, it does not posit that cultural achievements were transmitted from the Near East to West Africa by vague undated waves of migrations, or that there were no further developments in Africa. On the basis of the most important traditions of origin and an analysis of the major dynastic records of Central Sudanic kingdoms, it suggests a new approach towards the general topic of transcontinental continuities and discontinuities by according special attention to local achievements.

As a matter of fact, all major oral traditions of the Central Sudanic kingdoms point to origins in the Near East. Though usually discarded as resulting from Islamic feedback, these indications should, on account of their great diversity and their underlying ancient data, be considered as undismissable residual evidence. Their claim of ancient migrations from the Fertile Crescent or Arabia is backed up by similar information provided by several Arab historians who in turn seem to have relied on traditions of provenance transmitted in African societies long before the beginning of Islamization. Modern archaeological research tends to support the idea of a sudden disruption in the cultural continuity by dating the beginning of incipient urbanism and the onset of the Iron Age to the mid-first millennium BCE or slightly before. Thereby attributing the most important discontinuity in West African history prior to colonialism to precisely the time when the refugees from the collapsed Assyrian Empire are supposed to have settled in the Central Sudan, it confirms the validity of the Assyrian hypothesis. Similarly some linguistic pointers refer to the introduction of some highly significant culture traits from the ancient Near East. At first sight, one might therefore get the impression that foreign invaders established states and cities in sub-Saharan Africa only in form of secondary and imitative realizations.

³⁵³ Frobenius 1912: 605-336; Baumann 1939: 50-71; Oliver/Fage 1962: 44-52.

A different notion of transcontinental continuities is suggested by onomastic evidence provided by Central Sudanic king lists. From the analysis of this material arranged according to principals of Mesopotamian list science it appears that the pioneer state founders looked back at some but not all the ancient Near Eastern kings mentioned in the surviving dynastic records as their own rulers. Known by different names, their great unifying figure was Sargon of Akkad, the builder of the first empire in world history. Transmitted by either Babylonian or Assyrian intermediaries, his legend was widely cherished and constituted the most important unifying element among the state builders. Another factor of unity was the common experience of Assyrian oppression, beginning with the cruel deportations and continuing with integration into the army and constant military expeditions to distant countries. When finally the Babylonian insurrection precipitated the fall of the Assyrian Empire and the liberation of the oppressed people, the greatest danger arose from attacks by the despoiled people in Syria-Palestine. By referring in the context of the Assyrian defeat to the Babylonian rebel king Nabopolassar, the dynastic records point out the main cause for the liberation of the oppressed people and of their flight to sub-Saharan Africa. If they finish the ancient Near Eastern prehistory of the people with a reference to the Assyrian refugee king, this only concerns the last rallying point for the different deportee communities in Syria-Palestine during their final struggles and not any effective Assyrian leadership during the migration or during the state building process. Actual opposition to the Assyrian oppression was so considerable that in each documented case the Babylonians and not the Assyrians were hailed as the great benefactors of the pioneer settlers.

Moreover, none of the newly founded states in the Central Sudan – including Ile-Ife – seems to have reproduced the organization of Assyria or Babylonia or any other single ancient polity of the Fertile Crescent without major changes. From the reshaping of the ancient Near Eastern dynastic history by the chroniclers of the Central Sudan, it appears that in each newly created African state different ethnic groups participated to different degrees in the state-building: in Kanem the indigenous Babylonians became the new leaders, in Kebbi the Kassites, and among the Oyo- and Ife-Yoruba the Chaldean incursors in Babylonia. At the same time Israelites emerged as the intellectual elite in these states: in Kanem, they began chronicle-writing in Hebrew, in Daura they used the biblical descent scheme for the outline of the Near Eastern prehistory of the people, and in Oyo they conceived of the ancient history of the people in terms of early Israelite kings and Assyrian deportations. Other less well-known ethnic immigrant groups, such as Arameans, Urartians and Elamites, sometimes recognizable behind the titles of specific office-holders, seem to have occupied in turn solidly entrenched positions in the new states.

Since all the former deportees settled in sub-Saharan Africa ardently desired to forestall the restoration of an Assyrian-like oppression in Africa, the different states created were founded on the constitutional principle to restrict the power of the monarch as much as possible. Reactions against despotism, ethnic inequality and an oppressive class system are thus significant distinctive traits of the new states. In consequence, egalitarianism among the state-founders and constitutional control of the king by different institu-

tional means were the most important innovations which originated in Africa.³⁵⁴ On account of their original nature, the new polities should be regarded as African pioneer states and not as ancient Near Eastern successor states. Though the available evidence only throws light on the Near Eastern immigrants, it may be assumed that the anti-oppressive and egalitarian principles were extended to the indigenous African population. The absence of any enduring cleavage between immigrants and locals, widespread intermarriage, and the adoption of the local language in most cases seem to support this view.³⁵⁵

Some critics may feel that the findings set out here give rise to a rejuvenated Hamitic hypothesis. Careful reading of the paper will hopefully persuade them that the documentary basis of the research, its theoretical outlook and its results with respect to the founding of anti-despotic pioneer states owe nothing to racist speculations. Though conflicting with the present exclusive focus of African historical research on the African continent and by opening up the prevailing approach to transcontinental perspectives, its conclusions may be worthy of constructive discussion.

12.6. Bibliography

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³⁵⁴ Smith, Daura, 83-84; Lange, Diwān, 69-70; Law, Empire, 65-67.

³⁵⁵ Lange, "Successor state", 375-380; id., Founding, 18-23, 37; id., "Bayajidda", 154-7.

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PART IV. FOCUS ON
LANGUAGE

Chapter 13

‘Appropriate vehicles for verbal expression’

**Egypt as seen from the Saharan-Nubian area and
*vice versa***

by Alain Anselin

to Wim van Binsbergen

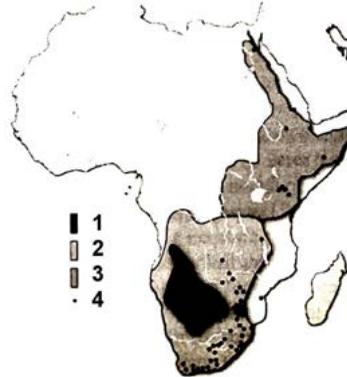
13.1. Preamble: new questions, new methods, new ways

At the Colloquium Ancient Egypt in its African Context held at Manchester Museum on 3 and 4 October 2009, we sketched the first part of the research we are presenting in this chapter. We were discussing a renewal of the states of knowledge, based on three decades of archaeological results within innovative methods, and the explosion of descriptions of languages, these black boxes of the societies disappeared in the collapses and crashes of the History. New questions were asked to the past. Precisely, since three decades, genetics of populations is one of these new approaches that break with the old readings and their mode of narrative. With it, let the race to colonial ideology and fan-clubs of Gobineau. Let the race for racists, and Humanity to the Men - which any never

can be divested.

This is an illuminating perspective upon the History of Ancient Egypt. That the genetics begins to illuminate is much more complex and dynamic than what gave to see the torches of the colonial conception of History. An example of complexity? In the study of the modern population of Adaima, established on a Nagadian site of Upper Egypt, Eric Crubézy first outlines the difficulties, due to selective epidemics³⁵⁶, in establishing a link between people and the predynastic and dynastic settlement history of the Nile Valley after that time. He detects the echo fleeting but consisting of a postglacial comeback possible, in the EpiPalaeolithic, of population flows to Africa, as well as the vestiges of an autochthonous proto-Khoisan presence (Crubézy 2010: 27-28; 39-42). These unexpected data necessitate a redefinition of the ancient map of the San. (*Fig. 13.1*).

« In future, only the study of population samples chronologically and culturally better integrated will provide new elements especially if they could be supplemented by paleogenetic analyzes who will have to be taken into account from the initial phases of the the excavation and that will involve technological advances within the detection of degraded DNA » (Crubézy 2010: 39).



1. present-day Khoisan distribution
2. probable distribution at the end of the 17th c. CE (according to the oral tradition)
3. probable distribution in the Upper Palaeolithic
4. sites that have yielded skeletal remnants attributed to Khoisan

Source: Crubezy, *Le peuplement e la vallée du Nil*, ArchéoNil 20, 2010, 28.

Fig. 13.1. Khoe San diachronic map

Although population genetics of is still a young subject, we can review the results of the last decades. Let us zoom in on the African continent, specifically its northeastern region, of which Egypt is a part. Jean-Philippe Gouridine observes

³⁵⁶ The tuberculosis leads to this place and for the reporting period, the death of 70% of the subjects before the age of 18 years (Crubezy 2010: 40).

The haplotype LoA holds special attention because it seems that its seniority dates back to Palaeolithic in Eastern Africa, either around 33 000 years (Salas, Richards *et al.* 2002) - and its dispersion can therefore be prior to the formation of populations who share it today and we compare here. We report in this article, a study by Gonzalez *et al.*, conducted on Mauritanian and Malian populations (Gonzalez, Cabrera *et al.* 2006). The presence of east-african mitochondrial haplotype LoA, previously found in the Senegambia region in the Balante in the Senegambian region (Rosa, Brehm *et al.* 2004), was identified in the Bambara in Mali, the Hausa and the Basaa (Gonzalez, Cabrera *et al.* 2006) (Gouridine 2008: 126, trad. the author).

Recent 'digests' of genetic studies being published, based on the autosomal markers, 'STR markers', or short tandem repeat, better reflect a greater proportion of the genetic heritage of an individual (the mitochondrial markers targeting only the maternal inheritance of those of the Y chromosome the paternal inheritance). Regarding most recent segments of the population, those of the site of Amarna (Dynasty XVIII), complete the dancing picture dancing of the connections and the complexities: *'The STR profiles of the Amarna mummies would most frequent in present populations of several African regions':* South Africa, Africa of the Great Lakes, tropical Africa, the Horn dominate, in an average ratio of 50 to 1, other regions present, Levant, Aegean, Arabia, Europe, Mediterranean, Mesopotamia. Profiles vary greatly from one individual to another. Comparison with markers of other regions show that the Horn enters almost half of the profiles of the Great Lakes. The dominant regions of the first results also overlap quite well with the ancient genetic map of San. (see above). Let's just our the conclusion of the author, Martin Lucas: *'If new data become available in the future, it might become possible to further clarify results and shed new lights on the relationships of ancient individuals to modern populations'* (Lucas 2010: 1-10).

Jean-Philippe Gouridine had already synthesized the results of several studies, one concerning the populations of northern Cameroon, the other, the residents of Gurna in Upper Egypt:

'Using mitochondrial DNA markers, Cemy and his colleagues concluded in 2004 that the populations of North Cameroon (Hide, Kotoko, Mafa and Masa) have more genetic affinities with the peoples of the Nile Valley and East Africa, than the neighboring populations of Central Africa (Fig. 13.2). And suggest, by coupling these genetic data with the linguistic data, that «the ancestral origin of the populations of Chadic and Cushitic languages would be in the middle Nile region, in the region of Khartoum, there are approximately 6000 years». A study of mitochondrial markers in a sedentary population from Egypt³⁵⁷, the Gurna, also revealed this same East-African ancestral character similar to that of the current Ethiopians' (Gouridine 2006: 12).

³⁵⁷ "We statistically and phylogenetically analysed and compared the Gurna population with other Egyptian, Near East and sub-Saharan Africa populations. Our results suggest that the Gurna population has conserved the trace of an ancestral genetic structure from an ancestral East African population, characterized by a high M1 haplogroup frequency. The current structure of the Egyptian population may be the result of further influence of neighbouring populations on this ancestral population" (Stevanovitch *et al.* 2004: 23-39). EDITOR'S NOTE: We remind the reader that the M1 haplogroup has been recognised, with R, as being associated with the 'Back-into-Africa' population movement that has been going on from c. 15 ka BP (Forster 2004). In this light, the expression 'ancestral population' takes on a very specific meaning. Cf. Forster, Peter, 2004, 'Ice Ages and the mitochondrial DNA chronology of human dispersals: A review', theme issue 'The evolutionary legacy of the Ice Ages', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 359, 1442: 255-264.

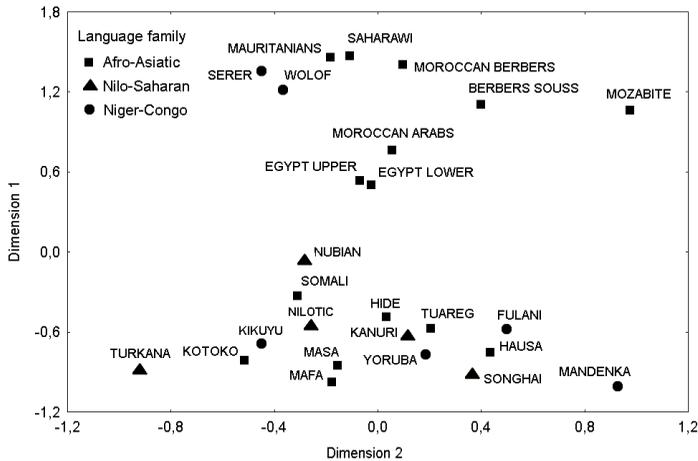


Fig. 13.2. Map of genetic mtDNA proximities (Cerny *et al.* 2004)

Certainly, we can not yet support absolutely no definitive statement of the facts in the absence of sufficient data available, as noted by Shomarka Keita with a cautious rigor. Subject to this, an initial inventory is likely to continue to be sketched. Following the maternal mitochondrial, the paternal Y chromosome:

'It was (...) found that a key lineage - the M35/78 was shared between the populations (...) of original Egyptian speakers and modern Cushitic speakers from the Horn. Amazigh (Berber) speakers had a high frequency of M35/81' (Keita 2008: 3).

Shomarka Keita continues:

'...The Cushitic domain includes notable percentages of M91 (haplogroup A) and sometimes M60 (haplogroup B), both essentially restricted to Africa, and as an aside found in some Khoisan speaking samples in substantial frequencies. Some samples evince substantial frequencies of an under-derived PN2, the marker 'upstream' (ancestral) to M35 and M2, the latter being the marker that is most common in tropical Africa' (Keita 2008: 7). The samples from Egypt are almost as diverse as those of the Horn. Some samples have high frequencies of the ancient M60 marker (haplotype B), but the plurality of studies show M35 lineages as predominating. Traces of M2 are found as they are in the Horn. In Egypt the M35 are also primarily M35/M78 with some M35/M81 (Keita 2008: 8). It is of interest that the M35 and M2 lineages are united by a mutation - the PN2 transition. This PN2 defined clade originated in East Africa, where various populations have a notable frequency of its underived state. This would suggest that an ancient population in East Africa, or more correctly its males, form the basis of the ancestors of all African upper Palaeolithic populations (Keita 2008: 13). The descendant Egyptian and Cushitic speakers also have in some samples notable frequencies of lineages sometimes called 'ancient' and essentially confined to Africa' (Keita 2008: 10). These genetic data give population profiles that clearly indicate males of African origin, as opposed to being of Asian or European descent'. Any state of knowledge requires tirelessly more research: 'A wider sampling of Chadic speakers - and all others is needed in order to make better inferences' (Keita 2008: 11). A year later, a study of Viktor Cerny returned to mitochondrial ge

nomes and provides a first harvest of data to this pioneering direction of research: 'We provide genetic support for an Early Holocene migration within Africa. A high-resolution phylogeny of haplogroup L3f based on whole mitochondrial genome sequences shows several clades that are unevenly distributed throughout Africa and Near East. Specifically, clade L3f3 is geographically limited to the Chad Basin where it reaches high frequencies especially in Chadic-speaking groups while almost absent in Niger-Congo and Nilo-Saharan people. Within the Afroasiatic language phylum, the Chadic branch is linguistically close to the East African Cushitic branch although they are separated by ~2,000 km of territory in which different Semitic and Nilo-Saharan peoples live today'. 'We show that only northern Cushitic groups from Ethiopia and Somalia are genetically close to Chadic populations. Thus, the archaeologically and linguistically supported route of Proto-Chadic pastoralists via Wadi Howar to the Chad Basin may have genetic support³⁵⁸. Moreover, our molecular genetic date for the Chadic-specific L3f3 clade is consistent with the suggested Holocene dispersal' (Cerny *et al.* 2009: 63).

Before proceeding, let us adopt the caveat of Shomarka Keita, who recalls that, by definition, the genotypes do not identify phenotypes, they '*indicate any specific set of skin colors, hair type, or facial features*' (Keita 2008: 11), and, it must be clear, the genotype certainly does not identify the language spoken by a population.



(Beginnings of the XX^e century [Musée de l'Homme, Paris] & A. Fakhy, *The Oasis of Egypt*, Cairo, 1973)

Fig. 13.3. Siwi (Oasis of Siwa)

The genetic data of the inhabitants of the oasis of Siwa (Fig. 13.3) provide a good example of the fact. 'GM and KM allotypes of immunoglobulins (autosomal) or HLA genes

³⁵⁸ "From this common focus", Cerny suggested in 2004, "two waves of migration would then followed - the first to the east would have resulted in the origin and diversification of the Cushitic languages,(...), the second to the west would have given birth to Chadic languages. Archaeological evidence (ceramics) of western migration are visible along the Wadi Howar in Sudan (Kuper 1981). Unfortunately, the Chad region has not yet been surveyed. It is possible that the first groups of Chadic-speakers pastoralists have come to Lake Chad 4000 years ago. It is currently premature to see in the diversification of the cluster revealed among the haplotypes L3 clear evidence of an expansion of the Chadic-speakers populations" (Cerny, Bruzek, Cmejla, Brdicka 2004: 123-131).

(cf. Arnaiz-Villena), allow to have a more complete picture of the origins of the individuals studied.³⁵⁹ "The results show that Siwan Berbers are composed of more than 45% of Gm haplotypes common in European populations and of more than 50% of 'sub-Saharan' haplotypes. These data contrast with those collected for Berbers from North-West Africa where we only find a 'sub-Saharan' contribution of about 20%. "There is neither correspondence between the genetics and linguistics since the Egyptian Berbers are clearly related to East African populations whose dialects belong to a different linguistic family (Semitic and Cushitic)" (Coudray, Guitard, Dugoujon & El-Chennawi 2005; Coudray *et al.* 2009: 196-214).

Andrew Smith had made the same remarks about the Tubu, Nilo-Saharan language speakers, Tuaregs, Berber language speakers, and Beja, the northern branch of Cushitic speakers, which share a pool of genetic traits (Smith 2004: 43-58).

'So what does this finding correlate with in the linguistic record, if anything? Although it is not proper to attempt to connect biological and cultural phenomena, or use one to 'correct' the other, it may be that one discipline can be used to suggest questions about another' (Keita 2008: 13).

To better illustrate the mutual fertility of questions that each discipline, in the state of its own progress in terms of matters, tools and methods, may suggest to the others, let Egypt for a moment, and take for example a neighboring region of Africa, the Near East, camped on its doorstep in a permanent contiguity.

Contradictory positions whose place of Semitic languages in the history of Middle Eastern populations and cultures is the subject since over half a century are well known. So we limit ourselves to summarize them from two recent publications which provided updates on each of those, one due to Christopher Ehret (2009) and the other to Noam Agmon and Yigal Bloch (2010).

The glottochronological positions of Christopher Ehret will probably seem insufficiently adequate given to genetics and not always fair in the definition of Egyptian roots used in the comparisons implemented; they have the merit to include the phylogeny of the family of languages in a wider geographical as the single Near East area, as suggested by genetic data, particularly the location of the mutation PN2:

'Our analysis of the Semitic language family produced a dated phylogeny that estimates the origin of Semitic at approximately 4400-7400 YBP (...). The phylogeny suggests East Semitic (represented by Akkadian in this study) corresponds to the deepest branch (although the four deepest branches have overlapping HPDs), and our log BF tests indicate that Akkadian is the appropriate root for the Semitic languages analysed here. These results indicate that the ancestor of all Semitic languages in our dataset was being spoken in the Near East no earlier than approximately 7400 YBP, after having diverged from Afroasiatic in Africa (Ehret 1995; Ehret *et al.* 2004; Blench 2006). Lacking closely related non-Semitic languages to serve as out-groups in our phylogeny, we cannot estimate when or where the ancestor of all Semitic languages diverged from Afroasiatic. Furthermore, it is likely that some early Semitic languages became extinct and left no record of their existence. This is especially probable if early Semitic societies were pastoralist in nature (Blench 2006), as pastoralists are less likely to leave epigraphic and ar-

³⁵⁹ Personal communication of Jean-Philippe Gourdine, 28.02.2012.

archaeological evidence of their languages. The discovery of such early Semitic languages could increase estimates of the age of Semitic, and alter its geographical origin if these early Semitic languages were found in Africa rather than the Middle East' (Kitchen, Ehret, Assefa & Mulligan 2009: 2708).

For Noam Agmon, the epicenter of Semitic languages would instead look to the Near East, near Kebara, ca 15.000 BC, that is to say a few millennia ago, a horizon he qualifies as pre-Semitic. With a great mastery of his method of linguistic reconstruction, Noam Agmon uses archaeological data to identify a very linear historical evolution of linguistic phylum parallel to a succession of 'stages'-hunting and gathering, nomadic pastoralism, using the stone as well as brush to build, and finally farming.

'With the evidence collected here, one might envision the transition to triconsonantalism as a lengthy process which paralleled the increased complexity of the pre-Semitic society, culminating in the transition to agriculture. The nomadic hunter-gatherers emerging from the last Ice-Age still retained the 2c/CVC language morphology of the UP [Upper Palaeolithic]. As of the Geometric Kebaran, certainly by the Natufian, society became increasingly more complex. Permanent (round stone) houses were built to complement the traditional brush huts, lime was manufactured for hafting weapons and tools, and the sickle was applied extensively for reaping wild cereals. This increased complexity was likely mirrored in the language, which no longer retained its simple morphology. Bisyllabic verbs (such as the Hebrew **bana**, Akkadian **ibni** 'he built', of the verbal root **bny**) were denominated from older 2c/CVC nouns (like PAA [Proto-Afroasiatic] ***bun** 'stone'). The suggested development ***bun** > ***bny** is interesting because archeological evidence for the onset of permanent (stone) house building around 16,500 bp suggests that the III-y root **bny** emerged after this date. In PS [Pre- or Proto-Semitic] we already find ***ʔa-bun** for 'stone', so that the augmentation ***bun** > ***ʔa-bun** must have occurred earlier, most likely during the Neolithic. These two events bracket the formation of the III-y root **bny**, which could thus be Natufian.' (Agmon 2010: 45).

The reconstruction of an archaic root, pre-Semitic, **+b-n**, provides its matrix to the vocabulary of building, Semitic, ***bny**, to *build*, literally, we use here a neologism, to *stone*. This word will continue to be used later when the houses will be made in bricks—such as an example to remind us that language is the black box of all our civilizations ! However, this raises some problems. Noam Agmon defined by the archaeology and the linguistics a Natufian horizon which no epigraphic corpus does not document the reality – we had already encountered in our works this problem of signs without words and words without signs (Anselin 2006: 13-28). The list of bi-consonantal roots that Yigal Bloch and Noam Agmon set can be associated with 'a Stone-Age hunter-gatherer society: **bn**, stone; *build*; **dr**, round; *house*; **gr**, fire; *pit*; **lm**, gravel, pebble; *cut, half*; **kr**, round; *kiln*; **zr**, flint; *rock*; *mountain*; **qn**, reed; *spear*; *create, acquire*; **št**, buttocks; *cloth, clothes, wrap*; **šm(n)**, fat; *oil*' (Agmon and Bloch 2010).

However, the Natufian expansion of the pre-Semitic root, that explains the Semitic one, **+bny**, from a etymon ***bn**, *stone*, who could know equivalents in the only Western Chadic phylum: bade: **bony-in** pl. **bonyanyon**, *stone, mountain* (Dagona 2004) et daffobutura: **bwaan**, *Hoch* (Takacs 2001a: 219)³⁶⁰.

³⁶⁰ Diakonoff identified lexicalized classifiers (Diakonoff 1965: 55), -b for wild animals (agr-ab, scorio, arn-ab, hare), -r for domesticated ones (imm-ar, ram, bak-ar, cattle), and -n for body-parts names (lis-an), this last different of Egyptian / h/ and Chadic, /k/, ones.

Then, the genetics data do not match with the hypothesis of a Natufian epicenter of the Chadic languages, which V.Cerny and his team have also established close genetic links to the Cushitic languages speaking peoples. Indeed, the works already quoted of Shomarka Keita provide a geographical context broader than that usually adopted for the single study of Semitic phylum: *'...The geographical patterns of the Y chromosome variation and the mid-Holocene distributions of Afroasiatic are interesting. Cushitic, Berber, and descendant Egyptians have in common a high frequency of M35 lineages, specifically M35/M78 and M 81. There are small frequencies of M2. (...) It is of interest that the M35 and M2 lineages are united by a mutation – the PN2 transition'. This PN2 mutation originated in East Africa. This would suggest that an ancient population in East Africa, or more correctly its males, form the basis of the ancestors of all African upper Palaeolithic populations'. This PN2 mutation, ancestral marker of the 'M35 lineages', which we have seen the frequency in Egypt, and in Cushitic languages-speaking peoples areas, is also that of the 'M2 (lineages), (...) being the marker that is most common in tropical Africa'. In this context, 'the Semitic speaking region is characterized by M89 lineages (and a declining west to east frequency of M35 in the Levantine-Syrian region' (Keita 2008: 10).*

The terminus can it be the origin ? And mankind always walk the roads in the both directions (see Hombert *et al.* 2006; Rabino-Massa *et al.* 2000 ; Gourdine 2006)... Restricted Natufian-centered vision of the dispersion of Afroasiatic flows and Semitic one, seems hardly compatible with the genetic landscape as summarized above. Starting from a single geographical point of view, Noam Agmon himself convenients it: based on the abundant results of the researches of one of the more intensively archeologically investigated regions areas, the Levant, his work lacks archeological studies of Africa, particularly for the pre-Neolithic era, as remarked by Roger Blench (Blench 2006): *'Prehistoric chronology is geography-dependent. In the present work it is based on the prehistory of W. Asia and, particularly, the archeology of the Levant (Mazar 1992, Bar-Yosef 1992; Bar-Yosef 2002; Kuijt and Goring-Morris 2002; Goring-Morris and Belfer-Cohen 2003). This does not necessarily mean that the 'homeland' of pre-PS speakers was the Levant rather than, for example, NE Africa (Ehret, Keita and Newman 2004, Blench 2006)' (Agmon 2010: 27).*

By contrast, in consideration of all the African data, genetic, archaeological, linguistic that constitutes the blinding spot of his interpretation as Noam Agmon convenients, would be the Semitic phylum really the only Afroasiatic one, that is to say the single phylum firmly established in Asia for millennia, and sharing a lot of features with African languages ? The precise genetic chart of Shomarka Keita in 2008 shows many points of convergence with the linguistic sketch that Hermann Jungrathmayr considered still speculative in 1989:

'On these questions we can only speculate. With the gradual dessication of the Sahara the various groups -probably within themselves linguistically already diversified to a certain degree- started moving mainly to the east, the southeast and the south, each of them defined by its basic linguistic identity, i-e. the Proto (= Early) Ancient Egyptians, the Early Cushites, the Saharans and the Chadic speaking peoples' (Jungrathmayr 1989: 66-73).

Since then, Gabor Takacs began to identify the phonological and morpho-

logical archaic features that the Western Chadic -angas-sura and bauchi-, Ancient Egyptian, Eastern Cushitic, and on the asian side of the Red Sea, southern arabic languages, may have shared, at the periphery of this centre now in process of desertification (Takacs 2001b: 56-125).

In any case, we can not deny here that Natufian could have been a major regional center of dispersal of cultural models that archaeological data testify, nor to contest the validity of the linguistic reconstructions of Noam Agmon and Ygal Bloch and especially their historical depth. It is obvious that things are far more complex than these two proposals profile, as argued by the proponents of a Natufian homeland of the African languages families of the northeastern Africa (Militarev), and those of an African cradle of 'afro-asian languages' (Ehret). They would benefit from the lighting of genetics, that could identify a spacetime that connects all the interpretations in a unified theory as called for African archaeological data as well as identifying

'possible return, postglacial stream people to Africa to Epipaleolithic' (Crubezy 2010: 25-42).

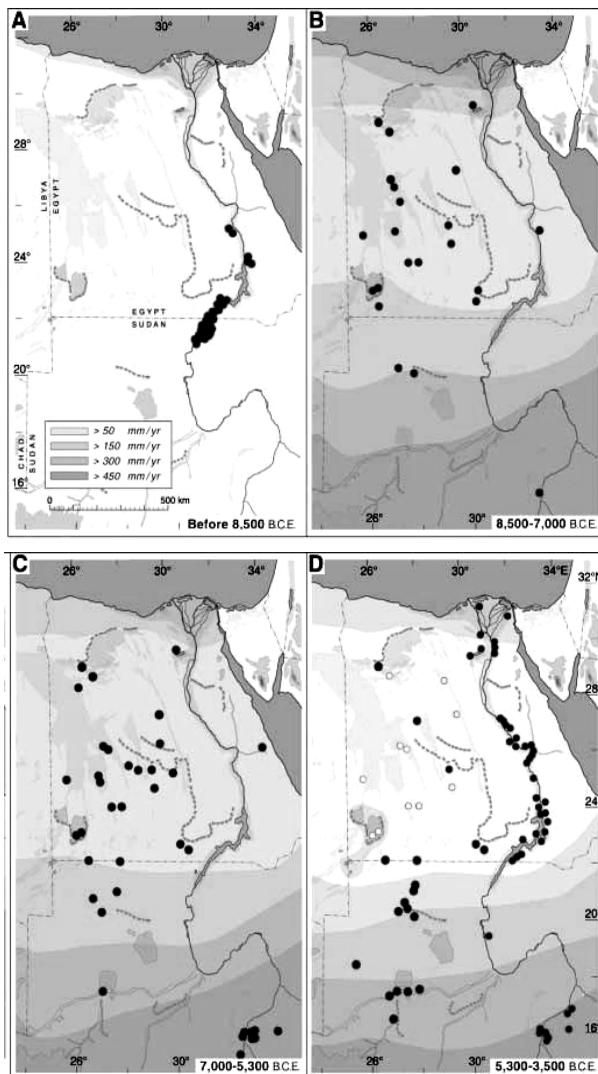
That said, our purpose is elsewhere: a few millennia later, when large groups of people and languages are already installed in the so called Northeastern Africa, never isolated from its general African context - nor stayed out the roads of the Orient. But we pose the same cluster of questions to the data of a linguistic archaeology of ancient Egypt: the words, that we consider as key artifacts of a civilization.

13.2. Egypt as seen from the Saharan-Nubian region

13.2.1. Climate and history

It is true the research has long been overlooked the areas and the millennia in which we situate our study. It is also true that from 20,000 BC to 8500 BC, during the Ice Age and the Late Pleistocene, the Saharan space was hyper-arid and uninhabited:

'During Glacial Maximum and the terminal Pleistocene, 20000 to 8500 BC, the Sahara was void'. From 8500 BC, 'with the abrupt arrivals of monsoon rains, hyper-arid desert is replaced by savannahs and inhabited by settlers'. 'How past climate changes, over a coherent region of subcontinental scale, have affected human societies throughout the Holocene. This fundamental climatic change from terminal Pleistocene hyper-arid desert conditions to savannah-type vegetation and the formation of lakes and temporary rivers resulted in the rapid dissemination of wild fauna and the swift reoccupation of the entire Eastern Sahara by prehistoric populations. Relatively stable humid conditions prevailed over approximately (...) between 8500 and 5300 B.C.' (Kuper and Kröppel 2006: 806, fig.3 (our Fig. 13.4).



(R.Kuper & S.Kröpelin, Science vol. 313, 11 August 2006, 806).

Fig. 13.4. Climate-controlled Holocene human occupation in the Sahara.

The studies of the emergence of Ancient Egypt from the space-time of epipalaeolithic and neolithic cultures in the refuge area of the valley and its Saharan-Nubian wide

background, are in their first decades. In 1974, when the UNESCO, on the initiative of its Director General, Amadou Makhtar Mbow, and Cheikh Anta Diop, gathered scientists from Africa, America and Europe at Cairo for the first International Conference linking Ancient Egypt to its Continent, it was generally believed that ancient Egypt was simply a gift of the Nile, and it was continued to think so after. This was due to the deficit of archaeological excavations in the eastern Sahara Desert, and the lack of genetic studies of modern and ancient NileValley populations and those of its hinterland. 'The Egyptian Sahara has long been regarded as an insignificant factor in the emergence of complex society along the Nile' Fred Wendorf writes in 2002. He adds that H.A.Nordström as early as 1972,

'suggested that cattle pastoralism may have been introduced to the Nile Valley from the Western Desert during the arid phase' (Wendorf & Schild 2002: 18).

In 1980, some years after the resumption of the excavations of Kom el Ahmar (Nekhen/Hierakonpolis), Michael.A. Hoffman, who leded the archaeological mission, published 'Egypt before the Pharaohs', and Fred Wendorf and Romuald Schild, who dug up the Nabta Playa site, published 'Prehistory of the Eastern Sahara'. More attention is now accorded to the African hinterland of ancient Egypt, particularly the Saharan-Nubian areas, and chaplets of sites documenting a network of ancient cultures that were able to provide cultural models and features, and ideological patterns to the political organization of the first kingdoms of Upper Egypt. It is now considered that Nubia and Egypt were also 'gifts of the desert' (Friedman 2002). Works go on, accumulating more, those of Beatrix Midant-Reynes which focuses the Archéo-Nil n°19, 2009, on The Rock Art of the Nile Valley and Egyptian Deserts, those of Rudolph Kuper and his project ACACIA past fifteen years, and the fascinating ones of Jean-Loïc Le Quellec (Le Quellec & De Flers 2005).

Long ignored by the historians of the classical ages, the study of the climate provide today its contextual data to this great historical shift of the predynastic times: 'After 7000 B.C.E., human settlement became well established all over the Eastern Sahara, fostering the development of cattle pastoralism. Retreating monsoonal rains caused the onset of desiccation of the Egyptian Sahara at 5300 B.C. Prehistoric populations were forced to the Nile valley or ecological refuges and forced to exodus into the Sudanese Sahara. The return of full desert conditions all over Egypt at about 3500 B.C.E. coincided with the initial stages of pharaonic civilization in the Nile valley' (Kuper & Kröpelin 2006: 805). The chronology recently proposed by Rudolph Kuper and Heiko Reimer for the cultures of the Gilf Kebir fits with this context and identifies three periods, the Gilf B1 and B2 from 6600 to 4400 BC, and the Gilf C and its pottery, attested from 4400 to 3500 ~ 3000 BC (Kuper & Riemer 2009). The pastoralism must be appreciated within the background of climate history, on the concrete basis of the practical capacity of cattle, goats and sheep of an ecozone to support families and livestock, and the seasonal alternation of their movements, to the heights and the settlements. It governs the system and provides the context of the modes of social organization and political authority

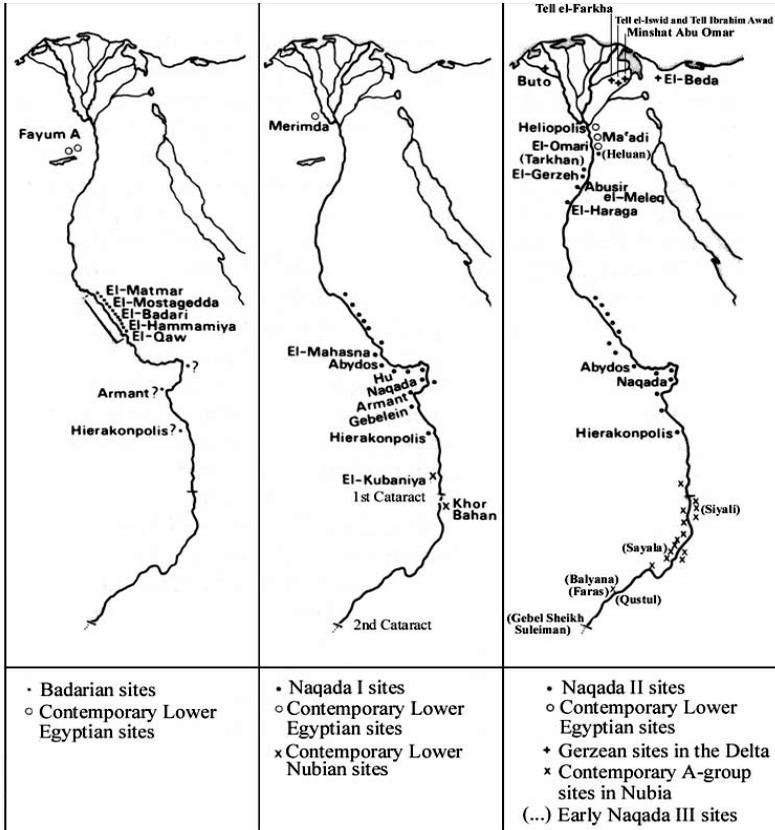
of the pastoralist cultures (Biagetti & Di Lernia 2003: 7-30)³⁶¹.

We must also beware of a mechanical evolutionism piling up in phases the hunter-gatherers and the pastoralists. We have to place the development of agriculture in the context of progressive scarcity of spaces and water, causing greater population density in refuges areas. At that time, oases and the Nile valley have close ties. The excavations led in the two major eastern Desert oases show they share the same culture since the early and mid Holocene, and that many of their common cultural features with predynastic Egypt are most ancient than Egyptian ones. 'Thus, semi-sedentary communities with slab structures are present virtually continuously from about 7500 BC, and bifacially knapped implements such as knives and arrowheads from at least 6400 BC' (McDonald 2011: 28-29). The excavations conducted on the Theban Desert Road in Upper Egypt, show that the early close links identified between the Nile Valley and the Oases, continued during the following millennia. 'The long sequence developed for Late Prehistoric Dakhlah and Kharga Oases allows us more precisely to date and account for the appearance of traits which later would characterize the early stages of the Predynastic' (McDonald 2011: 29).

From 5300 BC, the Gradual retreat of the Monsoons leads to desertification of the Sahara Egyptian. For two millennia, the Saharan populations were slowly pushed eastward to the refuges offered by the Desert oases and linear one of the Nile Valley, whose position makes it the gateway to the Orient, and rejected southward into the wadis and the corridors leading to the southwestern areas 'The full desert conditions all over Egypt ca. 3500 [BC] coincided with the first stages of pharaonic civilization in the Nile Valley' (Sadig 2009: 33). Seen in this light, the ancient Egyptians were the children that the desert had with the Nile.

The last thirty years of archaeological data draw a new map of the formation of ancient Egypt, from a pool of cultures from which its first kingdoms emerged. The map of the predynastic sites (Fig. 13.5) established in 1983 by B.G.Trigger, is suddenly cast in a new light (Trigger 1983: 1-69, fig. 1.2): in the second half of the Vth millennium BC, Tasian and Badarian no longer appear as centers of Predynastic culture, but as the north-eastern provinces of a network of ancient African cultures where Badarian, Saharan and oasian peoples, Nubian and Nilotic ones circulated regularly. In this context, Deborah Darnell bases on the data provided by the excavations of Rayayna her identification of the existence of a cultural complex Egypto-nubian: 'The results of excavation and study of th(e) material (of Rayayna site) illustrate the range of ancient activity in the area, and the relationship of the Rayayna culture to Tasian, Early A-Group, Abkan, and the Western Desert traditions, as well as to Predynastic Egyptian cultures of the Nile Valley' (Darnell, D., 2011: 9). The bubbling of new solutions and political constraints of hierarchisation of a society where space has become scarce, and population denser, where resources should be produced, wears the mask of the ancient on the face of the new - the power bases its legitimacy on violence and mastering the forces of chaos, making the king appear as 'hunter' par excellence, a lion, a hawk... or as a bull, leading the herd (Hendrickx 2010b: 106-133 ; Navajas-Jimenez 2011: 30-42).

³⁶¹ Evans-Pritchard gave very accurate descriptions of a similar economic ecology in the last century, that of the Nuere, Nilotic pastoralists (Evans-Pritchard 1940).



Trigger, 1983, 1-69, fig. 1.2

Fig. 13.5. Egyptian predynastic sites map

After decades of archaeological excavations in the eastern Sahara, the influence of cultures of the desert and oases on the development of Egyptian Predynastic begins to clarify³⁶²; simultaneously, this light reveals new shadow zones, suggests new questions

³⁶² As well as the scar of cultural practices, the use of rock as support of the iconography make the Valley a final echo regulated by original political and religious dynamics: "The exceptional character of the Naq' el-Hamdulab sites allows new reflections on the interpretation of (late) Predynastic rock art and the developing Egyptian iconography of Dynasties 0 and 1" (Hendrickx, Eykerman, Darnell & Gatto 2011: 18). It is accepted that the formation of the Egyptian civilization had its origins in the expansion of the Upper Egyptian cultures, which invested the original ones of the Lower Egypt, according ways discussed by Alice Stevenson (Stevenson 2008: 543-560). Southern polities traded with the northern ones since the time of "King Elephant" (buried at Nekhen ca 3700/3600 BC), and imported Maadi jars as well as Nubian artifacts (Friedman 2003: 8-22). It will be rather discussed here the close links of Egypt with its African hinterland.

and new interpretations.

The Nile Valley is a limit, together with a hub turned to other worlds. Some models encountered throughout the Saharan-Nubian cultural area will be abandoned³⁶³ instead of knowing the re-arrangement of their contents in the new formal developments of the always original culture of the Valley, as sites of its hinterland become scarcer with the desertification of the eastern Sahara (see Sadig 2009). We will turn to the hinterland of Northeastern Africa to continue the research conducted on the words of the immaterial culture, the words of the mind, published in the Proceedings of the conference Egypt in its African Context held at the Manchester Museum the 3-4 October 2009. This day, 13 april 2012, at the University of Leiden, in a tribute to Wim van Binsbergen, we will treat the words of the world, earth and stars, not in a naturalistic perspective, but in a cultural one - like defining the bestiary of a culture, not the fauna of its environment.

13.3. The words for stars

13.3.1. Archaeological data

In three lines, Fred Wendorf and Romuald Schild summarize thirty years of excavations in the southern part of the western desert, 300 km from the Nile Valley:

'The megaliths of Nabta Playa ceremonial center (Fig. 13.6) are an expression of an elaborate Late Neolithic ceremonialism in Africa, the earliest ceremonial center in Africa, marking the dawn of complex societies' (Wendorf & Schild 2004: 11).



After F.Wendorf & R. Schild, 2004, 13. A first double line of megaliths points towards the brightest stars of Orion's Belt as it appeared between 6150 and 5800 years earlier, ca 4000 BC, a second row, towards Sirius as it stood 6,800 years ago, and the third 'to the rising position of the same star' (Wendorf & Schild 2004: 12).

Fig. 13.6. Nabta Playa, the ceremonial centre

³⁶³ Throughout its history, the Egyptian culture was a dynamic canvas. Thus, the giraffes are part of the Saharan fauna, and of bestiary of Saharan cultures. Their image engraved or painted on the rocks of Eastern Desert, time incised or painted on the nagadian jars of the Nile Valley disappears from the Egyptian iconography in the late Predynastic. Note: the giraffe had never been buried, contrarily to other sacred animal figures in the cemeteries of the Upper Egypt elites in the Nagada I-II.

No doubt Wendorf and Malville have laid solid basis for consistent interpretations of the site (Malville *et al.* 1998, 2001). But since 1998 and 2001, the use of new tools for positioning and geolocation (gps, satellite imagery) led to the discovery of new megaliths, corrected initial errors of calculation of azimuths, and suggested other potential sources of astronomical orientation of megaliths (Brophy & Rosen 2005).

'...The results of climate studies (succession of more or less arid phases), geological (sedimentation) and archaeological (Carbon 14 dating)', finally correct the datation: 'we estimate that the megalith period lasted for approximately 800-900 years from 4500 BC to 3600 BC' (Malville et al. 2007).

The last decade of research has enabled a more comprehensive overview of the orientations and a more precise dating of Nabta megaliths, such as those proposed by the astrophysicist Karine Gadré. Karine Gadré inserted

'data available in the state of knowledge in 2010, historical period, geographical latitude and azimuth orientation of Nabta megaliths',

in the software she had developed for determining the astronomical source of orientation of monuments:

'It is thus appeared that some megaliths well and truly pointed towards the sunrise of stars in the constellation Ursa Major (alpha Ursae Majoris) and Dragon (epsilon Draconis), other in direction of the positions of the heliacal rises of stars of the constellation of Orion (Orion Belt, Orion Nebula, beta Orionis) and the constellation of Canis Major (alpha Canis Majoris particularly) over the period 4500 BC-3800 BC. It is therefore likely that the interest of the Ancient Egyptians for the constellations of the northern sky (Big Dipper, Dragon) and those of the southern sky (Orion, Sirius) dates back to the predynastic period' (Gadré 2010, culturediff.org/English/software3; Gadré, personal communication, 20 august 2012, from a working note in press).

We could not continue without the support of these more comprehensive orientations of the alignments, and more precise datations, which provide more synchronous chronologies in the comparison of saharo-nubian archaeological hinterland of the Nile Valley and the Badarian Periode.



in 1930 (from Bagnold, 1931)



and in 2003 (after Zboray, 2003).

Fig. 13.7. The Bagnold's stone circle in the vicinity of Zarzura, Gilf Kebir area



(after F.Wendorf & R. Schild, 2004,15)

Fig. 13.8 Nabta Playa, the stelae

So, the constellation Orion, *szhw*, in ancient Egyptian, is regularly associated with Osiris, and the heliacal rising of Sirius, *spd.t*, is the first chronological reference in the development of the oldest Egyptian calendar. These are 'the two key stars of the Egyptian cosmogony'. 'The constellation of Orion and the star Sirius, which are closely related to Osiris and Isis, are frequently cited in the Egyptian texts': *szhw*, 18 times et *spd.t*, 22 times in the Pyramid Texts of the Old Kingdom' (Gadré & Roques 2008: 7).

Wendorf and Schild continue:

'the ceremonial center of Nabta Playa supplies evidence that some of the roots of Ancient Egypt beliefs, magic and religion lie buried in the sands of the South Western Desert' (...)'

The most convincing tie between the myths and religion of Ancient Egypt and the Cattle Herders of the South Western Desert are the group of Nabta Basin stelae, erected' before 4000 BC (Fig. 13.8)

'face the circumpolar region of the heavens, a place where the stars never die and where there is no death at all – as in the Pyramid Texts, the Field of Offerings- in which the dead symbolized by the upright megalith will live as an 'effective spirit' (Wendorf & Schild 2004: 11, 15).

African cultures provide solid points of comparison to this funeral tradition - related to the thinking of the skies, as in Egyptian texts. Further west - and further in the past, the Neolithic Bagnold's stone circle in the vicinity of Zarzura Oasis, in the Gilf Kebir (Fig.8), never linked to funerary or stellar culture³⁶⁴ (Bagnold 1931); and further south, in the Nuba Hills of the Kordofan, the funerary steles of a Nilotic speaking people - the Nyimang, performed it still fifty years ago - underlining the connection with the leadership: 'If the dead is a kwai-gosu, a bull-man, a stone called bull, gosu, crowns the burial mound' (Kronenberg 1959: 201).

³⁶⁴ Bagnold observes: "There was no doorway or other sign of orientation, and though we searched within and without the circle, no implements could be found" (Bagnold 1931).

13.4. The thought of the skies

The two constellations evoked by Wendorf and Schild as keys to understanding the site of Nabta Playa have effectively also occupied a central place in the most ancient Egyptian thought: one, Orion is visible in the southern sky or *gb.t* (Thiers 2009: 53-58), the other, Ursus Major, in the northern sky or *ghr.t* (Gadré 2008: 253, 256). In the Egyptian thinking of the world and the life, *‘the constellations of the northern sky are related to the idea of immortality because we never saw them disappear into the Duat. In contrast, the stellar ensembles farther south, whose prototypes are Sirius and Orion, which are absent from the sky for some time during the year, are compared to the living: they ‘live’ when they shine in the firmament, and ‘die’ when their invisibility, which is felt as a stay in the Duat’* (von Bomhard 2012: 102, trad. the author). The theological speculation developed the divinization of the stars and the asterisation of the gods, as remarkably studied by Bernard Mathieu. The constellation of Orion, *s3hw*, was conceived by the Egyptians as a complex figure ruled by Osiris, to which it was assimilated:

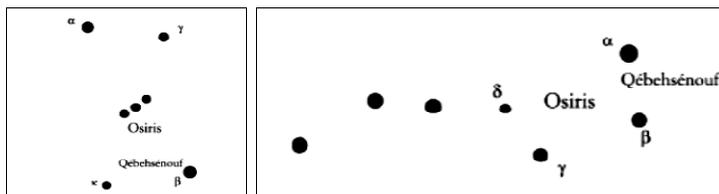
‘Children of Horus have been give rise to asterisms among the Egyptians’ (Mathieu 2008: 11), who attributed their astronomical correspondents in the southern sky as in the northern sky. ‘The southern sky, in fact, offered a fine example of asterism in which a group of three stars, our Orion’s Belt, appears to be surrounded by four others, it was easy to recognize Osiris, protected by the four Children Horus’.

The Chapter XVII of the Book of the Dead attests that the constellation Ursus Major, the Big Dipper, in the northern sky, provided to theological speculation the occasion of another asterism integrating the Four Sons of Horus:

jr d3d3.t h3 Wsjr, (j)mstj hpy dW3-mw.t.f k3h-sn.w.f pw nty.w m-s3 p3 hps m p.t m3ty.t,

As for the assembly surrounding Osiris, Imseti, Hapy, Duamutef and Qebhsenuf, it is those who are at the back of the foreleg - hps in the text- (the Big Dipper) in the northern sky’ (Mathieu.2008: 12, trad. the author).

But this time, Bernard Mathieu adds, *‘in contrast to what happened in the southern sky’*, Osiris remains invisible in the stellar configuration that he governs. Empty, his place is surrounded by the stars known as the Four Sons of Horus (Fig. 13.9).



left, southern sky, Orion; right, northern sky, Ursus Major (after B.Mathieu, 2008,14).

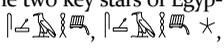
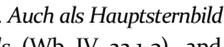
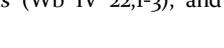
Fig. 13.9. Map of the Egyptian skies

This same presence of the Sons of Horus in the two stellar configurations³⁶⁵ that nourish the theological speculations of the Egyptian priests, that of Orion in the southern sky, that of Ursus Major in the northern one, is well established and documented:

'As almost always in the Pyramid Texts, the deities or divine corporations have celestial counterparts in the form of stars or constellations. Seth is no exception to the rule. The historiographical distribution Horus Nekhen - South vs. Seth Noubet - North, (...) most likely led to celestial correspondence, as evidenced in particular the § 2158A-b: 'to sit on the throne *khénédou* of Ra, after repelling Horus of the South of the Sky, after repelling Seth of the North of the Sky'. With the development and dissemination of the osirian theology, Osiris resumed in his account these astronomical manifestations where Seth of the northern sky was so confused with the astronomical manifestation of the northern Horus (the Elder), namely the constellation Ursus Major (the adze *mésekh*ti), while the southern Horus manifested in Orion; this is probably evoked by the Formula 1143 of the Coffin Texts: 'Horus the Elder is in the midst of the stars from the top like (the stars) from below, 'hr smsw hr(y)-jb sb3.w hr(y).w hft hr(y).w' (Mathieu 2010: 152, trad. the author). Seth may also be compared with the later African gods Ogun the Yoruba and Ogoun-ferraille the Haitian. As Bernard Mathieu observes, the flint knife^{PyF}
^{1906d,1927d,1999c} **ds, pr m Stš**, 'born from Seth', perhaps evokes sparks and lightnings which Seth might be responsible, unless it is alluded to a particular type of knife which the blade would be meteoric iron (**bi3**), metal also 'born from Seth' (Mathieu 2010: 152).

The Osirian theology wrapped the oldest (proto-)Egyptian culture, integrated and reorganized all its elements according to the ideological necessities of the royal elites; it redefined particularly like an antagonistic pair Horus of Nekhen and Seth of Noubet, and changed the celestial adze into Seth's Shoulder, **hps**, hitherto without astronomic correspondent in the Pyramid Texts, although it already appears in offering formulas^{PyF42c} **hps n Stš** 'Seth's shoulder' (Mathieu 2010: 152). Indisputably, the myth of Osiris assimilated an older construction where the thought organized into cultural paradigms the phenomena that the eye observed in the sky. This was a dialectic construction based on complementary antagonisms, those of the early protagonists of the foundation of the first states, Horus the Elder of Nekhen and Seth of Noubet, long associated as divine figures of the royalty, notably in the midst of the First Dynasty (cf. the title of a royal spouse, **m3st hr hts hr rmn.t Stš** under Djer (Petrie 1901: pl.XXXVII,96).

13.4.1. The words for star

What were the words of the more and more elaborated thinking of the skies linking them within gods, living and dead? The Egyptian names of the two key stars of Egyptian cosmogony embodying Osiris, Orion and Ursus Major: *, ^{PyF42c} *, **Constellation of Orion, das Sternbild des Orion, bes. Auch als Hauptsternbild des Südhimmels**, and *, **msj.tjw des Nordhimmels** (Wb IV 22,1-3), and

³⁶⁵ EDITOR'S NOTE: To avoid confusion in the reader unfamiliar with palaeoastronomy, it is perhaps useful to point out that Fig. 13.9 does not so much map 'the sky over Egypt' (which is specific in time and place, and needs to take into account latitude of geographic position, and moreover precession and proper motion of the stars involved); of course, locations at the same latitude serially see the same pattern of the heavens within a period of 24 hours. All the Fig. seeks to do is to link, for Ancient Egypt's classical period (3000-1000 BCE) specific theonyms to stars and asterisms.

𓆎𓅓𓏏𓏏, have no equivalent attested by the state of knowledge in modern languages of Northeastern Africa. But we can weave a web of cognates distributed between the names given to the Egyptian stars, as names of tools or body parts, and the names of body parts in modern African languages.

Orion bears the name of the human toe, 𓆎𓅓𓏏𓏏, *s3h(w)* (Wb IV 20). Its writing, 𓆎𓅓𓏏𓏏, uses the hieroglyph of a body-part of animals, the back, F39, *psd* or *imsh*, as determinative, single or combined to that of the star 𓆎𓅓𓏏𓏏*. The name, *s3h*, indisputably belongs to the oldest horizon of the Egyptian language, as shown by the lexicalization of the semantic affix of class of names of the body-parts, *h*. This suffix has lost its semantic relevance and is no longer a frozen classifier in the anatomic Egyptian vocabulary:

‘these postfixes became non-productive very early: possibly in the Old Kingdom or even on ‘Proto-Egyptian’ level (that is before 3000 BC)’ (Takacs 1995b: 101).

So, in Chadic languages, the formation of names of body-parts is similar:

‘Chadic *-k was also a postfix in the names of body parts (Skinner 1977:32)’ (Takacs 1995b: 99).

But the first (proto-) Egyptians counted on fingers and toes, head and back (Anselin 2008b: 869-870).

Similarly, the name of the Big Dipper is written with a hieroglyph of the same series of names of animal body-parts, the haunch of an ox F23. The Egyptians called *Ursus Major* 𓆎𓅓𓏏𓏏, *mshnw*, *Schreibung für* 𓆎𓅓𓏏𓏏, or 𓆎𓅓𓏏𓏏, *mshjtjw*, *das Sternbild des grossen Bären*, the foreleg of an ox replacing the adze in the writing (Wb III 148,1-4). This is also the name of the adze, 𓆎𓅓𓏏𓏏, used in the mortua Chadic and Egyptian share the mode of formation of names of body-parts, it is mostly the Cushitic that offers cognates to the Egyptian.

If we take for phonetic value of the *vulture percnopter* hieroglyph G1 that established by linguists and Egyptologists in the last decades, /3/ = /l/ (Lacau 1972, Hodge 1968, Garba 1996, Takacs1999), the cognates of the Egyptian word *s3h* < [*s-I + h] are: East Cushitic: somali: *suul*, *thumb*, somali-jabarti: *suul*, pl. *suulal*, *big toe*, bayso: *suul*, *finger nail*, *claw*, sidamo: *suul-ičo*, *finger nail*, South Cushitic: **cool*, *finger*. Dahalo: *tsoole*, *nail*, *claw*, and Central Chadic: muturwa: *sělĕk*, *finger nail* (with *-k* postfix) (Takacs 1999: 195 and 2000: 80-81 ; Anselin 2009: 19-20). Hard not to compare the number *four* words in the same languages family: kambatta-qabeena *shool-o*, 4/ *šool-u*, sidama: *shool-e*, haddiya: *soor-o*, gedeco: *shoole*, 4 (in Egyptian, 4, *fdw*, has cognates in Chadic: **f-d*, 4, Cushitic: *afur*, beja: *foola* (cf. Treis 2007: 55-70). ‘Empty, its (Osiris) place is surrounded by the stars named as *Four Children of Horus*’. Thus, the lexicalization of the affix of corporeality *h* /*k*, of the name, *toe(s)*, *s3hw(w)*, of a constellation and a method of counting frozen in the word for *four*, seem to be the cicatrix of an ancient numeral anthropology, ry ritual of the Opening of the Mouth, accompanied by an offering of the foreleg, *hps*, of alive bovine or calf, to the *k3* of the Dead - a ceremonial perhaps documented by the presence of a bovid foreleg in the grave S24 of the predynastic site of Adaïma, in the Upper Egypt, at the Nagada IC-IIIa/B period (Midant-Reynes 2003: 175).

The Egyptian word,  ḥpš, thigh, lower part of leg of humans and animals, forearm, Demotic: šps, foreleg, Coptic: Ⲯⲓⲛⲛⲓ (SB) Ⲯⲓⲛⲛⲓ (B) Ⲯⲓⲛⲛⲓ (A) (Wb V 268-269) has cognates in Nilotic languages: masaai: **en.gubis**, variant: **en.kupes** and nomintaive sg.: **en-kúpés**, accusative pl.: **in-kupesîr**. Front of leg between hip and knee; thigh (humans and cows); pubic area (Payne and Ole-Kotikash 2008); nandi: **kupes**, thigh, pl. **kupes.ua** (Hollis 1909), p^okot: **k^opæes**, pl. **kípesei** (Crazzolara 1978), turkana: **ekipiis**, pl. **ngikipiis**, 'forearm, as well as lower part of leg of humans as well as animals', and the tibia (Otha 1989: 6-8). All these Nilotic-speaking peoples (Nilo-Saharan phylum), Nandi, Maasai, Pokot, are pastoralists. They don't asterize the names of the body-parts³⁶⁶ they share with Ancient Egyptians. But links with characteristic cultural features of the pastoralists of the Northeastern Africa are well attested. The Turkana name **komar** the dissymmetric horns of their cattle (Otha 1989: 81), the Pokot name it **kamar**. The Pokot name *kopees* the thigh of their *kamar* cattle. Today, this cultural feature is known in Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, and among the Ethiopian pastoralists, as the Hamar, a Omotic-speaking people (Honegger *et al.* 2009: 2-13). The dissymmetric deformation of the horns is a vestige of a cultural practice archaeologically attested in very ancient times and a wider area: rock art of the Sahara (Le Quellec 1993: 176), Egyptian iconography (Montet 1954: 45; Frankfort 1951: 227; see Anselin 2011: 46), (rare) funerary deposits of bucranes at Kerma (Dubosson [in Honegger] 2009: 8).

All these basilectal linguistic data outline a horizon of families of languages in contact since more seven or eight milleniums. From an archaeological perspective, this horizon is that of the Saharan and Northeastern African areas of pastoralists cultures.

Widely posterior to the Late Pleistocene horizons to which the upper-Egyptian site of Qurta belongs (Huyge 2009: 109-120), the whole area crystallized under climatic pressure all its cultures into a homeland- starting point of asynchronous population flows, as local as peripheral, towards the today oases and the linear ones of the rivers: the north-eastern Nile where they stopped and sedimented between 4500 and 3500 BC, and the southwestern now fossil ones as the Wanyanga - or the Wadi Howar, where they marked a long stop characterized by the Leiterband pottery ca 3000 BP, before developing news dispersions to more southwestern spaces.

In this scarf of space-time in which a pool of cultures crystallizes, men watch, scrutinize, name the stars. The vocabulary of the look back to the words of the minds. In the first part of this work, presented at the Manchester Conference (2009), we gave some examples of the words of immaterial culture, and outlined its affinities - ultimately the geographical position of Egypt in Africa:

Dyn¹ **b₃** < ***b-1**, *soul* (Wb I 411), Western Chadic: angas-sura: **bel**, *reason, sense, intelligence*, Central Chadic: matakam: ***bl**, *genius, spirit*; Niger-Congo: fulfulde (Cameroon):

³⁶⁶ In Maa (language of the Maasai), "Orion is the enk-áibártani, female initiate, one who has just been circumcised, not a masculine cultural metaphor or hero; and the Big Dipper, Ursa major, is not a Thigh, but the Seven, "1-oisápa. n.pl. (lit: the seven)" (Payne & Ole-Kotikash 2008), and do not bear the name of the ox foreleg. Nueer: baro, the Seven.

**beeluu(ngu)*, vital principle threatened by the soul eaters; Semitic: **bāl*, spirit, mind; Nilo-Saharan: nilotic: nueer: *baḏ*, arbitration (Huffman1929: 6).

^{Pyt} *siz* < **s-r*, understand, know, written with the hieroglyph of the garment, S32, *siz.t*, variant ^{Coffin_Texts} *siz.t* (Wb IV 30, 1-21), Central Chadic: mofu-gudur, merey, muyang: *sər*, know - dugrow: *méesaáraàhay*, to see (E. & E. Brye 2004).

^{Dyn III} *rn*, name, *ꜣꜣn* (SB), *ꜣꜣn* (ALM), *ꜣꜣn* (F), *ꜣꜣn* (P) (Wb II 425,1-428,19), ‘one of the nine souls or elements of the Egyptian personality’, Western nilotic: luo, nwer, shilluk: **rin*, dinka: *rin*, name, reputation; Western Chadic: angas-sura: **rin*, shadow, spirit, as an element of the personality (Anselin 2009a: 8a-11a).

The words of the view belong to the same language families that those of the mind and those used to tell the stars, celestial benchmarks of the pathways of cattle and men, and landmarks of the cycles of water and grass: *wnwn* die Sterne beobachte (Wb I 318,11), with the determinatives of the star and the eye, *ꜣꜣꜣꜣn*, *ꜣꜣꜣꜣn*. Cf. also , *wnw.t*, Stunde, *ꜣꜣꜣꜣn*, ^{NR} *imy wnw.t* Stundenbeobachter (Wb I 316,1-2).

In the chapter The Old Egyptian Consonant System of his first Etymological Dictionary of Egyptian, Gabor Takacs notes, page 275: ‘The Afro-Asiatic and Coptic evidence from the reconstruction of Old Egyptian **n* or **l* is misleading in some cases’. He presents two types of examples of irregularities: ‘1. When AA-PEg **l* > OEg *n* > Copt. *n*. 2. When AA-PEg **n* > OEg. **l* > Copt. *l*’.

So, we can reconstruct the root as: Coptic: *ꜣꜣꜣꜣn* < OEg. **wn* < Proto-Egyptian **w-l*.

Beja: *wāli*, finden, we add bura: *wulà*, look at, watch over: *wul*, to look, *wulha*, to look for, examine (Blench 2009) ; cuvok: *máwálaj*, to see -*má*, verbal morpheme (Ndokobai 2003); Central Chadic: chibak: *wula* ansehen, margi: *wulu*, Eastern Chadic: mokilko: *wullè*, sehen. See also: Western Chadic: angas-sura, goemay: *wen*, to search, to look for (Takacs 2004: 403), and Central Chadic: mofu-gudur: -*wár*, *méwérey*, to see (Barreteau 1984: 254, 424), mafa: *war*, to see, to watch (Barreteau and Le Bleis 1990: 380-379), which, however, Gabor Takacs rejects the comparison with **w-l*: ‘Any connection to Central Chadic **w-r*, to see, bura: *wula*: ansehen, chibak: *wule*, matakam: *war*, to see’ (Takacs 2005b: 409-420).

The Chadic **w-l* and the southern Berber appear closely related: tamasheq: **wl*, *t-iwəl*, watch over, guard, *æ-m-awal*, *imalwalen*, surveillant, garde (T-Ka, K-d); **wl*: *è-wæle* (Gao), to place his hand like a visor to hide the sun and see better (Heath 2006: 245-246). Sooninke (mande): *walla*, to see.

The lexicogenic matrix of the terms of the observation of celestial lights could be one of the words of the shining light: West Chadic: Karekare: *walwal* neat-looking, shiny (Gambo and Karofi 2004: 54). Ancient Egyptian: *wnj* or *wny*, with the determinative of the shining sun, N8: *das Licht* (Wb I 315,4).

13.4.2. The words for earth

After the names of stars, here are some of the soil from which they are observed.

In ancient Egyptian, *m3^c*, is the value assigned to the hieroglyph AAu, pedestal of the gods Min and Ptah, terrace with step, base, stand, 'an indication of the earth in the oldest times' (Takacs 2008: 45), and a homophone of *m3^c* in *m3^c.t*, *truth* (Gardiner 1988: 541), attested since the Second Dynasty under Peribsen (Kahl, *et al.* 2003: 170-171), coptic: **ⲙⲁⲗ** (SBAL), **ⲙⲁⲎ** (F), **ⲙⲁⲓ**, **ⲙⲁⲛ** (B), **ⲙⲁⲟⲩ** (BF), *place* (Vycichl 1983: 103-104). Werner Vycichl rejects the etymology akin the word to prefix place names in arabic, **ma-**, berber, **me-**, hausa, **ma**, bedja: **me-**. 'We do not know the word which is the Egyptian origin of the Coptic word **ⲙⲁ**'. The hypothesis of a semantic extension of the word *m3^c*, *bank, bank of a river or lake* (Wb II 25,2-4) request additional verifications (Vycichl 1983: 104). If we consider that a not attested word, [*m3^c*], in Egyptian is the origin of the Coptic word **ⲙⲁ**, variant **ⲙⲁⲓ**, and may be transliterated logically (3 = 1) ***m-l**, *place*, the cognates are not lacking: Eastern Cushitic: ***mēl**, *place*, rendille: **mēl**, Proto-Somali: ***mēl**, Southern Berber *e-məl*, *be in a place*, Central Chadic: mada: **m̄la**, *area, place* (Takacs 2008: 61).

In Egyptian, the hieroglyph Q3, , *stool of reed matting (or covered by -)*, is attested from Dynasty I, under Djer, with phonetic and semantic values **p(i)**, 'the place' (Wb I 489,5-7). It thus enters into the spelling of names of a royal funerary domain, **ḥwt pī ḥr msn.w** and that of the city of Bouto (Kahl *et al.*, 2002: 147). The use of the hieroglyph for its phonetic value makes possible the spelling of demonstrative pronouns, **pn** etc... or the name of the sky, **pt**, determined by a specific hieroglyph - probably the best example of the saussurian arbitrariness of the sign. The Egyptian word finds many cognates in Chadic. 'If the primary meaning of Eg. **p** was 'base', it may be cognate with SOM.: hamer: **pe**, *earth, soil, ground, WCh. Sura: pèe*, *Grund, Ursache, pero: pépèpè*, *earth*' (Takacs 2001a: 374). Cf. also mofu-gudur: **p'**, *to place, pose, put* (Barreteau 1984: 217).

The Egyptian ^{OK} **iz.t**, , *Ort, Stätte* (Wb I 26,9-14) finds cognates in the same linguistic spectrum: Northern Omotic: zayse: 'ala, *kachama: 'alla*, *dizi: yellu id.*, Southern one: dime F **hilā**, B **yiil/yilé id.**; Eastern Cushitic: somali: **hal**, *Ort, Platz* (Reinisch); Western Chadic: angas, ankwa, sura: **yil**, *karekare: yali*, *ground, earth, land*, tangale: **yelli**, *pero: illiy*, galambu, guruntum: **yil**, *earth* (Stolbova 1987: 240); Berber: mzab: **al**, *place*, zenaga: **al(l)** *place, pays* (Cf. Blazek 2008: 103; Takacs 1999: 78). The semantic value of the word: **iz.t**, as *mound, tumulus, hillock, kôm, tell* (Wb I 26,9-14), matches perfectly with that of the fulfulde: **yoole.de**, pl. **yoole**, **yoola**, *elevation of land above a plain, yooledeewo*, *village located on an elevation* (Noye 1988: 421). On this root, the fulfulde forms **yoole-n-**, *add earth to make a mound*, **yoole-t-**, *form a protrusion* (Seydou 1998: 889).

The Egyptian ^{Pyr} **====**, *t3, earth, land, ground*, Coptic: **ⲧⲱ** (Wb V 212), **ⲧⲱⲓ**, *t3, alluvial land* (Wb V 212-216), *land, soil, country, plain*, written with the hieroglyphs N17 **====** and N33, **⋯⋯**, *sand grains* (rare).

As usually, with /ɜ/ noting /*r > l/, the Egyptian word, *t3* < *t-1*³⁶⁷, has cognates in: Eastern Cushitic: yaaku: **tirri**, *earth*, Southern Cushitic: ***teri**, *dust*, iraqw: **teeri**, *dust*; Omotic: ***tu:r-**: Northern Omotic: dizoid ***tu:r-** *id.*, bench: **tor**, *down*, Southern Omotic: karo: **tore**, *earth*, dime: **tiri**, *dust*, nao: **туру**, *soil*, hamer: **tore**, *country*; Western Chadic: dera: **turo**, karekare: **tara**, *farm, fields* (Blažek 2008: 103 § 22.2). After consultation of the works of Gérard Phillipson, we can add: chagga: **-téri**, *soil*, gekoyo: **te:ri**, meru: **té:ri**, ngiryama (swahili): **ntere** - et arusa: **en-terit**, *dust* (Phillipson 1987: 247), bantu and nilotic domains bordering the iraqw: **te:ri**

Vaclav Blazek proposes to the Egyptian, ^{Py}š; *sand*, $\overline{\text{𓆎}} \text{𓆏} \text{𓆑}$, š; *i*, *sand*, ^{med}šy, *be granular*, Coptic: **ϣω** (SB), **ϣωρω** (A), (Wb IV 419-420; Takacs 1999: 382), many Northern Omotic cognates: gonga: ***ša(:)w-/šaww-** > mocha: **šaawo** *id.*, **šawwe** *land*, bworo: **šawa** (*Fuss*)*boden*, kafa: **šawo**, **šowo** *land* [Lamberti] – and Southern one: dime: **šayy/Sáayi** [Fleming]; some Western Chadic cognates: bauchi: boghom: **šey**, zeem: **aši**, *sand* [Shimizu], and Central Chadic one: kotoko: affade: **se**, *id.* [Sölken] (Blazek 2008: 125 §71.5.; see Takacs 1999: 205). We can complete with an additional Omotic set: shako: **So'i**, koyre: **sise**, mao: **Sao**.

Gabor Takacs focuses brilliantly on another root for *sand*, ***ns** ~ ***nys** and compares the Egyptian **nš**, *Sandkorn*; *Sand boden*= *sandy soil* (Wb II 338, 6), *Sandkorn* = *grain of sand* (Hannig 1995: 434) with the southern 'Semitic: Yemeni Arabic: **nays**, *sand*, **niss**, (*fine*) *sand*, *fine pebble*, *earth*, **ma-nāyīs** (pl.), **mi-nyās** (sg.), *edge of field beside a stream of water, where there is plenty of sand* [Piamenta 1990-1, 502], Arabic of Hadramaut: **nays** ~ **nays-at** ~ **nās-at**, *sand* [Landberg 1901,719], Dathina: **nays** ~ **nās**, *sand* [GD 2837] and with the East Cushitic: Afar: **nīs** (m), *sand*, the Western Chadic: South Bauchi: ***nyas-**, *sand*, ***ni-nyas-** [after V.Orel & O.Stolbova (1992, 188; HSED #1858)] whose he quotes the comparison with the Egyptian: Burma: **ninesi**, Kir: **nineesi**, Laar: **neneesi**, Mangas: **nyenyesi**, Soor, Zangwal: **nyenyas**, Tala **nyenyas**, Polchi: **nyaaž-ən** (pl.), Dikshi: **nyezə/nyas**, Bandas: **nyeezə**, Zakshi: **nyaaš-əŋ**, Zaar of Lusa: **nyaac(ts)**, and the Central Chadic: Zime-Dari: **nyēš** (**sl**) *sand* ... (Takacs 2011: 151 §951). Difficult to suspect a natufian epicentre to this isogloss. Is that a lexical cicatrix of progressive desertification lived by of northeastern African pastoralists in a more ancient phase of expansion, long before the later clustering of their various cultures in a Saharan area from which will emerge the predynastic Egyptian ones? The root is missing from Berber languages, and the Buli (a Chadic language) uses two words, **ši** (from the Bantu languages?) and **nyes**.

In Bantu, the more common root is: ***ci**, *earth* (Meeussen 1980), and in Semitic: ***ap̄ar**, *dust, soil, earth, ground*, hebrew: **āpār**, *dust, soil, loose earth*, aramic: **ap̄ar**, *dust, earth*, ougaritic: **ṗr**, *dust, earth, ground, steppe*, arabic: **afar**, *dust, surface of the earth*, akkadian: **ep̄ru**, **ep̄eru**, *earth, soil, dust, ore, territory* (Bloch [in:] Agmon 2010: 56).

³⁶⁷ Takacs rejects as "unacceptable" the equivalence with the Semitic: arab: ta', black, established by Albright (Takacs 1999: 228). Albright does not take into account the value set by Lacau for /ɜ/, and gives a syllabic value to the sign, ta. After noting the value of Coptic: to (S), To (B), country, Vycichl adds: "The duel of the name appears in the middle-babylonian transcription ni-ib-ta-a-wa", for nb t3.w.y (Vycichl 1983: 209).

It is not without interest for our purpose to note that the two words by which the ancient Egyptians named earthquakes are precisely **Gb** and t_3 (Ndigi 1996: 59): **mmmn Gb** under-Taharqa (Parker, Leclant, Goyon *no date*, 58, note 37) and **mmmn t_3** , *quake of earth* (Faulkner 1966: 109) - in the *Tale of the Shipwrecked*, written under the XI^e/XII^e Dynasty: t_3 hr **mmmn**, *the earth quaked* (Le Guilloux 2005: 28-29, line 60). Few convincing etymons for ^A, **mmmn**, *to move, quake, shake* (Wb V 267,14). The Coptic: **ⲙⲙⲙⲙⲛⲉⲛ** suggests a root ***m-l**, documented in the Eastern Cushitic: ***mill-**, **mill-o**, *movement, milli, to shake*, rather than ***m-n** (South Bauchi ***man**, *to come*, angas-sura: **m^waan**, *to move*, **mwen**, *to go* quoted by Gabor Takacs (Takacs 2008: 293).

The Egyptian ^{OK} **gb**, *the gb-goose*, the goose *anser albifrons*, written phonetically, is determined by the hieroglyph G38. This biliteral logogram of the goose is used for its phonetic value in ^B, **Gb**, *the earth-god*, completely phonetised variant, ^B, **Gbb** (Gardiner 1958: 471). The cognates of the Egyptian word: ^{Py}**Gbb** 'Erdgott' (Wb V 164) are many, as established by Vaclav Blazek: Northern Omotic: bworo: **gaawa**, dizi: **gob** *id.*, Beja: **gwab**, *broad open flat ground with little or no vegetation*, Eastern Cushitic: dullay: ***gabb-e**, *earth*, dahalo: **guḅa**, *plains*, Semitic: akkadian: **gabibu**, *kind of grazing land*, arabic: **ḡabūb** *soil, field, crumbly earth*. (see Blazek 2008: 103 § 22.5).

Oum Ndigi observes that the goose-hieroglyph is a homophone of earth-god, **Gbgb**, *the God who flies* of the Coffin Texts, **p²(i) m Gbgb**, and provides a relevant cognate to the Egyptian name of the goose in a bantu language: Basaa: **kobakoba**, *the guinea fowl*, homophonous of that of the divine figure of the Elder, **Kòbákòbá** (Ndigi 1996: 59).

13.4.3...and for stone

The word ^{Dyn III} ^C, **inr**, *Stein* (Wb I 97) is attested in the lists of the Third Dynasty (Kahl *et al.* 2002: 44) and belongs to the the earliest horizons of the Egyptian language. In its classic forms, **jnr** [***jnl-*****jlr**] (1999), it illustrates the law of Belova (Takacs 1999: 395), and the Coptic: **ⲛⲣⲉ**, **ⲛⲣ**, one of the two 'irregular' values for /n/: ***l** > coptic **n**, and ***n** > coptic **l**. In this case, the Coptic **-nr** and the Egyptian /n/ are reflexes of ***l** (Takacs 1999: 275). So, we can reconstruct the root as **inr** < ***l-r**. Absent from the Berber area, the Egyptian word has many cognates in Western Chadic: angas: **lēr**, *smooth rock on which grain is dried*, sura: **laar**, *rock, stone*, mupun: **lāar**, *boulder, stone*, and in Southern Omotic: dime: **lāalo**, *stone*, Northern Omotic: dizi: **lyálu**, benesho: **ñel**, maji: **ñalu**, nao: **niolu** (Takacs 1999: 395). And in Eastern Cushitic: qabena/kambatta: **laalu-ta**, *stone* (Treis 2007: 55-70 ; Anselin 2007: 74).

See also Vaclav Blazek: Northern Omotic: bench: **nyal**, dizi: **nal-u**, nayi: **nyel-u** *id.*, Southern Omotic: dime: **la:le**, *id.*; Western Chadic: sura: **lar**, *Fels, Stein*, angas: **ler**, *flat rock*, mupun: **lāar**, *boulder, stone* (...) - he adds Semitic: akkadian: **narū**, *stone monument, boundary stone* (Blazek 2008: 129 §82.3). Olga Stolbova reconstructs the root for the Chadic, ***lar**, *stone*, and the Omotic, ***lal** (Stolbova 2005)³⁶⁸.

³⁶⁸ ***lyal**, ***nyal** (Takacs 2006: 85-86). Central Chadic has another root: á[...]**lgwa**, *stone, mountain*

Because of their semantic field, two Central Chadic forms of the root project a strange light on ancient times we have already evoked, the mbuko, *lar*, *space between rocks* (Gravina, Nezelek and Tchallalao 2003: 28), and the merey, baka, *muyang: lar*, *cave* (Gravina, Doumok and Boydell 2003: 26 ; Smith 2003). Like possible names of places of worship in the languages then spoken by the pastoralists? In mushere, the *lar-dyel*, (a) *wide flat stone used for judging cases or settling disputes*, institutes the rock as the place of judgment - a well known co-occurrence of the rock art of the Gilf Kebir, as those of the *Cave of the Swimmers* and the *Swallower of Souls* of the Wadi Sora (see Le Quellec 2005: 65-74 ; Anselin 2007: 59-98).

We finally identified the word in a Dinka, Nilotic language of the Nilo-Saharan phylum, the Dinka, where it takes the meaning of iron, a mineral iron, a stone, not a sideral one: *alēl*, pl. *aleel*, *ironstone, haematite, red stone, ironstone land* (cf. Blench 2005: 12).

In comparison, the most common Semitic root for rock mountain, is **zūr*, hebrew: *šūr*, *rock, boulder, mountain*, aramic: *šūr*, *rock, mountain*, ougaritic: *gr*, *rock, mountain*, south-arabic: *ʔrn*, *mountain*, akkadian (Old Babylonian): *šūr(um)*, *cliff, rock* (Bloch [in:] Agmon 2010: 74).

Vaclav Blazek establishes another etymological set, outlining a transphylic basilect and suggesting original acculturations: Omotic: **b-l*: Southern Omotic, ari: *balá*, *ubamer: balá, mountain*; Southern Berber: Ahaggar: *a-blal*, pl. *i-blal-an*, *stone* that Prasse derives from a proto-Berber form: **ā-bilāl*, pl. **ī-bilāl-an* (Prasse, 1974, 183) ; Semitic: akkadian: *billu*, *ein Stein* (Blazek 2008: 117, §55.7). Due to the regular use of /n/ Egyptian to write /l/, it would be tempting to compare the two series with the Egyptian *bnbn*, *stone* (Wb I 459). However, Gabor Takacs noted that the comparison of the Berber **a-blal*, (round) *stone*, tawlemet: *ta-bla-t*, *bullet (firearms)*, and the Western Chadic **bol*, *ball* (Takacs 2001: 228), with the Egyptian *bnn*, *bead, kleine Perle* (Wb I 460,9-10) is semantically more convincing. The origin of the Egyptian *bn*, *Art Stein* (Wb I 457, 1) seems debatable to him: he evokes the comparison with the akkadian *billu*, *ein Stein*, and the root **abn*, *stone*, with a question mark. Gabor Takacs also rejects any connection with ^{MK}  *bnwt*, *millstone*,  *bnw*, Müller (Wb I 458, 15), Chadic: **bōna*, *grinding stone* (Takacs 2001: 219-220). At last he rejects as 'semantically unconvincing', the comparison of *bnbn* with the Semitic **bny*, *to build*. The Semitic root is triconsonantal: **abn*, *stone*, hebrew: *eben*, aramic: *abna*, ougaritic: *abn*, arabic: *abān*, *stone (in toponyms)*, south-arabic: *bn*, akkadian: *abnu*, *stone* (Bloch [in:] Agmon 2010: 56), and the Egyptian and the Omotic are formed on a biconsonantal one corresponding to a earlier horizon of language.

The name of the cultual stone, absent from the predynastic vocabulary established by Jochem Kahl (Kahl: 2002-2004), is attested by the Pyramid Texts in a complete phonetic spelling, ^{PYR}  *bnbn*, *stone*. At the New Kingdom, its spelling has many variants, ST  *b3b3* < **blbl*, ^{XIX}  *brbr* (Wb I 459,5-6). The name of the pyramidion

(Barreteau 1984: 77). In Cuvok dəsá is a rock. Cf. Egyptian: *ds*, flint of the sacrificial knife. Cf. Wolof: *dees*, to sharpen.

has similar variants,   , **bnbn.t**, var.  , **brbr**, *die Spitze einer Pyramide ode reines Obeliske* (Wb I 459,13-14). All this argue for an original form, ***blbl-brbr**, where the *n*-hieroglyph writes the phoneme /r/ or /l/. In this view, the Omotic: ubamer: **bálá** *mountain*, **bolla**, *up*, ari: **balá**, goffa: **boll-a**, *sky*, the ahaggar (tamažigh): **a-blal**, and a nilosaharan language, the maaban, **byǵi**, *rock* (Blench 2006b: 16), may be favorably compared, including the semantic level (idea of high stone, monumental or natural, sharp or erected, well attested by the more ancient archaeological data of the eastern Sahara).

In 1996, during the Barcelona Conference *Africa antiga. L'antic Egipte, una civilització africana*, Oum Ndigi proposed solid points of comparison to the rock art in Libya of Messak presented by Jean-Loïc Le Quellec, attracting the attention of Jean Leclant, recently passed away³⁶⁹:

'... following the presentation on the apparatus of the rock art so called 'Opened Women' in the Messak Settafet, the French prehistorian and anthropologist Jean-Loïc Le Quellec, for who the original myth basaa of mankind known as Ngok Lituba, 'the drilled Roche ' could be a distant reference, I noted the methodological interest and emphasized the significance of this highly heuristic rapprochement' (Ndigi 2011: 3).

A decade later, after patiently following and developing this direction of research (Ndigi 2002 ; Ndigi 2006), *the last but not the least*, Oum Ndigi connected the holy place of the Basaa, its Bâti name (a language of the cluster basaa), and the **bnbn-stone** of Heliopolis.

'These are attestations relating to the items of cave and stone:

	<i>Mbougue</i>	<i>Kelleng</i>	<i>Nyambat</i>	<i>Ndog bikim</i>
Cave	mbénbén	mbénbén	ntan	ngok
Stone	mbole	mbole	mbole	ngok

It clearly appears that two of the four dialects of the Bâti designate the cave by a identical term, mbénbén. It was a great surprise to see the remarkable resemblance of this term with the name of the holy stone of Heliopolis in Egypt, bnbn' (Ndigi and Djoke 2007: 49-54).

The holy place Bâti, **Ngok lituba** in Basaa, is a cave. But like **lar** in the Chadic languages, merey, baka and muyang in the northern Cameroon, the Basaa and the Bâti **ngok** denotes both the rock and the cave, **lituba**, *drilled*. We can not therefore rule out the comparison! If any were needed, the most common name of the stone in the dialects of the Bâti, **mbole**, is comparable to the Omotic set, **bálá**, to the Central Chadic, bura: **pála**, *stone*, the Western Chadic, zaar: **pâ:l**, *stone* (Caron 2003) and to a Bantu set of the languages of the Great Lakes region: urunyoro, urutoro, uruhima: **i-bare**, linyari: **li-bara**, rugungu: **e-bali**, *stone*, urukaragwe: **i-wale**, kivamba: **i-vale**, kerebe: **i-bale**, also

³⁶⁹ "To support my argument, I mentioned the symbolic figure of the Egyptian human-headed bird, ba ânkh (coptic, bai wnkh) which coincides with the characteristic and revealing name of the nightingale in the Basaa language: mut baongi, lit. person (mut) of the being (ba) vital (ongi). To my great surprise, Jean Leclant had come up to me to say how impressed he was by my argument and my comparing, and exhorted me to publish an article on the question" (Ndigi 2011: 3).

attested in luganda: **balebale**, next to another Bantu root that is usual in kirundi and kinyarwanda, **brè**³⁷⁰.

But, if **ġemben** / **mbénbén**, seems to be a distinct root, it does not name just the cave in Bâti, but also the rock on which to climb, so a high rock. Indeed, a '*Bâti Sagesse told by Mbombok Njée Bileck Massanik (87 years)*' edited by J.C Mbogol in 2005 provides the attestation:

ŋ-ki néŋri o-á a ni-ġemben ni n-lómri / [ŋki néŋri wá à niġembèn ni níómri]

I-go you climb on holy stone = I will make you climb on the holy stone (sacred) (Mbogol 2005: 92).

We can see, things are perfectly complex. In all cases we consider, we are dealing with a biconsonantal root, ***b-l**, Egyptian: **b_{nb}n**, var. **blbl**, **brbr**, Omotic: ***bala**, Berber: ahaggar: **-blal**, Bantu: **bale**, **balebale**, from ***bààdé**³⁷¹.

Viewed exclusively in linguistic terms, the reflexes of this truly ancient basilectal and transphylic root appear scattered throughout the vocabularies of a wide web of African cultures, and could be interpreted in terms of *areal parallel*. Whether it be Southern Berber, Omotic, Cushitic, Chadic or Bantu (as basaa and bàti) languages, the purely linguistic notion of areal parallel presents the failure to evacuate the interculturality that any borrowing implies. In terms of cultural anthropology, we deal with shared (now frozen?) features needing peculiar studies. None of the directions outlined in our inventory can not be dismissed. But viewed together, like the rock art and the myths of the matricial cave, they take us back to a point of departure that was in the same time a crystallized moment of dynamic processes producing a conducive context to changes: the space-time of the History of a large Eastern Sahara, *largo sensu* ca 6500-3500 BC, that is to say the millennia of rock art then the art of stone. The words **Bnbn** and **inr** could have survived in Egyptian due to the cultural practices in cultural places of the Valley as echo already ancient of earliest Saharan ceremonial places, from the Gilf Kebir to Nabta Playa - times prior to times, whose vestiges could be identified in some Chadic languages: **lar dyel**, *flat rock of justice* (baka), **lar**, *cave* (muyang). Ultimately, a culture takes shape that embodies its Gods in its major stars,

³⁷⁰ Cf. Sir Harry H. Johnstone 1919, 842 pages. The Bantu provides: brè var. grè, mányà, stone, tádè, stone, iron-stone, and bààdé, stone - from the northern Great Lakes area to the southern Zones F (langi, nyamwezi, ilamba (Tanzanie), J (luganda, nande etc..), S (shona, sotho, tswana, ngoni, xhosa etc..) (Bantu Lexical Reconstructions 3). Assuming that the /l/ basaa < *d bantu, the serie is rooted in eastern areas, in the vicinity of the northeastern Africa under its Horn, and suggests to study further a correspondence of the Egyptian /l/ (noté n ou A) with the /l/ reflex of *d bantu. See the series: Egyptian: b₃, ram/ fulfulde: baalu('gu), sheep, ghadames (Berber): ta-bali, kabalay (Chadic): bâl, goat, bantu: *bodi, goat, kuba: mboli; Egyptian: b₃.t, grain/lozi: ma-bele, bantu: *bèdé, grain (millet, sorghum); Egyptian: bi₃ < *bir, well / bantu: *bida, pit (Anselin 2008: 14-16; Boesten 2004: 16-29; Meeussen 1980).

³⁷¹ The triconsonantal Semitic root: *bny, from *b-n, needs to be studied so as to ascertain its possible links with the African root.

Orion, Ursus Major, Sirius, and sometimes forms their names on those of the body-parts. They belong to a deposit of the words of the earth in the Nile valley, *š'i*, *i3.t*, *t3*, *nš*, *m3*, *p*, sometimes divinized as **Gb**, all words that still resound in the sands and the savannahs of the Sahara and the Horn, and so the cultural features that the words convey. As Jean-Loïc LeQuellec wrote, the stones, which can be animated, have not finished speaking.

So, for advancing in research, new tools of space imagery are required for new detections of archaeological remains, beneath the ground or visible but not yet discovered (Parcak, S. H. 2009 ; Gadré 2011a: 7-28). 'Their use, in close combination with Geographic Information Systems, led to targeted ground excavations which, for most, confirmed what space imagery had revealed, i.e., the discovery of thousands of new vestiges all around the world: monuments, cities, roads, irrigation canals, etc.' (Gadré 2011b: 4a; see also Gadré 2011a:7-28). It favors new excavations, that give new megalithic data and linked ones, as burials of men and/or bulls. It favors also an exhaustive mapping of monumental stones: a map of the *isofacts*, and its comparison with the *isoglosses* of their naming in all the cultures which attest circles or alignments of megaliths. And, in combination with archaeoastronomy, a mapping of their orientations.

13.4.4. Some words of cattle, milk, leather..

Therefore, this brief overview would be incomplete without a few words of pastoralist cultures still alive in the last century ... So, even a few decades ago, the Nyimang, a Nilotic-speaking people, erected a stone to their dead ruler. If he was a *kwai-gosu*, one of these bull-men of whom Ana I. Navajas Jimenez gave a well-documented picture at the Conference of Manchester in 2009 (Navajas Jiménez 2011: 30-42), the Nyimang crowned his burial mound with a stone called bull, **gosu** (Kronenberg 1959: 201-202).

A lexical constellation peculiar to the pastoralist cultures is taking shape in parallel to the cultural features and the archaeological data. The Egyptian names, *hps*, *is.t*, *dhr*, of the foreleg of bovinds, the milk, the animal skin and its work (peltings, tanning, etc...) draw a map of Chadice, Cushitic, Omotic, and Nilo-saharan isoglosses (cf. Anselin 2011: 43-53).

The etymological *comparandum*, due to Gabor Takacs, is enlightening: Egyptian: ^{PYT} **mr**, *Topf für Milch* (Wb II 105,19), Chadice: masa: *müra*, to milk, gizey: *mür*, lait, Cushitic: proto-Sam: ***māl**, to milk, somali: *māl-ayya*, to milk, *māl*, milk, proto-Boni: ***māl** (Takacs 2008: 403), ^{MK} **mr**, *mrj*, bull (Wb II 106, 8 and 109), **mr wr**, the bull great (Wb II 106,4), Eastern Cushitic: ***mor-a**, ox, and the ma'a, a language with a southern-cushitic lexicon ruled by bantu classifiers: *ki-môle*, pl. *vi-mole*, ox, var.: *ki-more*; Northern Omotic: *mārā*, young bull, janjero: *omora*; Central Chadice: matakam, mafa,cuvok: *maray*, sacrificed bull at the feast of the bull, mofu-gudur: *maray*, fattened bull in the barn - and the Akkadian: *mīru*, young bull (Takacs 2008: 392-394). The word appears to have traveled with oxen and their shepherds to the Wagadu, the soon-inke land: *mere*, humpless bovine - meaning the bovine and the word are prior to the expansion of the Sanga bovid. Cf. also Niger-Congo, Mande: bamana: *mère*, small cow (Bailleuil 1996: 272; Anselin 2012: 70).

The name of the goddess of milk, ^{pyr}𓆎𓅓𓆏𓆎 *is.t* (Faulkner 1966: 7), can also be written with the hieroglyph of scepter *w3s* on a standard. The phonetic value of the hieroglyph of the scepter *w3s*, is here *is*. The hieroglyph X1, *t*, complets twice its spelling in the designation of the milk, *ist.t* 𓆎𓅓𓆏𓆎, and 𓆎𓅓𓆏𓆎 (Wb I 27,1-4). The same ancient word of the lists of offerings, *is.t.t*, takes a vase or a cup, for determinative, in the expression (*cup*) of sacred milk, *is.t.t qsr.t* (Faulkner 1966: 324).

The use of the logogram of the *w3s*-scepter in the spelling of a title read *sm is.t*, is attested from the Third Dynasty (Kahl *et al.*, 2002: 9). This emblem is documented at Saqqara like *w3s*-scepter of Seth, and other ancient gods, including *Ig3y nb wh3t rsy.t*, Lord of the Southern Oasis under the Fifth Dynasty.

Seth is also the Lord of the deserts and oases (Arafa 2005: 11-22). The *w3s*-scepter also appears on the potmarks incised on two 'Clayton-rings' of the Eastern Desert (Fig.13.10) found in the region of Dakhlah and dated from the Fourth Dynasty (Kuper, Riemer, Hendrickx, Förster 2003: fig.23)

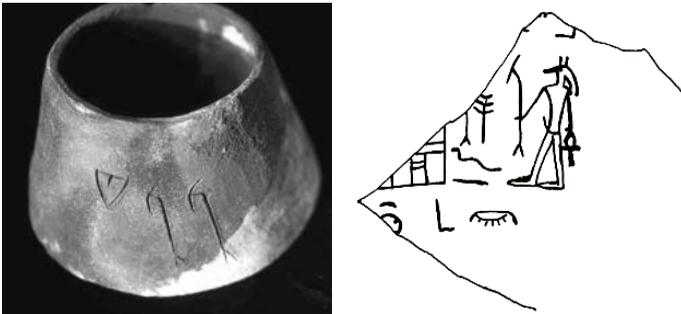


Fig. 13.10. The *w3s* scepter incised on a Clayton-ring, Dakhlah area; and the same *w3s* scepter associated with Seth

The same way, the divine cabin which is the temple of Min, features another emblem erected in front of its façade. This emblem provides its pattern to the hieroglyph O44 𓆎, whose the phonetic value is also *is.t*. In the classical period, the hieroglyph of the *w3s*-scepter enters the spelling of the Egyptian name of Thebes, *w3s.t* (Gardiner 1988: 503). The emblem *w3s*, which seems peculiar to ancient pastoralists cultures, has persisted in the sedentary Egyptian civilization, and is known today in the Ethiopian valley of the Omo, by the name of *shonkor* in Arbore and *woko* in the Hamar languages (Thubauville 2009: 1-2.; Anselin 2011: 43-53).

The Egyptian word, *w3sj*, to be ruined, decay < **rus*, with prothetic *w*- ruled by the law of Belova and /3/ writing /r/, has many African cognates: Western Chadic: **rus*, destroy, hausa: *rúúsá*, thrash, bole: *ruuš*, destroy, ngizim: *rású* (Takacs 1999: 396) to which we

add Niger-Congo West Atlantic items, fulfulde: **ruus-**, *collapse* (Seydou 1998: 578) and wolof: **ruus**, *crumble* (Diouf 2003: 294 ; see Anselin 2009: 8-11).

The Egyptian words of the milk: **Pyri3.t**, *goddess of milk* (WbI 27,1-4), also, **isḡt**, **irḡt**, **irt**, *milk* (WbI 117,1-6), Coptic: **ερωτε**, have Cushitic: ***ore**, *cream*, and Nilo-saharan cognates: Saharan: teda: **yōar**, *to milk*, daza: **yuur**, **yōor**; Western Sudanic: nubian (kenuzi): **er.ti**, *milk*, didinga: **irō**, *milk*, **ko.ro.yi**, *to milk*, nyima: **elo** ; Nilotic: bari: **le**, teso: **akile**, maasai: **kule** (Takacs 1995a: 123-131). The merōitic **yer**, *milk, breasts*, is also linked by Claude Rilly to Nyima and proto-Northeastern Sudanic: ***er**, *milk* (Rilly 2004: 3).

The attestations of the word, **jr-č.t** *milk* (OK, Wb I, 117) < ***īVr** (hence ***īV**), *milk*, cf. **js.t** *milk-goddess* (Pyr., FD 7, Wb I 26, 16-17), **js.t.t**, *milk or cream* (OK, Wb I 27,1; FD 7), **jr.tj**, *milky* (Pyr, Wb I 116,6), **jrj.t** *milk-cow* (XXIII, Wb I 114, 18, FD 28) 'reveal the lexicalization of a semantic affix of liquids, **t** = **č** (Takacs 2000: 101). The word **irḡt** means the milk, human or animal, but also the sap, designated as the milk of the tree, **irtt nht** (Wb I 118, 7). Its spelling, **irḡt**, differs by its determinative, a milk jug, from the writing of the name of a Nubian country, **irḡt** (Wb I 118,1-16) spelled with the hieroglyph of the eye, **ir**, as phonetic complement, and the hieroglyph of the mountains as determinative of the foreign countries - can we consider the Egyptian named this country as 'the Land of Milk'?

A second lexicographic and cultural comparandum concerns the leather work brilliantly investigated by Marwa Helmy: 'Animal skin wraps and garments are believed to have been widely used in the Predynastic period, especially during the Badarian and early Naqada periods, yet they are poorly represented in Predynastic artifact assemblages. This is due in part to the way animal skin is preserved, which leaves little of the artifact's original structure and quality' (Helmy 2011). She examined a hundred artifacts, bags, clothing, aprons, skirts, penis sheaths, sandals, blankets from the cemeteries of Naqada ed-Der and Badari at the Naqada IC-IIB, and tools found in the tombs: rubbers, shell, bone on this sites or on other naqadian ones (stone scrapers). She compared the Egyptian leather work within those of the Gamo and Konso of the Omo area. She observed a relatively limited production, which will provide settings, forms and cultural features to the later sequences of the naqadian Egyptian cultures, but a lower contribution than the cultivation of flax and textiles production to the social and economic dynamics from which the State of the first Horus will soon arise.

A name of the skin is **inn**, with the determinative of animal skin, with that of the braid, *human skin* but also *Leder, leather* (Wb I 96,14-20), demotic: **inn**, *skin*, coptic: **ανου** (Vycichl 1983,12-13). The coptic form supposes an original ***ī-m**, with prosthetic **i-** ruled by the Law of Belova. Werner Vycichl rejects curiously the comparison with the Berber: tashalyit: **ilem**, tamasheq: **élem**, pl. **ilaemawaen**, *skin (human or animal), pelt, hide* (Heath 2006: 106) because of the dialectal discordances (Vycichl 1983: 12-13). But the root is attested in Lybia: Ghadames, Ghat: **iləm**, Egypt: Siwa: **iləm** and in the Ayr: **elām**. Cf. also a Semitic language of Ethiopia, Amharic: **?alim**, *tanned hide used as a cushion* (Militarev 2005: §2593). The Chadic provides

some cognates, if following Aaron Dolgopolsky, or Paul Newman (Newman 1977: 107-119) in their analysis of the *laterals*: Western Chadic: bade: **almən**, *skin*, bokkos, daffobutura, sha, monguna: **lamo'**, *to skin*. Eastern Chadic: birgit, dangaleat: **zámá**, **zama**, *skin*. The bura: **kasim**, *skin*, had lexicalized the affix of corporeality, **k-**. This archaism is shared by the Egyptian for the name of the leather,  **ḏhr**, *Leder* (Wb V 48i) that infixes and lexicalizes the frozen classifier of the names of body-parts, **H**, and is determined by the hieroglyph  of the animal skins. The word, whose plural is **ḏhr.w**, has an irregular **ḏhr** as singular. Worked, the skin loses its affix of corporeality: **ḏhr**, *leather*, **dry**, *to tan*. The names of the worked skin and the tanning: **dry**, *to tan*, **drww**, *tanned skin* (Meeks 1980: 451, 77.5257-58) has many cognates in African languages: Cushitic: somali: **diir ka**, *the skin*, Nilo-saharan: dair (nubian): **ḏor**, *skin*, teda: **dir**, **ḏore**, *tanned skin*, Nilotic: jyeen: **del**, *human skin*, lwo: **deèl**, *skin*, **kwooroginy o ho ki deèl**, *tree used for the tanning*, nueer: **dwál**, *have a skin (for warmth)*; Niger-Congo: tupuri: **ndare**, *leather*, Ubangian: gbaya: **ndàra**, *skin, leather*, ngbaka: **ndálà**, *skin, leather* - Mande: dogon: **dalle**, *to skin* - West-atlantic: sereer: **ḏool n/k**, *skin, leather*, **ḏoolit**, *to skin*, wolof: **dar**, *to be peeled*, **der wi**, *skin, leather*, pulaar: **laral**, plural **lare**, *skin, leather* (cf. Murray 1923; Crazzolaria 1933; Kervan 1933; Ruelland 1974; Monino 1988; Fal 1990; Le Cretois 1973; Owens 1988).

These lexical data are consistent with the leather work archaeological data of the Egyptian badarian times level as explicited by Marwa Helmy, but also with those of the Saharan-Nubian hinterland of the Nile Valley, whose images of the rock art, and objects to which they refer, document a similar universe, as shown by Alessandro Menardi and Andréas Zboray: *leather bags* of the pastoralists of the rock art of the Gebel Uweynat, of the Kushites of the Egyptian fortress of Buhen three millennia ago, and today, of the Teda, *cased skins* of the past rock art of the Gebel Uweynat and those of the modern Erythrean pastoralists, the Saho etc... (Menardi and Zboray 2011: 284, 286, figs.14,19,20)

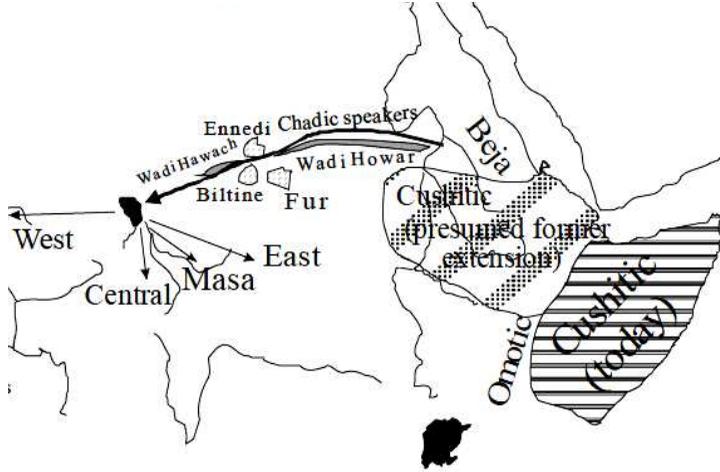
Discussion: by contrast, the Central Chadic has another root for skin: ***bal**. And the proto-Semitic provides two different roots: ***gild-**, *skin, leather*, and: ***mašek**, *skin, hide, leather*. First, hebrew: ***gēled**, *skin*, aramic: **gilda**, *skin, hide*, arabic: **ḡild**, **ḡilid**, **ḡalad**, *skin, leather*, soqotri: **gad**, pl. **ʔegelid**, *skin, leather*, ethiopian: **gald**, *skin, hide*, akkadian: **gildu**, **giladu**, *hide, leather bottle*, hebrew: **mešek**, *leather bag*, aramic: **mašak**, **maška**, **meška**, *idem*, arabic: **mask**, *hide recently removed from a lamb or a kid*, akkadian: **mašku**, *skin* (Bloch [in:] Agmon 2010: 59; 65). The Egyptian language used this second root in the New Kingdom: ^{Dyn XVIII} **msḳ**, *Leder* (Wb II 149,8) and ^{pyr-NK} **msk**, *Leder*, with the determinative of the skin F28 (Wb II 150,3) - the alternate irregular spellings suggest a loanword.

13.5. The Saharan–Nubian area: A view from Egypt

13.5.1. A country name and a generic tree name

Any question implies another. The concordance of lexicographical data paints a picture

of a Saharan-Nubian hinterland from which were made over the millennia, movements of populations of the eastern Sahara; northernmost ones sedimented in then large oases and dropped in slow percolations towards the Nile Valley; much later, southernmost population movements started from the Wadi Howar to roads and corridors leading to the areas long been populated of the Chad, and from the two Niles to the Horn. (Fig.11)



(after Blench 2006).

Fig. 13.11. Map of Chadic, Cushitic and Omotic languages, from the African Horn to Lake Chad

Back, how do the Egyptians of the Old Kingdom see the countries of this vast hinterland? What words they use to name them and to name the roads leading to them?

The question came from a form of archaeological documentation: the rock art. As Fred Wendorf had done about the site of Nabta Playa, Jean-Loïc Le Quellec was the first to propose a new approach to the (inter)connections between the cultures of the Nile valley and those of the Sahara. In particular, he relies on the iconographic data from the Cave of the Swimmers and the Cave of Beasts and those, most recent but archaizing, of religious texts of ancient Egypt in which he identifies re-arranged common sequences (Le Quellec 2005: 67-74). The historical depth of the rock art of the Gilf Kebir and Gebel Uweynat is no inferior in any way than that of Nabta Playa. It is evidenced by the chronology proposed four years later by Kuper and Riemer, who distinguish Gilf Kebir B1 and B2 periods from 6600 to 4400 BC and Gilf Kebir C, marked by pottery, from 4400 to 3500-3000 BC (Kuper and Riemer 2009).



(after Clayton, De Trafford and Borda, 2008, 129-134)

Fig. 13.12-15. Egyptian Middle Kingdom hieroglyphic inscriptions of the Gebel Uweynat

Jean-Loïc Le Quellec reminds that in Egyptian mythology, the God of the necropolis, Anubis, was the 'Lord of the Cave', *nb ꜥrrt*, and the cave, *ꜥrrt*, the place of the dead (Le Quellec 2008: 31). Everywhere the new conveys the ancient: a new word for *cave*, Middle Kingdom *ꜥrrt*, *Höhlung*, *Loch* (Wb IV 62,1-4) covers an archaic pattern of the Egyptian inhumation. In this similar funeral context, '[The] famous swimmers, unique in the Sahara, with their filiform and deformed bodies, the head turned into a series of lines towards devouring beasts evoke the *nmyw* (inert drowned) of the Egyptian mythology and the (aquatic) word of the 'death'. To this question from a today dumb rupestral imagery, as Jean-Loïc Le Quellec writes rightly, 'the answer could only come from the archaeological documentation' (Le Quellec 2010: 69).

The same year, in a memorable presentation to the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres of Paris, in presence of Jean Leclant his Perpetual Secretary, and Nicolas Grimal, Jean Loïc LeQuellec quotes the text (translated by Grimal in 1984) of a figure of execration dating from the Sixth Dynasty, found at the site of Ayn Asil at Balat, the most advanced

point of Egypt on the road to Abu Ballas 'for walking towards the country of Yam, whose inhabitants apparently frequented the Jebel el-Uweynat': 'That [people of] Yam southern nni.w are ^f 372' (Grimal 1984: 116, trad. the author). The localization of the country of Yam side of Gebel Uweynat could match a new discovery: a hieroglyphic inscription of the Middle Kingdom, dated from the reign of Mentuhotep, recorded in the massif of Gebel Uweynat by Mahmoud Morai (Morai 2008: 14-23) and translated by Joseph Clayton, Aloisia De Trafford & Mark Borda in the same year, 2008 (Clayton, De Trafford and Borda 2008: 129-134 ; see also Le Quellec 2009: 24) (Figs 12-15)

The inscription engraved on the wall of rock bears the cartouche of Mentuhotep, Son of Ra, s3 r^e mntwḥtp, and mentions two countries, tḥbt, Tekhebet [tḥbt ḥr ms [...]], and im³, Yam [im³ ḥr ms sn-nṛ]. The inscription presents a Yamite kneeling, holding a recipient, im³ ḥr ms sn-nṛ, 'Yam bringing incense', behind another prostrated Yamite.

The Tekhebite kneels behind an oryx, m³ ḥd. The name of is country is written: , with two determinatives, the hieroglyph of the mountains, that is to say the foreign countries and the hieroglyph of water, which suggests that this is a country watered or irrigated. As noted by Jean-Loïc LeQuellec, the road to Abu Ballas was prolonged until *Gebel Uweynat*, which means *Mountain of the Springs* in Arabic: 'The existence of ongoing relations between people of the Libyan desert and those of the Nile no longer any doubt now, but one of the outstanding questions is whether the *Jebel el-Uweynat* was a sort of terminus, or if the road leading to it was prolonged further west or south-west'.

The country of Yam is already mentioned in texts of the Old Kingdom, 'in the inscription of Uni, in the Decree of Daschour and on the statue of bewitchment of Cairo JE 88 & 46 A, plays a leading role in the activities of the famous head of interpreters', Hirkhouf under the Sixth Dynasty (Yoyotte 1953: 173). Jean Yoyotte specified that its documentation was provided by the inscriptions of the heads of interpreters of Elephantine, Heqa ib, Pepi nakht, Sabni - and Hirkhouf who recognized the road that led , r im³, towards the country of Yam (Yoyotte 1953: 174). The name of Yam is written [[i-m³ -im³ [hieroglyph of im³ tree] - 3 [determinative of the mountains, s.t, that is to say the foreign countries]], not i-3-m. Jean Yoyotte considered that 'the way to this country should be done at random (sic) of desert tracks', and not up the Nile - especially if one considers the text of the third expedition of Hirkhouf: 'I left the Province of [...] by the road to the Oasis'. The nome of the Cow Head (B3.t), Diospolis Parva, was the starting point of the road joining the Kharga Oasis to the Valley. On the road, Hirkhouf met the King of Yam in war against the Tjemehou that he ran 'hit at the western corner of the sky'. 'All this leads us to seek Yam in the Libyan desert'.

³⁷² "The *nniw* constitute a category (..) evoked (..) in the chapters «of the net hunting», and to which the deceased must avoid being assimilated so as not to be captured in the "net" (*isdt*) of the "fishers of *nniw*". Nicolas Grimal observes that the determinative of *nniw* is the drowned man (fonte IFAO, Chassinat 38n = 596b)" (Grimal 1984: 116, 117, note 35). The words: *nny*, be tired, *nnjw*, bed, coptic: *lol*, *nnwt*, weariness, coptic: *nenyot* (Wb II 275,2-8), have cognates in Western Chadic: **nin*, Angas: *nyin*, Eastern Chadic: *ndam*: lany, fatigue (Stolbova 2006), and Nilo-Saharan Nilotic, Dinka: *nin*, *niin*, to sleep, sleeping (Blench et al. 2005)- that is consistent with archaeological and linguistic data.

JeanYoyotte concluded his article by a fruitful perspective of research: ‘ Since prehistoric times, trade routes, prefiguring the route of the famous caravans of Darfur, could drain the central African commodities as far as small oases of Lower Nubia’. If, however, in the absence of data we can use fifty years later, Jean Yoyotte localized the country of Yam nearer the Nile than the Gebel Uweynat, grant him getting us in the right direction!

According to William Cooney who ‘casts serious doubts as to the location of Yam being in the vicinity of the Nile as is currently assumed’ and suggests ‘that a road to this fabled land passed through the Uweinat region’ (Cooney 2011: 218-219), we can consider a more complex identification, founded on a etymological study of the names of trees and countries of a region of various languages families, notably Berber and Saharan.

With respect to the hieroglyphic script, the value of all the inscriptions and their transliteration: , is ‘im3’, not the usual initially less common ‘Yam’. The choice of the hieroglyph M1 of the tree im3, as a phonetic complement, literally repeats the writing spelled out in three unilaterals and bilaterals, i-m3-3, and merits some attention.

Alan Gardiner gives to the hieroglyph M1, , two phonetic values, i3m and im3, based upon graphical variants that use the ideograms U1, , of the sickle, m3, and Aan, , of the pedestal, in writing the name of the tree: Pyl699 , i3m, , im3 so , , and upon the hieroglyph M1 itself,  (Gardiner 1988: 478). Phonetically written, the word, im3 , receives its own ideogram for determinative. It admits no other, the hieroglyph M2 of the foliage is never its determinative (Baum 1988: 184).

With respect to the tree, for Alan Gardiner, the im3 is a ‘unidentified tree’ (Gardiner 1988: 478). For the authors of the *Wörterbuch*, Adolf Erman and Herman Grapow, im3 is perhaps ‘die männliche Dattelpalme’ and they note its sacred character - im3, *heiliger Baum* (WbI 79,10-23). The *Lexikon Ägyptologie* defines it as a jujube tree, *Ziziphus vulgaris*, or *sativa* (see Meeks 1977: 28). Rainer Hannig hesitates between two species: im3 (i3m, imw), *Laubbaum*, a leafy tree: **Maerua crassifolia* and **Ziziphus vulgaris* od. *Ziziphus sativa*) (Hannig 1995: 69). The word is not attested in Coptic.

In his *Encyclopédie religieuse de l'Univers végétal*, Sydney Aufrère opts for the identification of the im3 tree with the *Maerua crassifolia* (Aufrère 1999: 132). Recently, in his *Handbuch der altägyptischen Heilpflanzen*, Renata Germer adopts the same definition: ‘Altägyptischer Name: Baum vermutet in dem Baumnamen im3 eine Bezeichnung für die *Maerua crassifolia*’ (Germer 2008: 290-291; 26).

With respect to the use of the hieroglyph of the tree, firstly, it is attested like determinative as soon as the First Dynasty, that supposes a earlier cohabitation between the tree and the man in the Egyptian culture, which may have crystallized it into a prototype. The historic hinterland of Egypt of the first times, peripheral province of a larger continuum of African areas at the crossroads of two continents, is not far off! Secondly, in the classic times, the use of the im3-hieroglyph as a peculiar species in the writing of the naming of a country may connote the nature of the landscape of this country located in this ancient continuum broken by the desertification.

Nathalie Baum recorded the species of trees from Gebel Uweinat: ‘Some trees rise

further in the gorges of the Gebel Uweynat: *Acacia tortilis* ssp. *raddiana*, *A. ehrenbergiana*, *Salvadora persica*, *Maerua crassifolia*, *Ficus*. The frequency of *Maerua crassifolia*, which is observed especially in rocky areas from 650 to 1850 m, increases markedly from 850 m. while *Ficus salicifolia* is strictly confined to high altitudes. Large stands of *M. crassifolia*, common to Karkur abd el Malek, were yet extended to Gebel Ouwenat in 1961 and no longer exist only in the state relictual at Gebel Arkenu, which owes its name to the plant in the local dialect. It is precisely this species of the family of the Capparacae that seems to coincide best with the tree *im3*' (Baum 1988: 192-193).

The whole massifs mentioned appear to provide the best candidate as the site of the country of Yam. Identified as *maruea crassifolia*, a beautiful size tree of the mountain landscapes, the tree *im3*, now extinct in the massif of Gebel Uweynat, still characterizes the nearby Gebel Arkenu. The place name Gebel Arkenu could be the last refuge of a former toponym particular to a wider area of now extinct pastoralist cultures. It may be the arabized cover of a toponym relic of a larger regional place name: if *gebel* is an Arabic word, *arkeno* designates the *maruea* in Teda³⁷³ (Le Cœur 1955: 270) - a Nilo-Saharan language still spoken by libyan pastoralists in the neighboring region of Kufra.

The land of Yam fits perfectly into the landscape, as peripheral northern part of a network of Saharan and Nubian cultures, and at crossroads of the northern today fossil wadis and oases, and the Wadi Howar area from which start the traditional routes to Darfur and the corridors of Ennedi.

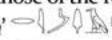
The *im3* tree, the inscriptions published by Grimal, Mourai, Clayton *et al.*, the Gebel Arkenu or *Mountain of Maerua*, practically a vestige of the ancient placenames folded up on a massif out of the way, everything contributes to make the region of Gebel Uweynat a relic province of a country or a confederation of polities known under the generic name of Yam in Egyptian. From one language to another, the country would continue to be designated, at least this only mountain, as the land of trees *im3*, Yam. In the region of the Gilf Kebir and the Gebel Uweynat, *Mountain of Springs*, and *Mountain of the Maerua*, this name of land of the *im3*-trees, could designate as Saharan the country of Yam, both partner and rival of the linear oasis of Egypt, and of the Oases of Dakhla and Kharga, along the roads connecting them.

Therefore, at the semantic level, the etymon of the country of 'Yam' is probably to search logically as a *land of trees*, in this instance the *Maerua*, large trees of the heights. At the lexicographic level, it may be sought among the languages alive in the region, Berber, Nilo-Saharan, or at the terminus of routes followed by the men and their words, northeast, to the Nile, well before 3000 BC, and two millennia later at the southwest end of time and space of the historical range, in the Chadic-speakers areas. But, the Egyptian phytonym *im3* has no berber nor nilo-saharan echo (*cf. teda: arkeno, maerua*). It accepts cognates distributed today in the actually West Chadic languages for expressing the category of the tree.

³⁷³The botanical and linguistic identification of the *arkenu* with the *maerua* by Baum and Le Cœur are concordants. So that of the great rock art specialist Andréas Zboray with the *acacia* is dubious.

The law of Belova ruling the prosthetic *i* of *im3* (Takacs 1999: 394), and the script of /r/ with the hieroglyph G₁ of the percnopter G₁ by the transliteral sign 3 being well attested, it may be formulated that the Egyptian *im3* < *m-r/*mar. The Western Chadic languages provide many valid cognates: ron-fyer: *mêr*, *tree*; angas-sura: *mar, *tree*, in the compound names of trees: *mar-wé*, *jatropha curcas*, an euphorbe; *mar kwak*, unidentified, perhaps a *sheep-tree*, or rather a *goat-tree*: sura: *k^wak, *Ziegenbock* < *k^wak, *he-goat* (Takacs 2004: 186-187) - a semantic equivalent of the *leggal mbaali* of the fulfulde; *mor-biring, litt. *horse-tree*: *biring*, *horse* (Takacs 2004: 16, 242, 250).

There is also evidence to compare *im3* < *m-r and the Western Chadic *mar on the basis of semantics: Egyptian and Chadic use the sign of the word and the word itself as generics of the tree. In Egyptian, the ideogram of the tree, whose the phonetic value is *im3*, determines all the trees, *nbs*, *jujube*, *nht*, *sycamore*. In the Western Chadic languages, the root *mar is never used alone, it enters *only* in the composition of tree names whose second term qualifies the species. *Mar* indicates the category, tree, *wé*, *kwak* and *biring*, the species, usually qualified by a feature of its relation to men and animals (Anselin 2010: 29-42).

Now let us follow, after the words of the tree and the country, those of the road all along their journeys. 'During his first trip, Hirkhouf began his march'  r im3, 'to Yam, for recognizing the route to this country', r w3 w3t r tn - literally *open the route*, that is to say to seek the best ways to open the communications with this (country) (Yoyotte 1953: 174).

The hieroglyph N₃₁ of the path lined with shrubs determines a phonetic script using the hieroglyph V₄, the node, the loop of the lasso. So, the script and the language play together to extend the semantics of the word , *abb.*,  w3.t, *way* (Wb I 246-248): the road is where we come from, , *w3j*, *kommen* (Wb I, 246, 10), with the determinative D₅₄ of the movement, and it literally ties, joins, what is distant, , *w3(y)*, *be far*, *distant* (Gardiner 1988: 559).

The isogloss of the word w3.t draws a kind of map of the expansion of the Pharaonic civilization, the limits of a distant hinterland that the *routes* might the Egyptian missions to reach. Northern Omotic: kaffa: *wore-to*, *way*, mocha: *wira-to*, *street*, shinasha, dangur: *wéera*, *road*. Central Chadic: ankwe: *war*, *way*³⁷⁴ (Takacs 1999: 54). (Fig.16). Serie carried on in the Ubangian languages (niger-congo) by the only subfamily of gbaya: proto-gbaya: *wáar, *path*, *road*, gbaya 'bodoë: *wár*, gbeya: *wáá*, ngabka manza: *wālā*, manza: *wārā* (Anselin 2005: 118).

³⁷⁴ Blažek adds Omotic: gonga *wor-et-, Western Chadic: ankwe: war, road (Stolbova 1987: 231) and Tangale: ware, tala: war, zem: wari to come (Blažek, o. c.).

beginning (Takacs 2005a: 163-187)

The Eastern Cushitic: afar: fir, fōyro, Anfang, Beginn, fir, beginning, fir-uk, first, formerly, in the beginning, fōyr-o, first, head, leader, the Southern Cushitic: qwadza: pal-iko, initiate ; the Western Chadic: *par, to begin, gwandara: pára, to start, ron: *f^har- to begin, daffo-butura: fur-ay, tsagu: pâr, to begin, and the Central Chadic: daba: pâl, to precede (in time), provide the Egyptian the most comprehensive set of cognates (Cf. Takacs 2005a: 165-166). In the beginning, the myth Bambara told, was Fàaro - the genius of the waters.

Regarding the numerals, the number 'one' is characterized by its high heterogeneity in Chadic languages. However, the Central Chadic: the daba: pâl, to precede (in time), the bura: pal, one (Blench 2006a), the higi: pale, the (mandara) wandala: p^hle, the glavda: pala, the gvoko: pal, the gisiga: plola, the makare (kotoko): fal, one, and the Nilo-Saharan, the kanuri: fâl, one, all these items could be acceptable cognates of the Egyptian word, formed on a same lexicogenic matrix that means 'begins, comes first'? And therefore also the *earliest*, the *most 'ancient'*, *παλαιος*, in conclusion, a final word very ... *paleo*-logical..

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Chapter 14

Le dieu égyptien Aker, le dieu romain Janus

et le paradoxe d'une histoire *préhistorique* de l'Afrique subsaharienne

par Pierre Oum Ndigi

14.1. Introduction

L'Afrique subsaharienne, encore appelée l'Afrique noire, en tant que sous-continent, espace géographique et foyer d'une civilisation (Léo Frobenius 1987) ou de plusieurs civilisations (J. Maquet 1962; H. Baumann et D. Westerman 1967; B. Nantet 1999), a fait l'objet, depuis le 19^{ème} siècle, au moins, de plusieurs études réalisées par des auteurs et des penseurs selon des approches très variées. Cependant, la question de son histoire, ainsi que celle des origines de sa civilisation ou de ses civilisations, n'ont pas manqué de se poser. Sagissant plus particulièrement de la civilisation égyptienne, J. Vercoutter 1946 considère que ses origines « ne peuvent se dater », puisque, écrit-il, « elles se confondent avec la prise de possession par l'homme de la vallée du Nil », ce qui signifie qu'elles précèdent de très loin le début de son histoire écrite. D'où l'existence de deux Egyptes:

celle des pharaons et celle de la préhistoire³⁷⁵.

De même, la question des rapports de l'Afrique avec d'autres continents en termes d'influence, dans un sens ou dans l'autre, s'est également toujours posée. L'anthropologue américain Melville J. Herskovits écrivait en 1965 à cet égard: « Quand on prend du recul, on s'aperçoit que l'Afrique a participé d'une manière active au développement de l'ancien monde en un processus d'échanges culturels qui ont commencé bien avant l'occupation européenne. La contribution de l'Afrique à la musique, à l'art narratif, aux arts plastiques et graphiques est universellement reconnue »³⁷⁶. Dans la suite de son propos, cet auteur fit la remarque suivante, qui est très opportune ici: « L'on s'est beaucoup plus attaché à l'importance des apports du reste du monde à l'Afrique qu'à l'influence de l'Afrique sur l'Europe et sur l'Asie ».

En effet, qu'il s'agisse de l'origine de l'agriculture ou des plantes cultivées, du peuplement ou de la métallurgie du fer, de l'écriture ou de l'alphabet, de l'histoire de la pensée humaine ou de l'origine de l'Etat, des sciences ou des techniques, des religions ou de la philosophie, etc., l'apport de l'Afrique a souvent été évalué en termes d'absence. C'est probablement de cette vision que procèdent les déclarations du Président français N. Sarkozy dans son discours de Dakar (27 juillet 2007, à l' Université Cheikh Anta Diop University) selon lesquelles le problème de l'Afrique, c'est qu'elle n'est pas assez entrée dans l'histoire.³⁷⁷

Comment rendre compte de certains faits ou phénomènes de similitude entre l'Afrique et d'autres continents qui seraient caractéristiques des périodes dites préhistoriques et protohistoriques ? C'est l'objet de la présente communication qui s'articule autour des analogies entre deux entités mythologiques, le dieu égyptien *Aker* et le dieu romain *Janus*, dont l'intelligence n'est pas sans suggérer une réflexion sur la pertinence de la distinction entre l'histoire et la préhistoire ainsi que sur une éventuelle continuité transcontinentale entre l'Afrique et l'Europe.

14.2. La préhistoire, un concept paradoxal

Bien des penseurs, des historiens et des philosophes en particulier, se sont interrogés et ont émis des réflexions sur la pertinence épistémologique du concept de préhistoire en rapport avec l'écriture comme facteur discriminant. Rappelons d'abord, avec B. Midant-Reynes, ce que représente cette dernière: « Communément considérée, elle constitue la borne-frontière qui sépare l'Histoire de la préHistoire, marquant un niveau de civilisa-

³⁷⁵ M. Hoffman 1979. L'auteur écrit à la page XIII: «There are two ancient Egypts: the Egypt of the pharaohs and the Egypt of prehistory ».

³⁷⁶ Herskovits, 1965. Cf. Midant-Reynes 2001: 1.

³⁷⁷ NOTE DE L' EDITEUR: M. Sarkozy adoptait simplement, deux siècles plus tard comme si rien n'avait passé entretemps dans le domaine de la réflexion interculturelle et contra-hégémonique, la position eurocentrique de Hegel (1822-1831 / 1992) concernant la position prétendue des Africains hors de l'histoire.

tion qui, selon une approche historique linéaire, va de l'invention de l'outil de pierre taillée, aux hautes technologies des temps modernes, en passant par la poterie, l'agriculture, l'élevage, la roue, la charrue..et les grandes révolutions industrielles du XIXème siècle³⁷⁸ ».

On sait, avec F. Braudel, que « l'histoire, c'est l'homme, toujours l'homme, et ses admirables efforts », en plein accord avec J. Ki-Zerbo pour qui « tout peut être historique pour l'historien avisé ». Et ce dernier de préciser:

« Tout, et pas seulement les dates de batailles ou de traités, les noms des princes et des présidents de républiques. L'homme a rendu historique tout ce qu'il a touché de sa main créatrice: la pierre comme le papier, les tissus comme les métaux, le bois comme les bijoux les plus précieux. Nous ne nions pas, loin de là, la valeur des preuves écrites. Mais par nécessité et par conviction, nous rejetons la conception étroite et dépassée de l'histoire par les seules preuves écrites, théorie d'après laquelle certaines zones de l'Afrique seraient à peine sorties de la préhistoire. Par définition nous disons que partout où il y a l'homme, il y a invention, il y a changement, il y a une problématique et une dynamique du progrès, donc il y a histoire au sens réel du terme. Nous refusons la théorie qui nie la possibilité d'écrire l'histoire de l'Afrique Noire, celle-ci n'ayant droit qu'à une ethno-histoire.. ».

Après avoir ainsi récusé le concept de préhistoire, Ki-Zerbo propose: « Et s'il fallait à tout prix un mot pour désigner l'histoire des pays ou des périodes sans écrits, au lieu de préhistoire, de proto-histoire ou d'ethno-histoire, il faudrait préférer le mot 'd'histoire sans textes' employé par l'*Encyclopédie de la Pléiade* ³⁷⁹ ».

Mais cette expression est-elle vraiment plus heureuse ? Il y a tout lieu d'en douter, dans la mesure où le mot *texte* n'est pas synonyme d'*écrit*. En effet, lorsqu'on veut souligner l'exactitude d'un propos, en français, on utilise l'adjectif *textuel* ou l'adverbe *textuellement*^w qui dérivent, l'un comme l'autre, du substantif *texte*. Par exemple: « il m'a dit *textuellement*: 'sors d ici' » ne signifie pas qu'il m'a dit *par écrit*: 'sors d ici' ». Le texte est, en effet, un discours, un énoncé ou une expression verbale signifiante. Il peut être écrit, bien entendu, mais ce n'est pas ce qui définit sa nature. On peut, en effet, sans jouer sur les mots, affirmer avec certitude que, de l'histoire entendue comme *enquête* au sens étymologique grec (Hérodote), c'est-à-dire " *recherche, connaissance, relation écrite ou orale*³⁸⁰, à l'histoire comme 'connaissance valide, vraie', ou *connaissance scientifique élaborée du passé humain* ³⁸¹, ou encore, comme connaissance pure de la " *nature de ce qui est* ', de " *l'être*", de la " *réalité*" ou du " *réel intrinsèque*" ³⁸², autrement dit, de l'histoire comme processus cognitif à l'histoire comme réalité indépendante de la conscience et de la connaissance humaines, il en a fallu *deshistoires*, au sens de "querelles", "polémiques", "controverses", sens correspondants à l'une des quatorze acceptions du terme *histoire* retenues par le dictionnaire *Grand Larousse Universel*.

³⁷⁹ Ki-Zerbo 1978: 15.

³⁸⁰ Larousse 1983: VIII, p. 5286.

³⁸¹ Marrou 1954: 32-33.

³⁸² d'Espagnat 1991: 12, 28, 29, 119.

H.-I. Marrou ne se trompe pas lorsqu'il affirme que parler de " *connaissance scientifiquement élaborée du passé* " ne saurait suffire, étant donné que *la notion de science elle-même est ambiguë*³⁸. Et il ne manque pas de rappeler que si l'archéologie elle-même a procédé d'une nouvelle conception du témoignage historique par rapport au témoignage écrit, longtemps resté l'apanage de la vieille philologie, dans la mesure où tout ce qui subsiste du passé humain peut nous en permettre une certaine connaissance et restitution, il y a lieu de reconnaître que " *la préhistoire est déjà de l'histoire au plein sens du terme* " (sic) sous cet aspect que le préhistorien qui étudie les artefacts en s'efforçant, par exemple, de comprendre les techniques matérielles ou spirituelles (magie, religion) et, dans une certaine mesure les sentiments ou les idées de leurs auteurs, fait de l'archéologie qui est une branche de l'histoire³⁸. Ce n'est pas là le moindre des paradoxes du concept de préhistoire. Dès lors, pourquoi continuer à utiliser un terme si impropre ? Telle est la question.

Mais, il est remarquable que le terme préhistoire n'ait aucun équivalent en égyptien ancien et en bantou, ainsi qu'on va le voir par la suite. Pour autant, la conception d'un temps antérieur, soi-disant préhistorique, n'y est pas absente, et il est tout aussi remarquable qu'elle ne soit pas fondée sur l'absence ou la présence de l'écriture. Les Bambara distinguent un « temps primordial » (dit préhistorique, c'est-à-dire « avant la faute ou la révolution ») et un « temps historique » (« après la faute ou la révolution »). De plus, chez ces derniers, le Temps est considéré comme un être et un enfant, l'aîné de quatre autres, tous issus d'un œuf primordial couvé par *Maa Ngala*, le Dieu créateur. Les quatre enfants, appelés Vie et Mort, d'un côté, et Haut et Bas, de l'autre, constituent des couples antithétiques.

Chez les Basaa du Cameroun, c'est par le termekobaou bien *koba ni kwan* que ce temps est évoqué. Il qui signifie « passé, temps anciens, antiquité, autrefois, il y a longtemps », selon le contexte. Nous allons y revenir plus loin, en rapport avec l'égyptien ancien.

Ce Temps est l'équivalent de *Chronos* chez les Grecs et de Geb ou *Koba* chez les Égyptiens anciens et les Basaa du Cameroun.



Source: Oum Ndigi, 1997, Vol. 2, P. 74.

Fig. 14.1. Le dieu Geb ou Koba avec l'oie emblématique sur la tête.

³⁸*Ibid.*, pp.35-36.

En effet, dans le cadre d'un essai comparatif antérieur, *Kobane* nous était d'abord apparu qu'en tant qu'ancêtre mythique très reculé des Basaa³⁸⁴. C'est par la suite que nous lui avons consacré une étude approfondie grâce à certaines données comparatives pertinentes, à la fois philologiques, linguistiques et mythologiques, fournies par l'égyptologie³⁸⁵. En effet, partant d'une transcription caractéristique méconnue du nom du dieu Geb découverte fortuitement dans un article de H. Brugsch à la suite de celui d'E. Lefébure, à savoir, *Gbb3/Kbb3* (Gebba/Kebba), dont la structure consonantique et la vocalisation, tout autant que sa mise en équivalence avec le dieu grec du temps mythologique, *Kronos*, suggèrent un rapprochement intéressant avec l'ancêtre mythologique des Basaa appelé *Koba*, nom homophone de celui d'un oiseau de basse-cour, mais de forme redoublée, à savoir, *Kobakoba*, à l'instar de l'oie de Geb, qui sert aussi à désigner le temps passé et le temps primordial, Kobas'est révélé comme étant un dieu créateur mythologique et une représentationsymbolique du temps, de la durée et de la terre, tant chez les Egyptiens anciens que chez les Basaa du Cameroun.³⁸⁶

Or qui dit temps dit histoire, et qui dit histoire dit passé, à la fois *passé écrit* et *passé non écrit*, relevant de l'archéologie matérielle et immatérielle dans laquelle nous plonge ou nous conduit le terme *Koba* (Geb). D'où la nécessité d'une réflexion sur la redécouverte et les sources de l'histoire de l'Afrique, naguère et longtemps niée. Mais, avant de livrer cette réflexion, rappelons, comme précédemment indiqué, qu'il n'existe, à notre connaissance, aucun terme équivalent à celui de préhistoire en égyptien ancien et en bantou.

14.3. La redécouverte de l'histoire de l'Afrique

C'est une ironie de l'Histoire que l'histoire de l'Afrique, longtemps niée, se soit révélée la plus vieille du monde grâce à l'archéologie et aux nouvelles méthodes de recherche, radiométriques de datation notamment, qui l'accompagnent³⁸⁷.

Si l'archéologie est étymologiquement la " *science des choses anciennes* ", dès lors qu'elle met au jour, classe et organise tout ce que le passé a laissé comme vestige humain sur le sol, sous le sol et dans les réalités immatérielles comme la langue, alors l'égyptologie, en tant que connaissance ou étude scientifique de l'Egypte ancienne dont la civilisation " *se trouve aux extrêmes avant- postes de l'histoire de l'humanité* " ³⁸⁸, apparaît comme un atout majeur pour la formation de l'archéologue et de l'historien.

A cet égard, J. Bottéro, soulignant la contribution de l'Egypte ancienne dans le développement de la recherche et des méthodes historiques, écrit:

³⁸⁴ Oum Ndigi 1993.

³⁸⁵ OumNdigi 1996, 1997, 2001.

³⁸⁶ Pour plus de détails, voir Oum Ndigi 1996.

³⁸⁷ Devisse, *Ibid.*

³⁸⁸ Erman et H. Ranke 1952, réimp. 1990, p. 10.

« Ce vieux pays n'était pas entièrement oublié: la Bible et les auteurs classiques, Hérodote en tête, en racontaient assez pour que les historiens en tirassent un minuscule chapitre parmi leur reconstitution de l'Antiquité. Mais le XIXe puis le XXe siècle ont multiplié par centaines de mille ces témoignages, non seulement grâce à un immense butin proprement archéologique, mais aussi et surtout en ajoutant au dossier du passé égyptien une incroyable quantité de documents écrits indigènes. C'est à quoi nous devons de connaître véritablement aujourd'hui au sens propre du mot, l'histoire de l'Égypte ancienne. Et l'on peut dire que l'ère nouvelle de cette historiographie a commencé moins avec la publication de la célèbre Description de l'Égypte (1809), premier bilan de la première exploration archéologique sérieuse du pays par l'expédition française qu'avait emmenée Bonaparte, qu'avec le déchiffrement opéré par J.-F. Champollion du système d'écriture propre aux vieux Égyptiens (1823)³⁸⁹ ».

Seize ans auparavant, l'égyptologue belge J. Capart avait déjà indiqué dans un article célèbre³⁹⁰ que "l'Égyptologie ne fait en règle générale que réclamer sa place dans le concours des recherches historiques" (sic). Et il l'avait fait de manière particulièrement révélatrice en ces termes:

On a dit **que l'histoire était le Janus de la vie moderne, une de ses faces tournées vers le passé, l'autre regardant vers l'avenir**³⁹¹. L'histoire, c'est de l'expérience humaine enregistrée dont le rôle n'est évidemment pas de satisfaire seulement les curiosités mais bien de servir d'enseignement. On m'objectera que la connaissance du passé a rarement empêché les erreurs et les fautes de l'humanité présente. Est-ce une raison suffisante pour en rejeter la signification et l'importance ?³⁹²

Et, comme on va le voir, cette assimilation de l'histoire à la figure mythologique de Janus présente, pour notre propos, le plus grand intérêt.

14.4. Mythologie, linguistique et iconographie dans la représentation de l'histoire

Il existe, en effet, une importante bibliographie relative à Janus considéré tantôt comme " *le plus ancien* "³⁹³, tantôt comme " *l'un des plus anciens* "³⁹⁴ dieux du panthéon romain, représenté avec deux visages opposés, l'un regardant devant lui, l'autre derrière.

³⁸⁹ Bottéro 1961, pp. 159-160.

³⁹⁰ Capart 1945.

³⁹¹ Passage souligné par nous.

³⁹² Capart 1945, p.15.

³⁹³ Mourre 1978: 2404.

³⁹⁴ Grimal 2005: 241- 242.



(a)(gauche) Janus (d'après une monnaie romaine)Source: J.C. Belfiore, Dictionnaire de la mythologie; (b) (droite) Buste romain de Janus, Musée du Vatican grecque et romaine, 2003, p. 357. Source: <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/janus>

Fig. 14.2. Janus

Bien que les mythologues ne soient pas d'accord sur son origine,³⁹⁵ et en dépit de l'affirmation du dictionnaire *Le Petit Robert* selon laquelle sa nature et son origine sont obscures, sa représentation iconographique et le contenu sémantique et symbolique de son nom semblent relativement bien fixés. C'est ce qui ressort de la notice intégrale que propose P. Grimal en guise de synthèse de tous ces aspects³⁹⁶. La voici :

Le nom de *Janus* est assimilable à un nom commun signifiant « passage ». L'irlandais a dérivé de la même racine le mot désignant le " gué " et la porte d'une maison se dit en latin *Janua* ; inutile sans doute de recourir au dieu étrusque Aní pour expliquer le Janus latin. Il est le dieu qui préside à toute espèce de transition d'un état à un autre.

Dans l'espace, d'abord: il veille sur le seuil de la maison, protégeant le passage de l'intérieur à l'extérieur et inversement ; il préside au passage de la paix à la guerre et inversement, c'est-à-dire au départ de l'armée pour l'espace extérieur à la ville et à son retour vers l'espace intérieur de la même ville ; il assure enfin le passage du monde à celui des dieux et, à ce titre, est toujours invoqué au début de toute prière rituelle.

Dans le temps, ensuite: il est le dieu du matin ; on l'honore le premier jour du mois, aux calendes, et il a donné son nom au mois qui devait devenir le premier de l'année, *Januarius* (janvier). Il préside de même au passage à l'histoire comme premier roi légendaire du Latium, ce qui a justifié son assimilation au Chaos des Grecs. Sa représentation iconographique traditionnelle résume ces deux aspects: les deux visages de la statue évoquent le présent comme transition du passé au futur et il est paré des emblèmes du portier, le bâton et la clé.

Dans l'être, enfin: il veille sur la naissance comme passage du néant à la vie. En fait, si la notion de passage reste partout sensible, elle se confond parfois avec celle de commencement, en particulier à l'occasion de la naissance et des calendes ; d'où des inter-

³⁹⁵ P. Grimal (1985) précise que c'est l'une des divinités à qui l'on n'avait trouvé aucun analogue sur l'autre rive de la mer Ionique.

³⁹⁶ Grimal 1985: 1529-1530.

férences avec d'autres divinités, *Junon* entre autres.

Au sujet des interférences avec d'autres divinités, Leda Spiller (traduit de l'italien par Patrick Michel) nous apprend que, dans la religion étrusque, " le gardien de la porte était *Culsu*, déesse des passages et donc aussi du trépas. *Culsans*, divinité mâle bifrons (à double face) comme le latin Janus et comme la divinité mésopotamienne *Usmu*, lui était lié "³⁹⁷. Il signale par ailleurs que l'" on sait également peu de choses du panthéon étrusque, les noms des dieux et des figures mythiques étrusques, italiques et grecs 'étrusquisés' (Uni pour Junon, *Ani* pour Janus, *Artumes* pour Artemis et ainsi de suite) ; mais ils ne nous donnent pas les histoires, les caractères, les fonctions de ces personnages "³⁹⁸.

Revenons à la citation de P. Grimal dont les aspects précis mis en évidence, à savoir, l'iconographie et la valeur symbolique de " passage " ou de " transition d'un état à un autre " du dieu Janus, sur le triple plan de l'espace, du temps et de l'être, le rapprochent singulièrement du dieu égyptien Aker.³⁹⁹

Mais il faut lui ajouter un autre plan, celui de la vie sociale, que M. Merlin a bien relevé:

Pour l'homme romain, il (c'est-à-dire Janus) est le dieu de tout acte qui commence. Il veille au franchissement du seuil de la maison et est invoqué lorsque le futur mari fait franchir à sa nouvelle épouse la porte de sa propre demeure ; il patronne les rites d'initiation des jeunes gens qui atteignent l'âge de porter les armes (...). La priorité accordée à Janus dans les textes liturgiques reflète sa fonction de dieu des commencements et non pas, comme on l'a cru trop longtemps, une primauté perdue au profit de Jupiter(...). C'est pour cela qu'il figure sur la plus ancienne monnaie romaine, l'as de bronze du IV^e siècle avant notre ère.⁴⁰⁰

14.5. Le dieu Janus, le dieu Aker et la valeur heuristique de la documentation égyptienne.

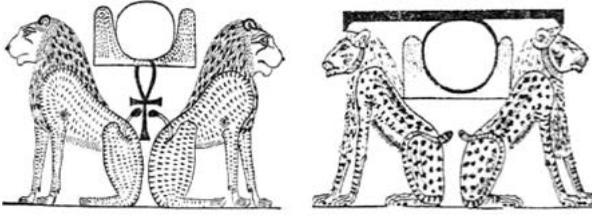
En effet, la représentation iconographique de Janus, à savoir, deux visages regardant à la fois vers le passé et vers l'avenir, rappelle celle, analogue, d'*Aker* consistant en deux lions juxtaposés et se tournant le dos comme on le voit dans les figures ci-dessous.

³⁹⁷ Spiller 1997: 183.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., p.181.

³⁹⁹ Hannig 199: 971.

⁴⁰⁰ Merlin 1985: 828.

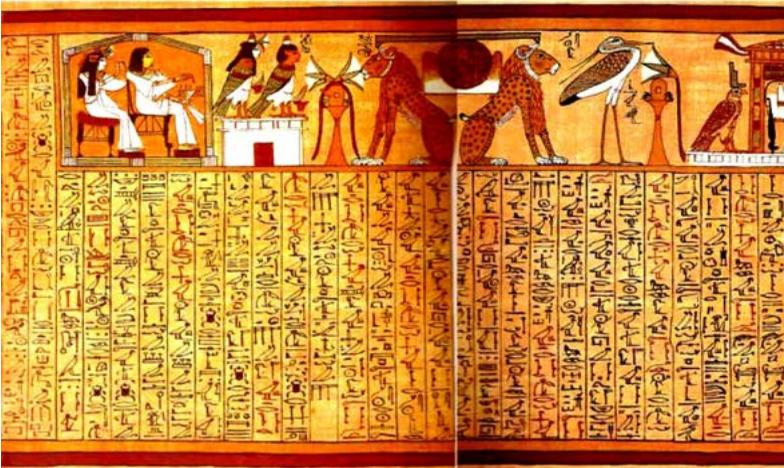


Source: E. Castel Ronda, 1999, p. 199.

Source: I. Schwaller de Lubicz, 1956, p. 121.

Fig. 14.3. (a) Aker, Dieu égyptien représenté par deux lions juxtaposés dos à dos, portant le signe *ankh* / l'horizon et la voûte; (b) Aker, Dieu égyptien représenté par deux lions;

Cette dernière image est déjà attestée aux hautes époques de l'antiquité égyptienne dans les *Textes des Pyramides* et elle se retrouve également aux époques plus récentes dans le *Livre des Morts*. Le nom *Aker*, " esprit ou dieu de la terre ", est écrit tantôt *3kr*, tantôt *ikr*, selon une alternance classique en égyptien, a/i, et sa forme plurielle *akerou/ikerou* désignant la " *totalité des esprits* ", est également attestée.⁴⁰¹



Source: Eva Von Dassow, 1998, Planche 7.

Fig. 14.4. Aker dans le *Livre des Morts* représentant à la fois "hier (*sf*) et "demain (*doua*)

Dans le *Livre de l'Amdouat*, encore appelé *Livre de la salle cachée* qui désigne les de-

⁴⁰¹ Cerny 1976: 17.

meures souterraines où s'effectuent les métamorphoses divines, plus particulièrement celles d'Osiris, on trouve notamment un ovale servant de réceptacle à l'être à venir qui est flanqué de deux protomes de lion, évocation d' *Aker*, en tant qu'entité qui gouverne les profondeurs de la terre. Le Livre des cavernes (début de l'époque ramesside) fait état, pour sa part, de deux dieux de la terre, Geb (Koba) et *Aker*, qui interviennent dans les transformations du dieu en devenir. Le dieu *Aker* y apparaît sous la forme d'un sphinx à double protomes. Enfin, dans le *Livre de la terre* ou *Livre d'Aker* (Tombe de Ramsès VI), *Aker* est évoqué d'abord par un double protome de lion et, par la suite, sous forme d'un double sphinx.

La scène de la Cinquième Heure représentée dans la tombe de Thoutmosis III (tombe 34 de la Vallée des Rois) montre bien qu'il s'agit d'un seul et même être (Dieu) qui se manifeste, dans ses transformations ou son périple, sous la forme du double sphinx ou *Aker*, l'un appelé, "hier", et l'autre, "demain", comme l'atteste le Chapitre XVII du *Livre des Morts*.

En effet, un passage du texte hiéroglyphique, expliquant les scènes d'une vignette où apparaît l'image des deux lions sur les dos desquels repose celle de l'horizon (*akhet*) dit textuellement: " Je suis hier (et) je connais demain " (ink *sf rhkwi dw3w*). Ce passage est suivi d'une glose identifiant Osiris à hier et Rê à demain: 'Quant à hier, c'est Osiris, quant à demain, c'est Rê " (*ir sfwsir pw ir dw3w r'pw*). Pour G. Kolpaktchy⁴⁰², ce même passage qu'il traduit " Je suis l'Hier, et je connais le Demain " (sic), signifie " Je suis l'intégrale vivante de toutes les potentialités du passé et toutes les potentialités de l'avenir sont contenues également en moi ".



Source: Book of Caverns, Third division, scene 7.

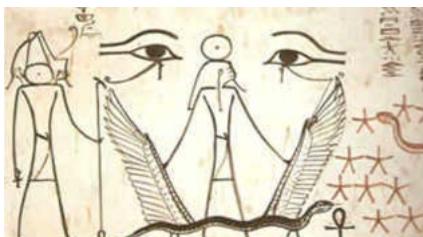
Fig. 14-5. *Aker*, sous forme d'un sphinx à double protomes ou double sphinx, Tombe de Thoutmosis III, N° 34, Vallée des Rois.

⁴⁰² Kolpaktchy 1967: 84-85.



Source: I. Franco, 2004, p. 268.

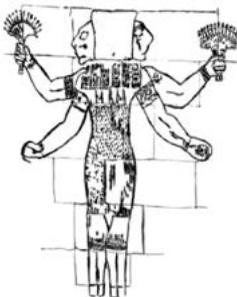
Fig. 14.6. Aker comme double sphinx.



Tombe de Thoutmosis III, N°34, Vallée des Rois. Source: Ph. Conrad, 1987, p. 178.

Fig. 14.7. Le pharaon à double visage de type Janus portant les deux couronnes de la Haute Egypte à gauche et la Basse Egypte à droite

Il y a lieu de convoquer ici, pour étendre la comparaison, le dieu-lion *Apedemak* de la Nubie méroïtique, représenté avec deux têtes de lions opposés et quatre bras sur un seul corps humain, dans le temple d'Amon à Naga, près de Méroé comme l'indique la figure 10 ci-dessous.



Source: B. Davidson, 1966, p. 19.

Fig. 14.8. Le dieu Lion nubien Apedemak dans le temple de Naga, près de Méroé.

L'association dieu, homme et lion est vraiment remarquable.

Qu'il s'agisse de *Janus* ou d'Aker, le regard des deux hommes d'un côté et, de l'autre, celui des deux lions, du double sphinx et du dieu *Apedemak*, tourné à la fois vers le passé (ou l'occident) et vers l'avenir (ou l'orient), symbolise aussi bien l'omniscience⁴⁰³ que les deux gardiens qui ouvrent et ferment l'entrée et la sortie du monde des ténèbres.

En tant que " dieu du matin ", Janus fait penser aussi à l'un des visages du dieu-terre égyptien *Aker*, le lion désigné par le terme *douaou* " demain ", homophone de *douayt* " le matin "⁴⁰⁴. Qu'en est-il du monde bantu ?

14.6. Noms divins, aperceptions et désignations temporelles en égyptien et en bantu

Le nom *aker* est superposable à l'ewondo *okidi/okiri* et au bulu *akit*⁴⁰⁵, au fang *kirie* signifiant à la fois " demain " et " matin ". Le basaa désigne également le " matin ", entre autres, par le terme *dihss*⁴⁰⁶, visiblement proche du radical fang-beti.

R. Ndébi Biya, dans son analyse de la notion de temps et de sa nature en rapport avec l'espace en Afrique, écrit à la suite d'un sous-titre *Préhistoire/Histoire*:

« Les traditions africaines nous parlent du temps comme d'une réalité primordiale. Hampâté Ba dit que de l'œuf primordial couvé par Dieu, Maa Nala, naquirent le Temps, la Vie et la Mort, le Haut et le Bas. Ainsi Temps est le fils aîné de Dieu, alors que Vie et Mort d'un côté, Haut et Bas de l'autre, sont des couples antithétiques. Temps se pose solitaire ne dissimulant point ses prétentions à l'autosuffisance et au dépassement des puînés. Suivant le privilège du droit d'aînesse reconnu en Afrique, aucun doute que Temps jouit de l'ascendant sur ses frères et le cas échéant, joue le rôle du père, c'est-à-dire de Dieu lui-même, parce qu'issu de l'œuf primordial, il existait dès les origines en celui-ci. Si Temps bénéficiait des privilèges du droit d'aînesse qui aujourd'hui permet au premier né de légiférer à la place de son père, Temps avait donc tout réglé d'avance au profit de la totalité, Vie et Mort, Haut et Bas, tout arrivait normalement comme Temps avait prévu. Mais voilà que survient la révolution fomentée par une lointaine descendance de l'œuf primordial. La rébellion fut réprimée par une nouvelle intervention du Temps réorganisant la totalité. D'où deux visages du Temps: le Temps primordial et le Temps après la faute ou la révolution. Ce dernier est le nôtre, c'est l'âge historique où tout devient événement par opposition à l'âge préhistorique où tout était destin, et un bon destin ; c'est le schéma commun de tous les récits évoquant le paradis perdu de l'âge préhistorique, destin heureux aboli par une faute originelle inaugurant l'ère événementielle. La description du démarquage et de la dissociation de deux aspects du temps ainsi que la faute qui en est la cause varient d'une ethnie à l'autre même si le schéma reste identique. Dans toute l'Afrique, des mythes de ce genre pullulent. La Bible, les anciens peuples du Moyen Orient ou d'ailleurs

⁴⁰³ Mourre, Ibid. p. 2404.

⁴⁰⁴ Hannig, Ibid. p. 971.

⁴⁰⁵ Alexandre 1966: 110.

⁴⁰⁶ Njock 2007: 1.

n'ont donc pas le monopole de la croyance à la faute originelle⁴⁰⁷ ».

Nous avons rapporté ce long extrait pour l'intérêt qu'il présente pour la suite de notre propos.

Dans une étude consacrée à l'ethnie *kapsiki* des monts Mandara au Nord-Cameroun, C. Duriez⁴⁰⁸ parle du terme arabe, *zamane*, qui signifie «l'époque», en général, et qu'il faut préciser tout comme en français, selon que l'on parle d'autrefois ou d'aujourd'hui. Après avoir indiqué que le peul aurait emprunté ce terme, Duriez ajoute:

« Les Kapsiki ont pris l'habitude d'appeler zamane, sans préciser davantage, ce que nous pourrions traduire par « le temps présent ». Un temps où la nouveauté côtoie chaque jour la tradition. Subi par les uns, accepté et désiré par les autres, zamane, notre époque, explique tout: de nouvelles façons de vivre, la mentalité des jeunes, les accros faits à la coutume. Et les anciens de hausser les épaules avec un brin de fatalisme: 'c'est le zamane'.

Examinons la tentative malheureuse de J. Mbiti⁴⁰⁹, qui a cru pouvoir distinguer, en swahili, les notions de *zamani* et de *sasa* qu'il traduit respectivement par " préhistoire " et " histoire ", distinction que R. Ndébi Biya et A. Kagameont critiquée, chacun, fort pertinemment. Le premier, mais le dernier en date, estime que la théorie de J. Mbiti est absurde et même contradictoire. Il écrit:

« J. Mbiti appelle le temps préhistorique Zamani et le temps historique sasa. Poussant son étude plus loin, il voit que sasa se réduit au présent immédiat et que le Zamani est tout le temps qui le précède, y compris le temps historique. En fin de compte le Zamani a un passé, un présent et un futur qui n'est pas à confondre avec un futur hypothétique après le sasa, car les Africains l'ignorent. Ceux-ci sont continuellement tendus vers le Zamani, le dos tourné au futur qu'ils ne connaissent pas. C'est la cause de l'échec de la philosophie et des religions africaines qui n'ont pas pu trouver une solution à la vie tragique de l'homme. Cette interprétation est-elle satisfaisante? (...). Nous nous permettons de suspecter la théorie de J. Mbiti. Tout d'abord, nous ne comprenons pas pourquoi et comment une partie de sasa qui n'est plus le présent immédiat se confond avec le zamani auparavant défini comme le temps du mythe. Si un peuple croit à l'irruption de Zamani dans le sasa, cela ne veut pas dire qu'une partie de sasa est devenue Zamani, si c'était le cas, nous reconnaitrions que tout le temps est ou sera Zamani, ce qui rend nulle la distinction entre Zamani et sasa. Il n'y aurait que le temps préhistorique, ce qui est même contradictoire puisqu'il se définit par rapport à l'histoire, à l'événement de la faute originelle. Si le Zamani recouvre le sasa sans distinction, c'est la négation de l'histoire. D'autre part, affirmer que l'Africain ignore le futur semble équivoque. Il est vrai qu'il se tourne vers le Zamani. Le problème est de savoir si pour lui le Zamani est effectivement le passé ausens occidental du terme. S'il ignore le futur, il ne concevra pas non plus le passé à l'occidentale car les deux termes n'ont de réalité que l'un par rapport à l'autre. Il paraîtra bizarre que l'Africain (Ndébi Biya, *op. cit.*, p.58)

Quant au second, et bien avant le premier, il avait déjà formulé une critique tout aussi pertinente à l'encontre de J. Mbiti en ces termes:

Pour exprimer les " temps anciens ", chaque langue dispose d'un terme propre ; ainsi *kale*, autrefois, en kinyanja, *kule* en kitabwa, *ker*a en kinyarwanda-kirundi-giha, etc. Le

⁴⁰⁷ Ndébi Biya 1995: 56-57.

⁴⁰⁸ Duriez 2007.

⁴⁰⁹ Mbiti 1972.

kiswahili et les langues similaires de la cote orientale utilisent également le terme *kale* qui veut dire anciennement, autrefois, jadis, l'antiquité (cf. Sacleux, op. cit., tome I, p. 320). Le kiswahili emploie parallèlement le terme *zamani* que John S. Mbiti a abondamment exploité, mais à tort semble-t-il, puisqu'il n'exprime pas d'une manière ferme et exclusive l'idée du « passé ». Il convient d'en préciser la nature en reprenant ce qu'en dit Ch. Sacleux qui est parfaitement compétent en la matière: "*Zamani*, temps, époque, moment ; usité au pluriel (*zamaniza*), comme au singulier (*zamaniya*), au temps de, du temps de, à l'époque de, aux siècles de, à l'âge de (en parlant d'une période de temps). *Zamani za kale*, aux temps jadis, dans l'ancien temps, dans l'antiquité, autrefois, il y a longtemps ; *zamanizasasa*, aux temps actuels" (op. cit., tome II, pp. 1036-1037). Cette dernière nuance montre que le terme flotte entre le " passé " et le " présent ", sauf s'il est complété par *kale*.⁴¹⁰

Pour notre part, si *zamani* désignait effectivement le temps préhistorique comme l'a soutenu J. Mbiti, le nom *Afrika zamani*, qui désigne un périodique, la revue de l'Association des historiens africains, signifierait, littéralement, « la préhistoire africaine

». Ce serait certainement loin de refléter l'intention de ceux qui ont choisi ce nom eu égard à l'époque de l'histoire visée. On peut en être sûr en découvrant le titre d'un recueil de contes swahili d'un groupe ethnique de Madagascar: Si mimi mwongo watu wa zamani, c'est-à-dire « ce n'est pas moi qui mens, ce sont les gens d'autrefois⁴¹¹ ».

Dès lors, d'après l'usage et le sens de *zamani* ici bien rendus, à savoir, *watu* (les gens) *za zamani* (ceux d'autrefois), l'*Afrika zamani* (nom de la revue de l'Association des historiens africains) devrait signifier « l'Afrique d'autrefois » ou « l'Afrique ancienne⁴¹² ».

D'autre part, l'ambivalence et l'équivalence des dieux Janus et *Aker*, ainsi que celles des désignations temporelles *okidi*, *okiri*⁴¹³, ou *kiri*, sont remarquables et permettent de rendre compte d'un fait linguistique singulier et caractéristique d'un certain nombre de langues bantu où un même terme signifie à la fois " hier " et " demain ", à l'instar du basaa *yani*. A. Kagame et Th. Obenga ont, à cet égard, rapporté chacun, pour sa part, des attestations particulièrement éloquentes.

Bien que le premier ait étudié la question plus de 10 ans avant le second, il convient de présenter d'abord l'analyse de ce dernier. La voici:

En langue bantu, basaa (Cameroun), *yani* signifie à la fois " hier " et " demain ". De même le mbochi (Congo) donne *yana* " hier " et " après -demain ". Le *tonga* semble rejoindre le basaa et le mbochi: *zana*, " demain ", Le *sena* (Zambèze) a: *dzana* " avant -hier ". Un tableau⁴¹⁴ significatif se dégage.

⁴¹⁰ Kagame 1975: 124.

⁴¹¹ Gueunier 1980,

⁴¹² Titre du volume II de l'Histoire Générale de l'Afrique publiée par l'UNESCO, ainsi que d'un ouvrage de l'historien britannique B. Davidson traduit en français aux éditions Maspéro en 1971.

⁴¹³ Lolo Simon 2006: 106 et 111.

⁴¹⁴ Obenga 1973

Langues	Avant-hier	Hier	Demain	Après-demain
Basaa		Yani	Yani	
Mbochi	Ngol'ayana	Yana		Yana
Sena	Dzana			
Subia	Izona dina	Izona	Izona	
Tonga			Zana	
Makua (Mozambique)		M-tsana		
Swahili		Jana, yana		
Kota		Yana	Yana	
Shona		Zwana		
(Ci) Nyanga	Dzana			
Pokomo		Dzana		

Tableau 14.1. Le temps dans plusieurs langues africaines

Obenga a cherché, par ce tableau (qui comporte beaucoup de trous), à mettre en évidence une " homogénéité morphologique et sémantique " (sic) en tant que reflet d'une communauté d'origine des formes concernées. Et, dans la suite du commentaire qui suit ce tableau, Obenga relève, à juste titre, qu' " il y a des langues bantu qui présentent un même signe pour hier et demain et qu'il y a d'autres langues bantu qui ont agi différemment " (sic). Mais, sa présentation de ces langues est quelque peu désordonnée, confuse et incomplète, puisque certaines langues sont citées deux fois (cas du luba-Kasai) avec deux termes différents signifiant à la fois " hier " et " demain ".

Pour d'autres langues comme le basaa, les catégories d' " avant-hier " et d' " après-demain " sont absentes et sont ainsi ignorées dans l'analyse comparée. D'où l'intérêt de l'étude plus rigoureuse, à notre avis, de Kagamé. Ce dernier écrit⁴¹⁵:

On constate deux attitudes différentes concernant les deux jours avant et les deux jours après l' " aujourd'hui ". Six des onze langues sur lesquelles nous avons recueilli des informations complètes emploient le même terme pour rendre hier et demain, et un autre pour exprimer avant-hier et après demain, tandis que les autres disposent de termes spéciaux pour exprimer ces mêmes idées. Le tableau suivant le fera mieux comprendre:

On peut ajouter au premier groupe de langues de ce tableau les données du basaa, de l'ewondo, du fé'efe'e et du nyemboon.

Basaa: *yani* " hier " et " demain ", *noma* " avant-hier " et " après-demain " ;⁴¹⁶

Ewondo: *odzan* " avant-hier " et " après-demain "⁴¹⁷ ; *a sô a odzan* " il est arrivé avant-hier " ; *a yi zu odzan* " il viendra après-demain " ;

⁴¹⁵ Kagamé 1975: 121.

⁴¹⁶ Lemb et De Gastines, Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Tsala, Ibid. p. 516.

Fang: *akiri* "hier" et "demain" (cf. S. Galley, Dictionnaire Fang - Français et Français - Fang suivi d'une grammaire fang, Ed. Henri Messeiller, Neuchatel, 1964, pp. 28, 450, 481.)

Fe'efe'e: *waha, waa* 'hier' et "demain"⁴¹⁸; **ghomala:** *wa* 'hier' et "demain"

Ngemboon: *juo* "hier" et "demain"⁴¹⁹.

Bakossi (akoose): (*t)chan* 'tomorrow, yesterday'

Si **l'histoire**, c'est *Janus, Aker, Yani ou Yana* (PB *Jana)⁴²⁰, *dikelela, ojo, mailo*, etc, c'est à dire, "hier" et "demain" (et même "après - demain"⁴²¹, d'après Obenga cité précédemment), le passé et l'avenir, alors il y a lieu de **reconnaître qu'elle ne saurait se réduire à un seul aspect de son être, lequel est en perpétuel devenir**. Et pourtant, c'est le contraire, semble-t-il, que soutiennent certains historiens et non des moindres, à l'instar de E. Mveng qui déclarait à Lipawing en réponse à une question relative à la signification du temps pour les sociétés africaines: "l'avenir n'est pas du domaine de l'histoire mais de la prophétie ou de la prospective, le passé et le présent constituent le moule dans lequel coule l'histoire"⁴²².

Quoi qu'il en soit, **l'universalité de cette conception de l'histoire comme projection d'un même esprit à la fois dans le passé et dans le futur**, telle que suggérée par l'allusion contenue dans la citation J. Capart, à savoir que l'histoire est le Janus de la vie moderne, peut également être documentée par certaines langues de l'Inde moderne. R. Panikkar et B. Baumer, analysant "l'aperception empirique du temps" (sic) dans ces langues, passent en revue treize mots ou concepts y désignant le temps et apportent les précisions suivantes: De Kâla vient l'adverbe Kâlya qui, dans la plupart des langues indiennes modernes (dérivées du Sanskrit), a pris la forme Kal et signifie soit demain, soit hier, soit les deux à la fois. Ainsi les adverbes de temps: hier et demain, avant-hier et après demain, etc., sont exprimés par le même mot, l'important étant la distance du centre (l'aujourd'hui en soi intemporel), sans donner de préséance à une direction plutôt qu'à une autre⁴²³. Voilà qui rejoint le cas des langues étudiées précédemment.

Mais, revenons à Janus pour signaler que cette figure fait partie de l'imaginaire des Bantu en général et des Basaa du Cameroun en particulier. Une œuvre d'art de ces derniers, connue sous la forme d'une "*statuette double face dite Janus en bois du 19^es*" l'atteste (Fig. 14.9). Elle est conservée au musée de Berlin (*Museum für Völkerkunde, s.v. Basel und Basel Mission*). Nous ignorons le nom basaa de cette statuette ainsi que

⁴¹⁸ Feyou de Happy Père c.s. s.d.: 334; Direction générale des activités Nufi, Dictionnaire Bamilékéfé'efe'e - Français, BP 13, Bafang,,pp. 21, 38.

⁴¹⁹ Anderson 1987: 64, 67.

⁴²⁰ Guthrie 1971, p. II, 156; on trouve aussi *bâdi et *dûbi qui signifient chacun « hier » et « demain », pp. 155 - 156.

⁴²¹ Pourquoi pas « demain » ? C'est assez curieux !

⁴²² Mveng & Lipawing, 1996: 82.

⁴²³ Panikkar & Baumer 1975: 91.

l'usage qui en était fait.



Source: B. Bikoy, 2008, p. 44, photo 7

Fig. 14.9. Statuette basaa double face dite Janus



Fig. 14.10. Double sommet de masque basaa appelé *libak*



Source: B. Bikoy, 2008

Fig. 14.11-Masque de double tête basaa surmonté par deux oiseaux



Fig. 14.12-Masque Janus de société troh (ouest Cameroun).

La figure de Janus semble assez répandue dans l'univers bantou. En effet, P. Harter⁵⁹ en signale un grand nombre d'attestations artistiques, à savoir, des masques, des statues, des sifflets (chez les Baleng), des léopards bicéphales (chez les Baloum), des serpents bicéphales (chez les Bamum), des personnages, des casques, des éléphants, des femmes gravides et des bâtons.



Source: Essomba 1982: 70

Fig. 14.13. Masque polyfacial de danse Bamun, en bois



Fig. 14.14. Masque janiforme d'initiation, Akuwak-Meta, Nord ouest Cameroun

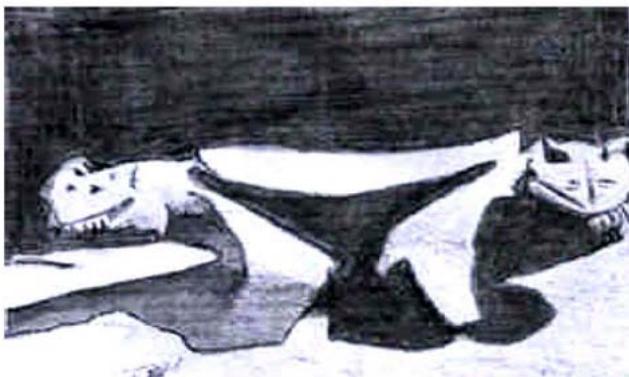
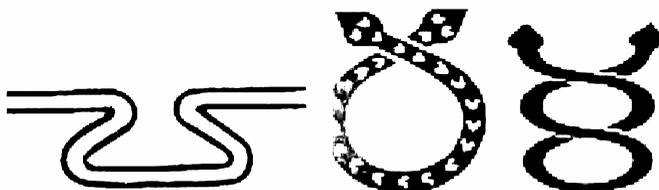
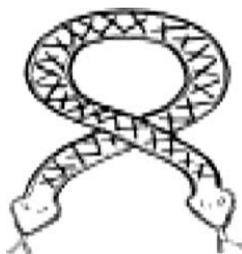


Fig. 14.15. Léopard bicephale de Panguï, Baloum (ouest Cameroun)



Source: E. Mveng, p. 58.

Fig. 14.16. Serpents bicephales bamum



Source: J.M. Essomba et M. Elouga, p. 168.

Fig. 14.17. Serpent bicephale tikar

Il y a des tambours comme ce tam-tam en laiton (sic) de l'ouest Cameroun dont le support de type Janus très caractéristique n'est curieusement pas évoqué dans la notice

de sa présentation.⁴²⁴ La simple mention *ce tam-tam de bronze a été créé comme objet décoratif d'une résidence de chef et n'a qu'un ton est trop vague pour nous renseigner sur la provenance exacte de cette œuvre d'art toute chargée de symboles.*



Source: Guide de l'art camerounais, Musée bénédictin, Mont Fèbé, Yaoundé.

Fig. 14.18. Tam-tam en laiton janiforme

Les *Woyo* ou *Vili* de la République Populaire du Congo connaissent également la figure de Janus sous la forme d'un masque (voir Fig. 14.19).



Source: C. Falgayrettes-Leveau, 2000, p. 267, Fig. 197

Fig. 14.19. Masque Janus Ndunga des Woyo ou Vili de la République du Congo.

⁴²⁴ Edelman 1989: 1.

P. Harter, observe que " d'autres figurines Janus sont formées de deux personnages de sexe différent opposés dos à dos (...) et selon le fonte Youaleu de Batchoungou, elles appartiendraient aux devins dotés de double vue vers le passé et l'avenir "⁴²⁵. D'autre part, " existent également des léopards bicéphales, ou ayant à la fois une tête d'éléphant et de léopard, tous ces Janus étant symboles de continuité, d'éternité et de connaissance universelle, à l'instar du serpent bicéphale "⁴²⁶. S'agissant des masques *troh* à quatre têtes, le même auteur rapporte:

Lorsqu'on interroge sur la signification de ces doubles, triples ou quadruples visages, les informateurs situent toujours leur réponse dans le cadre de la vision poly directionnelle, ou vis-à-vis de l'avenir et du passé, confirmant toujours le pouvoir de connaissance des membres de la société.⁴²⁷ (cf. Falgayrettes - Leveau, 2000, planche 197).

On découvre ainsi, à partir des travaux de P. Harter et à travers les significations données au motif ou au signe Janus des représentations artistiques par des informateurs privilégiés (des *Fon* ou des *Fonte* de l'ouest Cameroun), l'universalité de la signification du signe Janus. Les " serpents bicéphales " représentés sur un tabouret⁶⁵ doivent être considérés comme étant la multiplication d'un seul et même signe ou symbole Janus, à savoir, le serpent à deux têtes, que les Bamum appellent *Nue Pet Tu*. E. Mveng écrit à cet égard:

Le serpent veille à l'entrée de la ville de Fouban ; il orne le trône royal, les masques de danse ; il est parure sur les étoffes rutilantes des notables et des princesses ; on le considère aujourd'hui comme le symbole de la ville de Fouban. C'est que, dans sa signification, le serpent Bamun récapitule l'histoire et la sagesse des habitants du pays. On lui a trouvé des ancêtres égyptiens (Jef-freys, Etudes Camerounaises, mars 1945). En fait, le serpent, partout en Afrique, sur la côte occidentale, au Dahomey, en Nigéria tout comme dans le Centre-Afrique, chez les Ngbandi de l'Oubanghi, est le symbole de la force royale. Bien plus, il est "gémellité" universelle: corps et esprit, monde des vivants et monde des morts, force vitale et forces occultes. On le vénérât à Ouidah ; il est au centre du Vaudou. Objet de crainte ici, de vénération ailleurs, il est partout présent. La légende raconte qu'il donna la victoire au roi Nchare fondateur de la dynastie Bamoun. Depuis ce jour, il est le symbole du peuple et de la royauté de Fouban. Symbole à la fois de paix et de victoire, le signe du serpent à deux têtes peut porter dans l'avenir des significations nouvelles. La Bible ne donne-t-elle pas au serpent le double rôle de Tentateur (Genèse) et le signe du Salut (Exode: serpent d'airain) ?

Ces remarques de Mveng s'apparentent à celles relatives au dieu Janus des Romains (voir supra). De même que ce dernier est considéré comme une "porte", un "passage" et veille sur le seuil de la maison, protégeant le passage de l'intérieur à l'extérieur et inversement, et "préside au passage de la paix à la guerre et inversement", de même le *Nue Pet Tu* des Bamum "veille à l'entrée de la ville de Fouban" et est "symbole de paix et de victoire".

⁴²⁵ Harter, Ibid., p. 268.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 68.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., 309.



Source: T. G. Henry James, 2001, p.96.

Fig. 14.20. Masque funéraire égyptien de Toutankhamon



Fig. 14.21. Cimier de danse bamum, Njitapon. Source: P. Harter, 1986, p. 159.



Source: J. Ndane, 1989, p. 10.

Fig. 14. 22. Les armoiries du royaume bamum: Serpent bicéphale, double cloche et mygale

En effet, on le retrouve le serpent bicéphale dans les scènes de plusieurs tombes royales (Tombe de Ramsès VI, Thoutmosis III), à la seule différence qu'ici, les deux têtes ne se croisent pas, et le serpent apparaît comme un être protéiforme, hypostase du dieu Rê dans sa barque, serpent à deux têtes, serpent tricéphale et ailé, serpent pourvu d'une tête humaine ayant une barbe postiche, d'un côté, et pourvu de trois têtes, de l'autre, et doté de deux ailes entre lesquelles se tient le dieu-faucon Horus. La signification nouvelle, ici, c'est le serpent bicéphale en tant que représentation de l'Être suprême omniscient, omnipotent et omniprésent.

14.7. L'histoire comme Etre-Temps qualifié comme Alpha et Omega

Le passé et l'avenir étant deux modalités ou séquences de l'*Être-Temps*, on peut les comparer au dieu Yahvé des Hébreux ou de la Bible. En effet, dans le Livre d'Isaïe (Ancien Testament) 41:4, on peut lire: " Moi Yahvé qui suis le Premier et serai avec les derniers » et, plus loin, on lit: (44:6) " ainsi parle le roi d'Israël et son rédempteur Yahvé Sabaot. *Je suis le Premier et le Dernier* ". Le Nouveau Testament est encore plus explicite. Dans l'Apocalypse 1: 8, il est écrit: " *C'est moi l'Alpha et l'Omega, dit le Seigneur Dieu, " Il est, Il était, Il vient ", le Maître- de- tout* ". Au chapitre 21 verset 6 du même livre, il est encore écrit: " *Je suis l'Alpha et l'Oméga, le Principe et la Fin* ". Citons, pour terminer, le chapitre 22 verset 13: " *Je suis l'Alpha et l'Oméga, le Premier et le Dernier, le Principe et la Fin* ".

Une stèle funéraire copte montre un édifice renfermant une croix à laquelle sont suspendus l'Alpha et l'Oméga. Ce relief, au remarquable sens esthétique combiné avec originalité et symbolisme, évoque le triomphe de la croix avec ses pouvoirs de rédemption et de résurrection, les lettres Alpha et Oméga, de même que les grappes de raisin et les feuilles de vigne étant considérées comme des symboles du Christ.



Source: Gawdat Gabra, 1996, p. 57: Stèle funéraire: 4302.

Fig. 14.23. L'Alpha et l'Oméga sur une stèle funéraire copte

Une fois de plus, cette auto-désignation de Dieu comme *Alpha* et *Oméga*, est reflétée dans la langue basaa par une expression caractéristique utilisée pour dire adieu, à savoir: **àadd**⁴²⁸. Comme cela est manifeste, *àa* renvoie à Alpha et *àà* à Oméga. Par quel mystère cela s'est-t-il produit et que faut-il penser d'une telle coïncidence ? On mesure au moins à quel point l'Être Suprême s'impose par son omniprésence et innerve, anime et détermine la vie, les conceptions et le langage des Hommes, et à quel point *la langueest*, d'après J. Ki-Zerbo⁴²⁹, la "**maison de l'Être**", ou encore la "**demeure de l'Être**", selon Heidegger⁴³⁰.

Sans s'en rendre compte, lorsque les Hommes se séparent, ils remettent leur avenir à l'Être Suprême appelé *Dieu* par les Français et *àa àà* par les Basaa.

Cette révélation d'un nouveau nom divin chez les Basaa, suggérée par l'analyse comparative pluridisciplinaire, fera l'objet d'une étude ultérieure d'autant plus spéciale que ce nom semble attesté aussi en égyptien ancien⁴³¹.⁴³² Là-dessus, nous ne saurions dissimuler l'immense bonheur que nous avons ressenti en découvrant, *a posteriori*, que notre analyse purement intuitive du terme français *adieu*, de l'espagnol *adios*⁴³³, du catalan *adéu*⁴³⁴ et du portugais *adeus*⁴³⁵, développée depuis des années dans des conférences ou des séminaires (notamment à l'Université de Barcelone en 2004 devant un auditoire constitué d'étudiants doctorants du Pr. Ferran Iniesta et certains enseignants de sa Faculté, ainsi qu'à l'Université Ramon Llull en décembre 2008), allait de pair avec celles des lexicographes. En effet, dans leur *Dictionnaire d'étymologie* (2004), les professeurs d'université J. Dubois, H. Mitterrand et A. Dauzat, écrivent (p. 9): "*adieu*: V. *Dieu*".

Le terme auquel ils renvoient se trouve à la page 223. On peut y lire: " dieu: 842, Serments (deo) ; XI^e s. (deu) ; XII^e s. dieu ; latin *déus*, dieu// **adieu** XII^e s. mort de Garin, interj. ; **on recommandait son interlocuteur à Dieu en prenant congé (...)**".

L'expression anglaise, *goodbye*, n'est pas en reste et n'est pas moins révélatrice. On peut à cet égard lire dans *The Winston Simplified Dictionary*⁴³⁶: '**good-by**: n. and interj. (contr. of **Godbe with ye**), a farewell. Also **good-bye**'.

Mais comment cet Être suprême est-il précisément conçu et désigné par les Bantu et les Égyptiens anciens ? C'est ce que révèlent nos travaux présentés, en 1996, au Colloque

⁴²⁸ Njock 2007: 1.

⁴²⁹ Ki-Zerbo 1979: 10.

⁴³⁰ Auroux & Weil 1991: 360.

⁴³¹ R. Hannig, op. cit., p. 1184: 3^{cc}w Aouu (im Hohlenbuch). Nom divin attesté dans le Livre des Cavernes

⁴³² Hannig, op. cit.: 1184: 3^{cc}w Aouu (im Hohlenbuch). Nom divin attesté dans le Livre des Cavernes.

⁴³³ Grand Dictionnaire... 1998: 21.

⁴³⁴ Serveis Linguistics 2008: 241.

⁴³⁵ Rousé & Cardoso 1922: 9.

⁴³⁶ Brown et al. 1937: 418.

international de Dakar commémorant le Xe anniversaire de la disparition du professeur Cheikh Anta Diop, intitulés " *Dénomination et représentation de l'Être Vital chez les Égyptiens et les Basaa du Cameroun à travers une scène de résurrection du Nouvel Empire et la figure de l'oiseau à tête humaine* " et, en 2004, au IV^e Congrès International d'Études africaines du monde ibérique (Barcelone), intitulés *Égyptologie, langues africaines et expression de l'être en égyptien et en grec* ".

14.8. Conclusion

C'est une curieuse ironie de l'histoire que la nouvelle historiographie africaine dont fait partie l'ère nouvelle de l'historiographie égyptienne dont parlait Bottero ait commencé huit ans avant la déclaration pompeuse de Hegel sur le caractère prétendument ahistorique de l'Afrique. A la lumière de la fécondité de plus en plus avérée de cette science qui, comme l'avait prédit son fondateur, « portera des lumières inespérées sur des époques abandonnées jusqu'ici dans les vagues des périodes fabuleuses à cause du défaut de documents ou de l'incertitude extrême des traditions⁴³⁷ », l'égyptologie participe donc de façon marquante « au renouvellement et à l'approfondissement de la double problématique de l'historiographie et de l'identité culturelle qu'unissent des liens de réciprocité⁴³⁸ », objectif affirmé du projet de l'histoire générale de l'Afrique lancé par l'UNESCO.

Alors que retenir quand on parle de préhistoire ou de protohistoire par opposition à l'histoire à la lumière des développements précédents ? Les propos suivants d'E. Mveng ont de quoi répondre, presque de manière poétique, à cette question: « Dans la littérature grecque, au fond, tous les cycles épiques, celui d'Homère, celui d'Aractinos de Millet, chantent une dimension du destin du peuple grec non pas comme préhistoire, ni même comme protohistoire, mais comme genèse de l'histoire et fondement du passé, du présent et de l'avenir. L'épopée est essentiellement la célébration des Dieux et des héros qui, en fait, sont la projection absolue de l'image du peuple hors de toute actualité. Mais ces formes poétiques se retrouvent chez tous les peuples». ⁴³⁹

L'éclairage apporté par les différentes sources ici rapportées, analysées et comparées permettent, nous semble-t-il, de se rendre compte que, véritablement, « le véhicule privilégié de l'apprentissage et de la transmission de la tradition est la langue, porteuse des 'catégories de pensée' sur lesquelles la tradition se fonde et qui lui permettent de donner sens au monde », et en outre que « ce n'est pas un hasard si la langue, comme la tradition qu'elle informe, est, dans toute société, cela même qui perdure et néanmoins évolue, traverse l'histoire tout en étant à même d'intégrer des apports extérieurs, et ce, plus sûrement et sur

⁴³⁷ Champollion [année...]: iij.

⁴³⁸ Mbow 1980: 12.

⁴³⁹ Mveng & Lipawing 1996: 193.

une durée bien plus longue que la plupart des institutions humaines⁴⁴⁰ ».

Ce n'est sans doute pas sans raison que Robert et Marianne Cornevin écrivaient au sujet de l'importance de ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler la 'préhistoire africaine':

« L'étude de la préhistoire africaine est absolument indispensable à la compréhension de l'histoire. On pourrait envisager une histoire de l'Europe en la faisant débiter avec les premières civilisations méditerranéennes historiques ; c'est impossible pour l'Afrique où des civilisations dites préhistoriques puisque sans écriture ont constamment coexisté avec des civilisations historiques du fait de la massivité du continent et de l'isolement géographique créé par les milieux naturels aussi inhospitaliers que la grande forêt équatoriale ou le désert. Par ailleurs, c'est dans la préhistoire et particulièrement dans la connaissance du Sahara "humide" néolithique que se trouve la clef de la naissance de la civilisation égyptienne et en même temps celle de l'unité culturelle du monde noir.⁴⁴¹

14.9. Bibliographie

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⁴⁴⁰ Babadzan 1985.

⁴⁴¹ Cornevin 1970: 6.

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Chapter 15

On the chronology of Berber in the perspective of Phoenician / Punic loanwords

by Zuzana Malášková & Václav Blažek

In the present study the chronology of the Berber dialect continuum, obtained with help of recalibrated glottochronology (Blažek 2010), is correlated with the distribution of the Phoenician / Punic loanwords in the contemporary Berber languages, mapped especially by Werner Vycichl (1951; 2005).

15. A. Berber forms of Phoenician/Punic origin with the epigraphic or literary documentation of sources

15.1. Berber: **ā-b[i]zālīm* (Prasse 1974, 299 derives the pattern *āBāCid*, pl. *iBāCīDān* < **ā-BāCīD*, pl. **ī-BāCīD-an*; Kossmann 1999, 112, #242; 133, #297)

North: Shilha of Tazerwalt *azālīm* coll. 'Zwiebel / onion' (Stumme 1899, 33, 170; he mentioned the correspondence to the Hebrew plural in *-īm*), Ntifa *azalīm* 'oignon', Illaln *azalim*, Zemmur *tazalimt* (Dray 1998, 342), Central Morocco *azalim* coll. 'oignons' (Taifi

1991, 825), Mzabi *zālim* 'oignon' (Delheure 1984, 251), Wargla *zālim* 'oignon' (Delheure 1987, 390), Jebel Nefusa *zālim*, pl. *izalimen* 'oignon' (Motylinski 1898, 142; Beguinot 1942, 224 knew only the Arabic loan *bšāl* coll. 'cipolla'), Kabyle *ezlim*, pl. *izlimin* (Brosselard apud Newman 1882, 105) = *izlem* 'onion', while *lebšəl* coll., *tibšelt* 'an onion' (Dallet 1982, 54) is apparently borrowed from Arabic; Ghadames *tabazzult* 'ail sauvage' (Lanfry 1973, 35). Vychichl 1951, 199 also added Sened *tibšlim* 'oignon' (Provotelle 1911, 127; he also quotes *abzel* id., apparently of Arabic origin), but later (2005, 3) he preferred to see here a mistaken record of the plural **tibšlin* to the unattested sg. **tibšelt*, representing also the Arabic loan.

East: Augila coll. *bzālīm* 'cipolla / onion', nom. unit. *tebzālīmt*, pl. *tebzālīmīn* (Paradisi 1960, 162).

?South: Awlemmiden *eməzəlli*, pl. *iməzəllitān*, Ayr *əmzəlli*, pl. *əmzəllitān* 'oignon (cultivé)' (Alojaly 1980, 136) < **ē-mazallīH*, pl. **ī-mazallitan* (cf. Prasse 1974, 207), Tamasheq of Mali *tamzəllit*, pl. *timzəll(it)* (Heath), Tamasheq of Udalan *tamzəllit* 'wild onion' vs. *ālbəšəl & əlbəšəl* 'onion' (Sudlow 2009, 145, 302), borrowed from Arabic, similarly as Ahaggar *elbezār*, pl. *elbezāren* 'oignons séchés et salés' (Foucauld III, 994) or Zenaga *elbaçol* 'onion' (Basset 1909, 150) or Figig *lebšəl* coll. 'onion' (Kossmann 1997, 400).

Neo-Punic *bšl* 'onions' (K 123) - Hebrew *bəšāl*, pl./coll. *b'sālīm* 'onion', Jewish Aramaic *bušlā*, Syriac *bešlā*, Arabic *bašal*, Sabaic *bšl*, Soqotri *bišle*, Mehri *bešəlōt*, cf. also Akkadian *bisru & bišru* 'leek'; Arabic > Geez *bašal & bošal*, Tigre *bäsäl* 'onion, garlic' (Leslau 1938, 93; 1987, III; DRS 77; HAL 147; CDA 46).

Vychichl 1951, 199; 2005, 3.

15.2. Berber: **ā-gādīr*, pl. **ī-gūdār* (Prasse 1974, 299; Kossmann 1999, 139, #306; DRB 734-35)

North: Shilha *agadir*, pl. *igudar & igidar* 'fortified granary, storage, enclosure wall' (Jordan), Tazerwalt *agadir*, pl. *igudār* 'Kastell, Schloss, befestigte Stadt/fort, chateau, fortified town' (Stumme 1899, 158), Sus *agadir* 'fortin, maison fortifiée' (Destaing), Ntifa *agadir*, pl. *igudar* 'mur; mur épais bâti en pierres sèches soutenant les terres des pentes déclives des collines; court et épais pilier en pisé (au bord du puits)' (Dray 1998, 328), Central Morocco *agadir* 'mur, muraille, rempart, enceinte, talus' (Taifi 1991, 147); Kabyle *agadir*, pl. *igudar* 'inaccessible steep crag / talus; terrain en forte déclivité; escarpement; monticule' (Dallet 1982, 251), cf. *agadir* 'fortification' (Newman 1882, 87); Ghadames *uğadir* 'bench-like extension inside on the garden wall for its support / banquette (élargissement à la base du mur de clôture du jardin, à l'intérieur, pour l'étaier)' (Lanfry 1973, 109).

East: Siwa *gādīr*, pl. *iğudār* 'wall from lumps of earth / mur, cloison de terre' (Laoust 1931, 264), Sokna *žadīr*, pl. *ižudār* 'muro' (Sarnelli 1924-25, 21), Foqaha *žādīr*, pl. *žūdār* 'muro' (Paradisi 1963, 115).

South: Ahaggar *ağādīr*, pl. *iğūdār* 'mur' (Foucauld I, 400), Ghat *adağīr*, pl. *iduğār* 'mur' (Nehli 1909, 180), Awlemmiden *agadir*, pl. *igudar*, Ayr *ağédīr* 'clôture en banco, ciment;

mur; cimetière’.

West: Zenaga *agədri* ‘sol, parquet’ (Nicolas 1953, 304), besides *tigidith* & *tigid’ith* ‘wall’ (Basset 1909, 146, 232), Kwarandzyey *agqāda* ‘wall’ (Souag 2010, 179).

Neo-Punic *gdr* ‘wall’ (K 137) - Hebrew *gāḏēr* ‘dry-stone wall’, Samaritanian *gēdar*, Ugaritic *gdr* ‘hedge, fence’, Christian-Palestinian Aramaic *gdr* ‘tas de pierre’, Talmudic *g’dērā*, *gāḏērā* ‘clôture séparation’ Nabatean *gdr*, Arabic *ǧadr*, pl. *ǧudr* ‘wall of stones, enclosure’ & *ǧadīrat* ‘walled place, enclosure of stones’, Minean *gdr* ‘wall’; Arabic > Tigrinya *gidar* ‘sorte de hangar pour les animaux’ (DRS 102; DUL 295; HAL 181; Steingass 1988, 222-24).

Vycichl 1951, 199; 2005, 3.

15.3. Berber: imperative **agliH*: perf. **yuglaH* (Prasse 1973, 109; DRB 767-78)

North: Shilha *gl* ‘prendre par la même occasion, faire venir avec’, Central Atlas *gulu* ‘arriver, parvenir à, atteindre’, *gal* ‘arriver à’ (Taifi 1991, 451); Kabyle *glu* ‘aller; prendre par la même occasion’ (Dallet 1982, 254).

South: Ahaggar *əǧlat* ‘to move, to camp on another campground’, *əǧəl* ‘fortziehen / move away / partir’ (Foucauld I, 421), Awlemmiden *ǧlu*, Ayr *eglu* ‘partir; passer; continuer son chemin; disparaître’, Tamasheq of Udalan *əǧəl* ‘to leave, go away’, *gāllāt* ‘to move house or camp’ (Sudlow 2009, 56-57), Tamasheq of Mali *-ǧla-* ‘to go away, depart, leave’ (Heath).

Phoenician *√g-l-y* ‘to move, remove’ (K 140) - Hebrew *gālā* ‘to emigrate, uncover’, Ugaritic *gly* ‘to present oneself, make one’s way, go’, Aramaic-Syriac *gālā* ‘to depart, uncover’, Mandaic *gla* ‘to exile, uncover’, Arabic *ǧalā* ‘to emigrate, make clear, unveil, uncover’, Geez *galaya* ‘to cut away, separate, divide’; Aramaic > Akkadian *galū* ‘to be deported’ (Leslau 1987, 193; DUL 299; DRS 120-21; HAL 191; CDA 88).

Vycichl 1951, 201.

15.4. Berber: **ē-niHir*, pl. **ī-niHir-an* (cf. Prasse 1974, 125-26, §F.I.A.2.b)

North: Mzabi *nnir*, pl. *innarən* ‘lampe (surtout à huile)’ (Delheure 1984, 139), Wargla *nir*, pl. *innarən* ‘petite lampe à huile, à pétrole’, Djerba *ennir*, pl. *ināren* ‘Ōl-Lampe / oil lamp’, Sened *nir* ‘petite lampe à huile’ (Provotelle 1911, 120), Jebel Nefusa *iunir*, pl. *inaren* ‘lampe’ (Motylinski 1898, 137), *iunir* ‘lampe’ (Beguinet), Ghadames *īnir*, pl. *īnirīwen* ‘lampe de terre cuite en une ou deux pièces; la lampe des fêtes, scellée dans le mur du vestibule’ (Lanfry 1973, 245).

East: Sokna *nir*, pl. *ināren* ‘lampado’ (Sarnelli 1924-25, 20), Siwa *inir* ‘lampe’ (Laoust 1931, 251).

South: Ahaggar *enir*, pl. *inīren* ‘lamp / lampe’ (Foucauld III, 1399), Ghat *inir*, pl. *iniren* ‘lampe’ (Nehilil 1909, 172), while Tamasheq of Mali *ənnur/ənnor* ‘light, illumination, bright color’ < Arabic (Heath).

Phoenician *nr* 'lamp, candelbrum' (K 336) - Hebrew *nēr* 'light, small clay lamp filled with oil', Akkadian *nūru(m)* 'light', Eblaite *nu-ru₂-um* /*nūrum*/ 'light', Ugaritic *nr* 'sheen, gleam; lamp', *nrt* 'lantern, lamp', Samaritanian *nor*, pl. *nīrot*, Arabic *nūr* 'light', besides *nīr*, pl. '*anyār* 'luminary', *nayyir* 'shining, bright, light' (DUL 642-43; HAL I, 723; CDA 258; Steingass 1988, 1155, 1158).

Vycichl 1951, 200; 2005, 6.

15.5. Berber: ?**ā-niHās* or ?**ā-naHās* (cf. Prasse 1974, 184, § F.VII.A.3; 227, §F.X.A.3)

North: Shilha of Tazerwalt *anas* 'Kupfer / copper' (Stumme 1899, 165), Ntifa *anas* 'cuivre' (Dray 1998, 142), Tarudant *anas* 'cuivre', Ghadames *unas* 'cuivre' (Basset 1895, 69; he added Gurara *amennas* id. and Awlemmiden *temannas* 'une tasse en cuivre'), while Central Morocco *ennhās* 'cuivre' (Taifi 1991, 483), Jebel Nefusa *nehās* (Motylinski 1898, 129), Siwa *ənnāhās* 'cuivre' (Laoust 1931, 222) or Zenaga *nhas* 'copper' < Arabic (Basset 1909, 100).

East: Sokna *nās* 'rame' = 'copper' (Sarnelli 1924-25, 24).

Phoenician *nḥšt* 'bronze' (K 327) - Hebrew *n^eḥōšet* 'copper, brass', *n^eḥūšā* 'copper, brass, bronze', adj. *nāḥūs* 'brazen', Samaritanian *nāšša* & *nāššət*, Aramaic-Syriac *n^eḥāšā*, Old Canaanite *nuḥūšum*, glossed *erū*; Aramaic > Arabic *nuḥās* 'brass' > Geez *nəḥās/nahās/nāhs* 'copper, brass' (Klein 1987, 411-12; HAL 685-86, 691; Leslau 1987, 395; Steingass 1988, 1105).

Vycichl 1951, 200.

15.6. Berber: ?**ā-yānim*, pl. ?**ī-yūnām* (cf. Prasse 1974, 299, § F.XVIII.A.1b2)

North: Shilha of Tazerwalt sg. & coll. *ayanim*, pl. *iyānimin* 'Rohr' (Stumme 1899, 160), Ntifa *ayanim* 'roseau' (Dray 1998, 432), Central Morocco *ayanim*, pl. *iyanimn* 'roseau, flûte, chalumeau' (Taifi 1991, 196), B. Iznacen, Matmata *yānim*, pl. *iyunām* (Destaing 1914, 312), Figig *yanim*, pl. *iyanimen* 'roseau' (Kossmann 1997, 470), Wargla *yanim*, pl. *iyanimən* 'roseau' (Delheure 1987, 241), Kabyle sg. & coll. *ayanim*, pl. *iyunam* 'Rohr, roseau, canon de fusil, grande flûte de roseau' (Dallet 1982, 619), Sened *yanim*, pl. *iyunam* 'roseau' (Provotelle 1911, 136), Nefusa *yanim*, pl. *iyunam* 'roseau' (Motylinski 1898, 148) = *yānim*, pl. *iyunām* 'canna' (Beguinot 1942, 297); Ghadames *yanim*, pl. *yanimen* 'palm stick without leaves which is used for splitting of the threads on the loom / tige de palme effeuillée servant de séparateur des fils de chaîne', *taynimt*, pl. *taynimən* 'Schreibrohr / writing tube / calame du scribe' (Lanfry 1973, 262).

East: Siwa *təyanəmt*, pl. *tyanīmin* 'roseau' (Laoust 1931, 289).

West: Zenaga *taynāmt*, pl. *tuynāmən* 'natte pour entourer le porte-bagages ou pour fermer la tente' (Taine Cheikh 2008, 243), ?Kwarandzey *ayaləm* 'reed(s)' (Souag p.c., Aug 2011).

Punic *qn* 'reeds' (K 427) - Hebrew *qānā* 'reed, stalk', pl. *qānim*, Samaritanian *qāni*, Ak-

kadian *qanû(m)* 'reed, cane', Eblaite *ga-nu-wu / qan(u)wum/*, Ugaritic *qn*, pl. *qnm* 'cane, windpipe, arrow', Official Aramaic *qn'*, Syriac *qanyô*, Mandaic *qaina*, Arabic *qanâ(n)*, *qanât* (DUL 704; HAL 113; CDA 284).

Vycichl 1951, 200; 2005, 7.

15.7. Berber: imperative **ayriH*: perf. **yuyraH* (Prasse 1973, 109)

North: Shilha of Tazerwalt *yər* 'lesen, rufen / to read, call' (Stumme 1899, 182), Ntifa *yər* 'lire' (Dray 1998, 293), Central Morocco *yər* 'appeler, inviter, convoquer, invoquer, faire appel' (Taifi 1991, 197), B. Iznacen, B. Menacer *ɣr*, Snus *yər*, Zkara, Matmata, B. Salah *yər* 'lire', Figig *yər* 'lire, étudiant' (Kossmann 1997, 471), Wargla *yər* 'appeler, être appelé; lancer un appel, être lancé (appel)' (Delheure 1987, 243), Kabyle *yər* 'lesen, sagen / to read, tell / lire, étudiant' (Dallet 1982, 621), Nefusi of Fassato *áyar* 'leggere, insegnare, studiare', 3 sg. m. perf. *yeyrú* (Beguinet 1942, 239, 269), Ghadames *tayrīt* 'cri de joie' (Lanfry 1973, 263).

East: Siwa *yər* 'lire' (Laoust 1931, 253), Augila *ayār* 'leggere' (Paradisi 1960, 168), Foqaha *áyār* 'leggere' (Paradisi 1963, 112).

South: Ahaggar *əyər* 'to call / appeler' (Foucauld IV, 1761), Ghat *eyer* 'appeler' (Nehli 1909, 128), Awlemmiden, Ayr *áyr* 'appeler, mentionner, nommer, invoquer; lire; étudiant' (Alojaly 1980, 70), Tamasheq of Udalan *áyār & áyr* 'to read, call out' (Sudlow 2009, 75), Tamasheq of Mali *əyər* 'to read, study, go to school; call, summon' (Heath).

West: Zenaga *a'ri* 'appeler; avorter' (Taine Cheikh 2008, 45), Tetseret *arα* 'appeler' (Lux 2011, 522), besides Zenaga *ayri* 'être instruit; étudiant; lire' (Taine Cheikh 2008, 244), Tetseret *yər* 'étudier' (Lux 2011, 516) < Arabic.

Neo-Punic *√q-r-* 'to read' (K 431) - Hebrew *qāra'* 'to call, read, recite, invite', Akkadian *qerú(m)*, Old Assyrian *qarā'u* 'to call, invite', Eblaite *ga-la/ra-um / qarā'um/*, *ga-ru₂-um / qarūm/*, Ugaritic *qr'* 'to call, shout, invite; invoke, conjure up, proclaim', Arabic *qara'a* 'to call, read, recite; present in the name of another; receive instructions', Soqotri *qáre*, Mehri *qarú* 'to read' (Leslau 1938, 385; 1987, 443; DUL 708; HAL 1128; CDA 288; Steingass 1988, 826).

Vycichl 1951, 199; 2005, 7; Rössler 1952, 139, #54: Berber+Semitic; Kossmann 2005, 73-74 excludes a borrowing from Arabic and prefers the Hebrew origin.

15.8. Berber: **yarat* (cf. Prasse 1973, 167)

South: Ahaggar *yārāt* 'to be polite and educated, to be excellent / être comme il faut, être poli, bien élevé et distingué de manières' (Foucauld IV, 1764).

Phoenician *qrt*, pl. *qrht* 'city' (K 433) - Hebrew *qeret* 'city', Ugaritic *qrt*, du. *qr̄tm*, pl. *qr̄ht* 'city', Aramaic *qr̄t'*, Syriac *qr̄tā* (Leslau 1938, 385; DUL 712; HAL 1149).

Vycichl 1951, 200; 2005, 8.

15.9. Berber: *ā-γ[i]ssīm, pl. *ī-γ[i]ssīm-an, coll. *ā-γ[i]ssāīm (Prasse 1974, 199 derived the pattern eBəCDiF from *ē-BaCDiF, pl. *ī-BaCDiF-an or *ī-BuCDāF - it is not the present case, the attested forms better agree with the pattern aBCiD < *ā-BiCiD by Prasse 167; Kossmann 1999, 239, #727 about γs > xs)

North: Central Morocco *ayessim* 'melon vert, concombre' (Taifi 1991, 208), Boussemghoun *ayessim* 'concombre' (A. Basset apud Kossmann 1999, 239), Mzabi *ayessim* 'fruits de certains arbustes' (Delheure 1984, 155), Wargla *taḡəssim* 'concombre, sorte de courgette' (Delheure 1987, 247).

East: Siwa coll. *aḥassim*, pl. *iḥəssīmən*, nom. unit. *taḥəssimt* (Laoust 1931, 217), Sokna coll. *aḥəssim*, pl. *iḥəssīmen*, nom. unit. *taḥəssimt* 'cetriolo' = 'cucumber' (Sarnelli 1924-25, 14), Foqaha *ḥəssim* & *ḥəssim* 'cetriolo' (Paradisi 1963, 104), Augila coll. *kšāim* 'cocomero / Gurken', nom. unit. *teksāimt*, pl. *teksāimîn* (Paradisi 1960, 162).

South: Ahaggar *taḡəssim*, pl. *tiyəssīmîn* 'concombre' (Foucauld IV, 1789); Ghat *taksaimt*, pl. *čikswiam* 'melon encore vert' (Nehlil 1909, 177).

West: Kwarandzeyy *axsim/aysim/ayssim* 'cucumber, small melon' (Souag p.c., Aug 2011).

Note: Interesting are Mzabi *tamisa* 'melon' (Laoust 1931, 217) = *tamisa* 'courge' (Delheure 1984, 123), Sened *tameksa*, pl. *timeksiwin* 'concombre, courge' (Provotelle 1911, 107, but p. 132 *tameqsa*), Ghadames *tameksa*, pl. *təməksiwīn* 'melon' (Lanfry 1973, 167) in perspective of Hebrew *miqšā*, pl. *miqšā'ot* 'field of cucumbers', cf. also Jewish Aramaic *m'qašyā*, Arabic *maqta'* 'field of cucumbers' (HAL 629).

Punic *qš' 'cucumber', reconstructed after the gloss of Dioscurides κισσου μεζρα = Apuleius *cissu mezra* (K 435) - Post-Biblical Hebrew *qiššū'ā*, pl. *qiššū'im* 'musk melon', Samaritanian *qāšuwwəm*, Akkadian *qiššū(m)*, pl. *qiššāte* 'cucumber, melon, gourd', Aramaic *qattayyā*, Syriac *qattūtā*, pl. *qattayyā*, Arabic *quttā'* & *qittā'*, Geez *q'asāy* & *q'asyā*, Amhara *q'asa* (Leslau 1987, 447; HAL 115; Klein 1987, 597; CDA 289).

Vycichl 1951 200; 2005, 9.

15.10. Berber: *ā-sāyīd, pl. *ī-sāyīd-an (cf. Prasse 1974, 299; § F.XVIII.A.1b1)

North: Ghadames *ašašid*, pl. *šašiden* 'almond/amandier, amande'; the palatalization of the expected *γ also appears in *tašardemt* 'scorpion' (Lanfry 1973, 38, 42).

?West: Zenaga *tāyššād* 'arbre *Balanites aegyptiaca*... dont les fruits *tūgga'n* s'appellent dattes du désert...' (Taine-Cheikh 2008, 592: *v̄y-š-ḡ*; the loss of velar is regular, cf. *tāyšb̄aT* 'fait de grandir' vs. *əkkušbih* 'être grand') = *taišad* 'sorte de noyer' (Basset 1909, 148, 254) = *tāišād*, pl. *tiššəd'ən* 'Balanites aegyptiaca', cf. Hassaniya *tāišta* id. (Nicolas 1953, 378).

Phoenician *šqdm* pl. 'almonds' (K 479) - Hebrew *šāqēd* 'almond', Akkadian *šiqdu(m)*, *šuqdu*, *siqdu*, Neo-Assyrian *duqdu*, Ugaritic *ṯqd*, Jewish Aramaic *šiqdā*, Syriac *š'gedtā*, pl. *šeqdē*, Mandaic *šiqda*, Geez *sagd* 'almond tree, nut tree' (HAL 1638; DUL 927-28; Leslau

1987, 491).

Vycichl 2005, 10.

15.11. Berber: **ā-zātīm*, pl. **ī-zūtām* (Prasse 1974, 299)

South: Ghat *azāčim* 'huile' (Nehliil 1909, 168) = *azatim* id. (A. Basset apud Prasse 1969, 70, #418), Ahaggar *ahâtīm*, pl. *ihûtâm* 'olive', *tehâtimt*, pl. *tihûtam* 'olivier' (Foucauld II, 679-680), while Tamasheq of Udalan *āzzāyt*, of Mali *əzzāyt* 'olive' (Sudlow) are borrowed from Arabic *az-zayt* id., similarly as Mzabi *əzzitunat* 'olivier, olive' (Delheure 1984, 255 did not indicate the Arabic source) etc.

Phoenician *zt* 'olive' (K 174) - Hebrew *zayit*, pl. *zētīm* 'olive, olive tree', Ugaritic *zt*, pl. *ztm* 'olive, olive tree, olive grove', Official Aramaic *zyt*, Syriac *zaytā*, Mandaic *zaita*; Aramaic > Arabic *zayt* 'olive oil' > Soqotri *zeyt* id., Geez *zayt* 'olive, olive tree, olive oil' (Leslau 1938, 152; 1987, 647; DUL 1001; DRS 728; HAL 268-69).

Vycichl 1951, 200; 2005, 11-12.

15. B. Berber forms of probable Phoenician/Punic origin without the direct epigraphic documentation of sources, but with evidence in other Canaanite languages

15.12. Berber: **ā-gūsīm* (cf. Prasse 1974, 278)

North: Kabyle *agusim* 'écorce de racine de noyer utilisée par les femmes pour l'entretien des dents et des gencives ou comme produit de beauté' (Dallet 1982, 279), *tagusimt* 'noix', East Kabyle *agusim* 'noix, noyer', *tagusimt* 'une noix, un noyer' (DRB 906).

Hebrew ^ע*gōz*, pl. ^ע*gōzīm* 'walnut, nut tree', Jewish Aramaic ^ע*gōzā*, ^א*amgōzā*, West Syriac *gawzō*, Arabic *ǧawz*, Geez *gawz* (DRS 106; HAL 10; Dolgopolsky 1999, 133).

Vycichl 1951, 199; 2005, 2.

15.13. Berber: **ā-galzīm*, pl. **ī-gulzām* (Prasse 1974, 199; DRB 792-93; Kossmann 1999, 158, #408; 169, #465; 170, #470: **agālzīm*)

North: Shilha of Tazerwalt *agelzim*, pl. *igulzām* & *igelzīmēn* 'Hacke / pioche; hoyau; hachette; mors de cheval' (Stumme 1899, 159), Ntifa *agelzim*, pl. *igelzam* 'pioche à pic, hoyau' (Dray 1998, 372), Central Morocco *agelzim* 'pioche à pic; hache, herminette, hoyau; mors de bride' (Taifi 1991, 155), Iznacen *ayzzim* 'houe, bêche, pioche', Senhaja *ayelzim* id., Rif *agarzim* & *agalzim* 'houe, bêche, pioche', B. Messaud, B. Salah *aǧelzim*, pl. *iǧelzam*, Matmata *aǧelzim*, pl. *iǧelzām* 'pioche' (Destaing 1914, 275-76), Figig *ayelzim*, pl. *iyelzam* 'pioche' (Kossmann 1997, 522), Shenwa *agelzim*, pl. *igelzam* 'pioche' (Laoust 1912, 144), Shawiya *agelzim*, pl. *igelzam* 'bêche, pic, pioche, hoyau' (A. Basset); Kabyle *agelzim* 'hache; pioche; pièce de fer qui cale l'axe moteur de la roue à aube sur la meule

volante' (Dallet 1982, 259); Jebel Nefusa *agelzim*, pl. *igelzimen* 'pioche à pic, hoyau' (Motylinski 1898, 144); Ghadames *aǧelzim* & *aǧerzim*, pl. *ǧelzam* & *ǧerzam* 'outil à deux tranchants perpendiculaires l'un à l'autre'; f. 'cheville métallique qui cale la meule volante sur son axe (moulin à main)' (Lanfry 1973, 11).

East: Foqaha *ǧelǧim*, pl. *iǧelǧimān* 'ascia, accetta' (Paradisi 1963, 101).

South: Ahaggar *aǧǧhim*, pl. *iǧǧhām* 'houe' (Foucauld I, 430).

West: Kwarandzyey *aǧərzəm* 'pick-axe' (Souag 2010, 180).

Hebrew *garzen* 'axe, pick-axe', Arabic *karzan/m* & *kirzīm* 'large hatched, axe' (HAL 202; DRS 184; Steingass 1988, 881). The final *-en* in Hebrew instead of expected **-im* may be a Moabite or Aramaic dialectism.

Vycichl 1951, 200.

15.14. Berber: imperative **almid*: perf. **yulmad* (Prasse 1973, 86)

North: Shilha of Tazerwalt *lǧmd* 'lernen, erlernen / study, learn' (Stumme 1899, 203), Ntifa *lǧmd* 'étudier' (Dray 1998, 197), Central Morocco *lǧmed* 's'habituer; prendre une habitude; s'accoutumer' (Taifi 1991, 379), Figig *lǧmed* 'apprendre' (Kossmann 1997, 444), Mzabi & Wargla *ǧlmǧd* 'apprendre, étudier; être instruit' (Delheure 1984, 106; 1987, 169), Kabyle *elǧmed* 's'habituer, prendre pour habitude' (Dallet 1982, 455), Djerba *elǧmed* 'to practice, to be used to something', Jebel Nefusa *elǧmed* 'apprendre' (Motylinski 1898, 122), Ghadames *elǧmd* 'être habitué à, apprendre' (Lanfry 1973, 182).

East: Siwa *ǧlmǧd* 'apprendre' (Laoust 1931, 196), Sokna *éllǧmed* 'imparare' = 'to learn' (Sarnelli 1924-25, 19), Foqaha *élmǧd* 'imparare' (Paradisi 1963, 11), Augila *elǧmed* 'imparare' (Paradisi 1960, 167).

South: Ahaggar *ǧlmǧd* 'to learn, study, understand, find out / apprendre, être instruit' (Foucauld III, 1077), Ghat *elǧmed* 'apprendre' (Nehliil 1909, 128), Awlemmiden, Ayr *ǧlmǧd* 'apprendre, étudier, savoir; s'habituer à s'entraîner à' (Alojaly 1980, 116), Tamasheq of Udalan *ǧlmǧd* 'to learn' (Sudlow 2009, 121), Tamasheq of Mali *-ǧlmǧd-* 'to learn, understand, know (trade)' (Heath).

Hebrew *lǧmaǧd* 'to learn (to); become tamed, teachable', Akkadian *lamādu(m)* 'to learn', Ugaritic *lmd* 'to teach, train; give an instruction; pupil, apprentice', Geez *lamada* 'to be accustomed, be familiar with, be used to, be trained, learn' (HAL 531; DUL 499-500; CDA 176; Leslau 1987, 315). In Arabic the verb *lamada* means 'to submit to, be obsequious' (Steingass 1988, 927) and so it cannot be a source of the Berber forms.

Vycichl 1951, 199; 2005, 3-4; Rössler 1952, 135, #30: Berber+Semitic.

15.15. Berber: **ā-māHdār*, pl. **ī-mūHdār* (cf. Prasse 1974, 202)

North: Shilha *amadir*, pl. *imidar* 'houe / Haue, Hacke; Stangengebiss des Pferdes' (Cid Kaoui 1907, 126), Ntifa *amadir*, pl. *imudar* 'pioche, houe' (Dray 1998, 372); Wargla *amdir*, pl. *imidar* 'sorte de houe, de sape' (Delheure 1987, 185); Ghadames *umadir*, pl. *midar*

‘wide hoe with short handle; shoulder blade / omoplate, houe large à manche court qui forme avec le plan de l’outil un très fermé’ (Lanfry 1973, 206).

Hebrew *ma^Cdēr* ‘hoe, mattock’ [Is. 7:25], derived from *ḥādar* ‘to hoe’, Arabic *ma^Cdūr* ‘Spitzhacke / pickaxe’ (HAL 793; Klein 1987, 365).

Vycichl 1951, 200; 2005, 4.

15.16. Berber: **ā-mindām* (cf. Prasse 1974, 187)

South: Ahaggar *amāndam* ‘something like that / telle chose’, *māndam* ‘so und so, un tel’ (Foucauld III, 1208), Awlemmiden, Ayr *māndam* ‘un tel. tel homme’, *amāndam* ‘telle chose’ (Alojaly 1980, 130), Tamasheq of Udalan *māndam* ‘so and so’ (Sudlow 2009, 137), Tamasheq of Mali *māndan* ‘so-and-so’ (Heath).

Post-Biblical Hebrew *minda^Cam* & *midda^Cam* ‘something’, derivable from *madda^C* ‘knowledge, science’, plus *-mā* ‘irgend / any’, Syriac *meddem*, Nabatean *mnd^Cm* ‘irgendetwas / anything’, Amhara *myndym* ‘what’, lit. ‘das Bewusste / the conscious’, from *d^C*.

Vycichl 1951, 200; 2005, 5-6.

15.17. Berber: **ā-yurūm*, pl. **ī-yurūm-an* (cf. Prasse 1974, 175)

North: Shilha of Tazerwalt coll. *ayrum* ‘Brot / bread’, Ntifa *ayrum* ‘pain avec levain’ (Dray 1998, 352), Central Morocco *ayrum*, pl. *iyrumn* ‘pain’ (Taifi 1991, 203), Beni Snus, B. Izna-cen, Zkara, Zeggu, B. Salah, B. Messaud, Matmata *ayrūm*, B. Rašed *ayrum* ‘pain’ (De-staing 1914, 259-60), Figig *ayrum* ‘pain’ (Kossmann 1997, 470), Mzabi *ayrum* ‘pain’ (Delheure 1984, 154), Wargla *ayrum* ‘pain’ (Delheure 1987, 246), Kabyle coll. *ayrum* ‘Brot / croûte de pain, morceau de pain’ (Dallet 1982, 626), Sened *ayrum* ‘pain’ (Provotelle 1911, 129), Jebel Nefusa *ayerum* ‘pain’ (Motylinski 1898, 143)

South: Ahaggar *ayrum*, pl. *iyrūmen* ‘Brotkruste / bread crust / croûte de pain’ (Foucauld IV, 1758), Awlemmiden, Ayr *təyorəmit*, pl. *tīyorəmiten* ‘croûte’ (Alojaly 1980, 72), Tamasheq of Udalan *tāyorəmit* ‘crust’ (Sudlow 2009, 77).

West: Kwarandzyey *ayəm* ‘bread’ (Souag 2010, 182).

Hebrew *q^rrūm* ‘crust, membrane, skin’, from *qāram* ‘to overlay, cover with crust, incrust’, Aramaic-Syriac *q^rrāmā* ‘covering, membrane’, Arabic coll. *quram* ‘Durra-Brot’, *qurāmat* ‘Brotrest im Backofen / rest of bread in the oven’ (Klein 1987, 592, 594).

Vycichl 1951, 200; 2005, 8; Rössler 1952, 139, #56: Berber+Semitic.

15.18. Berber: imperative **argim*, perf. **yurgam* (cf. Prasse 1974, 86)

North: Shilha of Tazerwalt *rgəm* ‘schmähen, lächerlich machen / to vilify, to mock’ (Stumme 1899, 215), Ntifa *rgem* ‘injurier’ (Dray 1998, 268), Central Morocco *rgem* ‘maudire, prononcer une malédiction contre qqn., insulter, injurier qqn.’ (Taifi 1991, 572), Kabyle *erjem* ‘injurier, insulter’ (Dallet 1982, 714).

South: Ahaggar *ərǧəm* 'to mock (in a poem) / faire une épigramme contre' (Foucauld IV, 1603), Awlemmiden, Ayr *ərgəm* 'faire une épigramme contre, critiquer, blâmer' (Alojaly 1980, 159), Tamasheq of Udalan (š) *ərǧəm* & (z) *ərgəm* 'to blame, criticize' (Sudlow 2009, 164), Tamasheq of Mali -*ərjæm*- 'to slander' (Heath).

West: Zenaga *tirəgmi* 'malédiction' (Basset 1909, 138: Arabic lw.).

Hebrew *rāgam* 'to stone, imprecate, cover with a heap of stones', Akkadian *ragāmu(m)* 'to shout; prosecute, raise claim', Ugaritic *rgm* 'to say, report, speak', Syriac *rəgam* 'to stone', Mandaic *rgm* 'to stone; make lame, immobilise, paralyse', Arabic *rağama* 'to heap up stones; make nasty remarks about, curse, abuse', Geez *ragama* 'to cast a spell on, curse, insult, excommunicate' (HAL 1187; CDA 295; Leslau 1987, 465).

Vycichl 1951, 201; he explained that the Ahaggar word could not be of Arabic origin; in this case it should look ⁺*ərħəm*, cf. *əlhin* 'Gespenst' < North African Arabic *el-žinn*; *təlhamust* 'Buffelkuh' < North African Arabic *el-žāmūsa*. Rössler (1952, 140, #61) differentiated between Kabyle *erǧem* 'injurier' and *eržem* 'lapider' < Arabic.

15.19. Berber: ?*ā-rumūn, pl. *ī-rumūn-an (cf. Prasse 1974, 175)

North: Izayan *tarmunt*, pl. *tirmm^win* 'pommette; saillie de la joue' (Taifi 1991, 583), Mzabi *armun*, pl. *irmunən* 'grenade (fruit)', *tarmunt*, pl. *tirmunin* 'grenadier (arbre)' (Delheure 1984, 173-74), Wargla *armun*, pl. *irumunən* 'grenade (fruit)', *tarmunt*, pl. *tirmunin* 'grenadier (arbre)' (Delheure 1987, 276), Jebel Nefusa *armun* pomegranate', *tarmunt* 'grenadier', while the nomen unitatis *tarummant* represents an Arabic loan (Motylinski 1898, 134), similarly Ahaggar *errummān* 'grenade (fruit)' (Foucauld IV, 1640) or Shilha of Tazerwalt *rrummān* 'Paradiesäpfel / grenades' (Stumme 1899, 216), Ntifa *rrman* 'grenade', *rroman* 'grenadier' (Dray 1998, 248), Central Morocco *errman* 'grenades (fruit), grenadiers' (Taifi 1991, 583), Matmata coll. *rrumān* 'grenade' (Destaing 1914, 158), Figig *rremanet* id. (Kossmann 1997, 485), Kabyle *erřeman* coll. 'grenade (fruit), grenadier' (Dallet 1982, 727); Ghadames *armun*, pl. *ənd-armunen* 'grenade (fruit), grenadier', *tarmunt*, pl. *tarmunīn* 'boîte de bois en forme de grenade (fruit), à couvercle à vis, pour conserver le santal' (Lanfry 1973, 317).

East: Siwa *armūn*, pl. *armūnən* 'grenades douces' (Laoust 1931, 245; Basset: < Arabic; Colin: < Hebrew).

South: Ghat *armun*, pl. *armunen* 'grenade', *tarmunt*, pl. *tarmunin* 'grenadier' (Nehlil 1909, 168: < Arabic).

West: Kwarandzyey *arəmm^wən* 'pomegranate' (Souag p.c., Aug 2011).

Hebrew *rimmōn* 'pomegranate / Punica granatum', Samaritanian *rimmon*, Akkadian *nurmū* & *lurmûm*, *lurimtu(m)* id., ?Ugaritic *lrmnm*, Official Aramaic *rnm*, Syriac *rummānā*, Mandaic *rumana* 'pomegranate'; Aramaic > Arabic *rummān* > Geez *romān*, Tigre, Amhara *roman* id. (HAL 1241-42; DUL 504; Leslau 1987, 471).

Vycichl 1951, 201; 2005, 10.

15.20. Berber: **ā-zārīf*, pl. *ī-zūrāf* (Prasse 1974, 299)

North: Shilha *azarīf* (Cid Kaoui 1907, 30), Central Morocco *azarīf* (Taifi 1991, 827), Wargla *zarīf* (Delheure 1987, 397), Kabyle *azarīf* (Dallet 1982, 957), Ghadames *azarīf* ‘alum’ (Lanfry 1973, 433).

South: Ghat *azarīf* ‘alum’ (Nehllil 1909, 126), Ahaggar *azârīf*, pl. *izûrâf* ‘alum’ (Foucauld IV, 1990), Awlemmeden, Ayr *āzarīf*, pl. *izuraf* ‘alum’ (Alojaly 1980, 223; cf. Taine Cheikh 2008, 640, fn. 1162).

Post-Biblical Hebrew *šārīp* ‘alum’, Aramaic *š’rīpā*, Syriac *š’rāpā* (Klein 1987, 556).

Vycichl 1958, 149; 2005, 10.

15.21. Berber: ?**ā-taggār* (cf. Prasse 1974, 231)

North: Shilha of Sus *tateggärt* ‘sale certificate / acte de vente’ (Destaing 1920, 7), implying *†ateggār* ‘merchant’, while the word *ttāžer* ‘Kaufmann’ (Stumme 1899, 233) represents a recent loan of North African Arabic *tāžir* ‘Kaufmann’, similarly Central Morocco *ttažr*, pl. *ttužar* ‘riche’ (Taifi 1991, 722), Beni Snus *atāžer* ‘marchand’ (Destaing 1914, 211), Wargla *yattəžim* ‘traduire; interpréter’ (Delheure 1987, 338), Kabyle *ttažer*, pl. *težžar* ‘marchand, commerçant’ (Dallet 1982, 822); Ghadames *ateğger*, pl. *teğğaren* ‘riche, pris substantivement’ (Lanfry 1973, 370).

Post-Biblical Hebrew *taggār* ‘merchant, dealer, trader’, Aramaic *taggār*, Syriac *taggārā*, Arabic *tāğir*, pl. *tiğār/tuğār*, *tağr/tuğr* ‘merchant’, all from Akkadian *damk/gāru(m)* & *tamkāru(m)* ‘merchant, businessman’, derived from the verb *makāru* ‘to do business, use for commerce’ (Klein 1987, 691; CDA 397).

Vycichl 2005, 11.

15.22. Berber: *(t)*ā-daffūH(t)*, pl. *(t)*ī-duffāH* (cf. Prasse 1974, 219)

North: Kabyle *taɖfuyt* ‘white figues’, Shawiya *adfu* ‘apple’, Djerba coll. *adfu* ‘apple’, n. unit. *taɖfuyt* ‘an apple’ (all after Vycichl 2005, 11), Nefusa coll. *deffu*, pl. *ideffa* ‘pomme’, nomen unitatis *tadeffuyt* ‘pommier’ (Motylinski 1898, 145), while the coll. *etteffāh* ‘apple’ is a recent Arabic loan, similarly Ntifa *ttefa* & *tateffaht* ‘pomme (fruit)’ (Dray 1998, 385), Beni Snus *téffāh* ‘pomme’ (Destaing 1914, 283), Wargla *tadeffāht*, pl. *tideffāhin* ‘pomme (fruit)’ (Delheure 1987, 74 did not indicate the Arabic loan), Kabyle *tadeffāht*, pl. *tideffāhin* ‘pomme, pommier’ (Dallet 1982, 131: < Colloquial Arabic *teffaħ*).

Hebrew *tappūh* ‘apple’, Jewish Aramaic *tappūhā*, Ugaritic *tpḥ*, Arabic *tuffāh* ‘apple’ > Geez *təffūh*, *təffaḥ* ‘apple, potato’, Tigre *tofaḥ*, Amhara *tufa* (HAL 1773-74; Leslau 1987, 571).

Vycichl 1951, 201; 2005, 11.

15.3. Conclusion

The Berber populations were in direct contact with speakers of two Semitic languages, namely

- a. Phoenician/Punic from c. 800 BCE (Lancel 1995, 21-31: the foundation of Carthage between 846-813 BCE; Pichler 2007, 28-30: the adaptation of the Phoenician script in the area of northern Morocco) till the 5th cent. CE (cf. the witness of Saint Augustine from *Epistula ad Romanos expositio inchoata* 13 [394-395 CE] about peasants in the neighborhood of the city of Hippo Regius on the east coast of modern Algeria: *Unde interrogati rustici nostri quid sint, Punice respondentes Chanani* 'Being asked who they were, replied Chanani in Punic'), and Arabic from
- b. the end of the 7th cent. CE.

The hypothetical third one, Hebrew, is questionable in the case of terms with religious semantics, viz. ##7, 14, 16.

In the present contribution 22 more or less probable Phoenician & Punic (or Hebrew) loans in Berber languages were analyzed. The Phoenician or Punic material is directly attested in 11 items, and the existence of the Phoenician/Punic counterparts is deduced from their Hebrew equivalents and hypothetical Berber borrowings in the remaining 11 items. Although Arabic cognates appear in 18 items out of 22 (exceptions are ##8, 10, 16, 20), the adoption of the Arabic words is improbable or less probable than the Phoenician/Punic origin for reasons of semantics (e.g. #14: Shilha *lemd* and Hebrew *lāmad* 'to learn' vs. Arabic *lamada* 'to submit to, be obsequious'), phonetics (e.g. #8: Tamazight *rgem* and Hebrew *rāgam* vs. Kabyle *eržem* and North African Arabic *ražama*) or morphology (e.g. the Northwest Semitic plurals in *-īm, e.g. Punic *ilim* = Hebrew *'elim* 'gods' [K 52; HAL 49] unknown in Arabic, preserved in such Berber forms as *ā-b[i]zālīm, *ā-yānīm, *ā-γ[i]ssīm & *ā-γ[i]ssāīm, *ā-zātīm, *ā-gūsīm) or their combination. Most interesting is the distribution of the Phoenician/Punic loans within the Berber dialect continuum. It is important that they appear in all branches, but are dispersed unevenly:

North: Σ19; Shilha 13, Ghadames 12-13, Central Morocco 12, Kabyle 12, Wargla 9, Nefusa 8, Mzabi 7, Figig 5, Sened 4-5;

South: Σ15-17; Ahaggar 13, Awlemmiden 8-10, Ayr 8-9, Ghat 8, Tamasheq 6-7;

East: Σ9; Siwa 7, Foqaha 5, Sokna 4, Augila 4;

West: Σ8-9; Zenaga 4-5, Kwarandzyey 5, Tetserrret 1.

How to explain this disproportion? We must apparently take into account at least three factors: (i) Length of contact; (ii) Completeness of lexicon; (iii) Density of loans from Arabic and other languages.

Ad (i): Early Berber dialects, which were in contact with Phoenician/Punic for longer time, had occasion to adopt more loans than the dialects which interrupted their con-

tact earlier.

Ad (ii): It is probable that languages with detailed dictionaries have preserved archaic loans better than languages whose lexicons were described only in the form of wordlists.

Ad (iii): A greater density of recent loans implies a lower probability of preservation of inherited lexicon or early borrowings.

With these three factors it is possible to explain the main disproportions between all four branches and between individual languages:

The ancestors of Shilha, Tamazight of Central Morocco, Kabyle, or Ghadames, were in direct contact with Phoenician/Punic for a longer time than Zenaga.

The summary of lexicological descriptions of Shilha (Dray, before the expected monumental work of Harry Stroemer), Tamazight of Central Morocco (Taifi), Kabyle (Dallet), Ghadames (Lanfry) or the most detailed lexicological description of any Berber language, the four-volume dictionary of Ahaggar by Foucauld, offers significantly more complete information about their lexicons than brief wordlists representing *e.g.* lexicons of East Berber languages, Sened or Figig. If there are languages with a lower share of early Phoenician/Punic loans, although their relatively rich dictionaries are at our disposal, it could be ascribed to more recent influences, besides a universal Arabic as in the case of Mzabi, it is possible to mention *e.g.* Wolof in the case of Zenaga or Songhay in the case of South Tuareg idioms.

In any case, in Berber branches there are early Phoenician/Punic loans - at least 6(?) in the West, and as many as 19 in the northern branches, indicating that the first contact preceded the disintegration of the Berber dialect continuum. This agrees with the absolute chronology: the first contact could be extrapolated on the basis of adoption of the Phoenician script and after the foundation of Carthage to c. 800 BCE, while the disintegration of the historically attested Berber languages is dated between 680 and 460 BCE, if so-called 'recalibrated' glottochronology is applied (Blažek 2010). On the other hand, the estimates by G. Starostin (p.c.; see Appendix 2) and A. Ajxenal'd & A. Militarev (1991, 154), dating the disintegration of Berber to 1480 BCE and c. 1300 BCE respectively, are too early with regard to dispersion of the Phoenician/Punic loans.

The semantic classification of the analyzed set of loans is remarkable:

Urban & commercial civilization: #2) 'wall', #8) 'be courteous', #21) 'merchant'; 'Modern' technical materials and tools: #4) 'oil lamp', #5) 'copper', #13) 'axe', #15) 'hoe', #20) 'alum'; Cultural plants, fruits, products: #1) 'onion', #6) 'reed', #9a) 'cucumber', #9b) 'field of cucumbers', #10) 'almond', #11) 'olive', #12) 'nut', #19) 'pomegranate', #22) 'apple' & #17) '(crust of) bread'; Sacral speech: #7) 'to read/call', #14) 'to learn', #16) 'so-and-so', #18) 'to blame/abuse'. The item #3) 'to move' cannot be classified and may be inherited.

The present data may be summarized in the following table:

Nr.	Source	Common Berber	North	East	South	West
1.	^{Ph} bṣl, ^{Hb} b ^ṣ šālim _{pl}	*ā-b izālīm onion	Sh/CM/Mz/Wa/Ne/?Se /Kb	Au	?Aw/?Ay/?Tq	
2.	^{Ph} gdr, ^{Hb} gāder	*ā-gādir wall	Sh/CM/Kb/Gd	Si/So/Fo	Ah/Gt/Aw/Ay	Ze/Kw
3.	^{Ph} √g-l-y, ^{Hb} gālā	√g-l-H to move	Sh/CM/Kb		Ah/Aw/Ay/Tq	
4.	^{Ph} nr, ^{Hb} nēr	*ē-nīHir lamp	Mz/Wa/Se/Dj/Ne/Gd	Si/So	Ah/Gt	
5.	^{Ph} nḥšt, ^{Hb} n ^ḥ uša	*ā-ni/aHas copper	Sh/Gd		?Aw	
6.	^{Ph} qr, ^{Hb} qānim _{pl}	*ā-yānim reed	Sh/CM/Fi/Wa/Se/Ne/Kb /Gd	Si		Ze/?Kw
7.	^{Ph} √q-r- ^ʿ , ^{Hb} qāra ^ʿ	√y-r-H to read; call	Sh/CM/Fi/Wa/Ne/Kb/Gd	Si/Fo/Au	Ah/Gt/Aw/Ay /Tq	Ze/Tt
8.	^{Ph} qrt, ^{Hb} qeret city	*yarat to be courteous			Ah	
9a.	^{Ph} qs, ^{Hb} qiššū ^ʿ ā	*ā-√ i ssim cucumber	CM/Mz/Wa	Si/So/Fo	Ah	Kw
9b.	^{Hb} qiššū ^ʿ im _{pl}	*ā-√ i ssim id.		Au	Gt	
9c.	^{Hb} miqšā	*tā-mikšā field of cucumbers	Mz/Se/Gd			
10.	^{Ph} šqdm, ^{Hb} šāqēd	*ā-sāyid almond	Gd			?Ze
11.	^{Ph} zt, ^{Hb} zētīm _{pl}	*ā-zātim olive			Ah/Gt	
12.	^{Hb} gōzim _{pl}	*ā-gūsīm nut	Kb			
13.	^{Hb} garzen	*ā-galzim axe	Sh/CM/Fi/Sw/Ne/Kb/Gd	Fo	Ah	Kw
14.	^{Hb} lāmad	√l-m-d to learn	Sh/CM/Fi/Mz/Wa/Dj/Kb/ /Gd	Si/So/Fo/ /Au	Ah/Gt/Aw/Ay /Tq	
15.	^{Hb} ma ^c dēr	*ā-māHdir hoe	Sh/Wa/Gd			
16.	^{Hb} minda ^c am	*mindām so-and-so			Ah/Aw/Ay/Tq	
17.	^{Hb} c q rūm	*ā-yurūm (crust of) bread	Sh/CM/Fi/Mz/Wa/Se/Ne/ /Kb		Ah/Aw/Ay/Tq	Kw
18.	^{Hb} rāgam	√r-g-m to blame/abuse	Sh/CM/Kb		Ah/Aw/Ay/Tq	Ze
19.	^{Hb} rīmōn	*ā-rumūn pomegranate	MC/Mz/Wa/Ne/Gd	Si	Gt	Kw
20.	^{Hb} zānp	*ā-zānif alum	Sh/CM/Wa/Kb/Gd		Ah/Gt/Aw/Ay	
21.	^{Hb} taggār	*ā-taggar merchant	Sh/?Gd			
22.	^{Hb} tappū ^h	*ā-daffūH apple	Sw/Dj/Ne/Kb			

Abbreviations: Ah Ahaggar, Au Augila, Aw Awlemmiden, Ay Ayr, CM Central Morocco, Dj Djerba, Fi Figig, Fo Foqaha, Gd Ghadames, Gt Ghat, Hb Hebrew, Kb Kabyle, Kw Kwarandzey, Mz Mzabi, Ne Nefusa, Ph Phoenician, pl. plural, Pu Punic, Se Sened, Sh Shilha, Si Siwa, So Sokna, Sw Shawiya, Tq Tamasheq, Tt Tetserset, Wa Wargla, Ze Zenaga.

Table 15.1. Phoenician / Punic loans in Berber: summary

15. 4. References

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15.5. Appendix 1: Glottochronological classification of Berber languages (Blažek 2010)

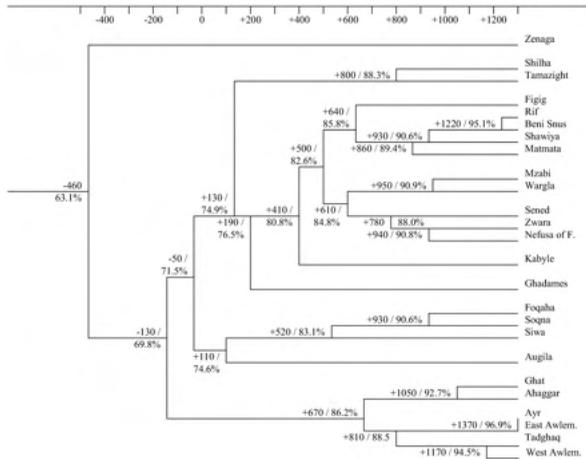


Fig. 15.1. Tree-diagram depicting the Berber dialect continuum based on average values in the glottochronological test.

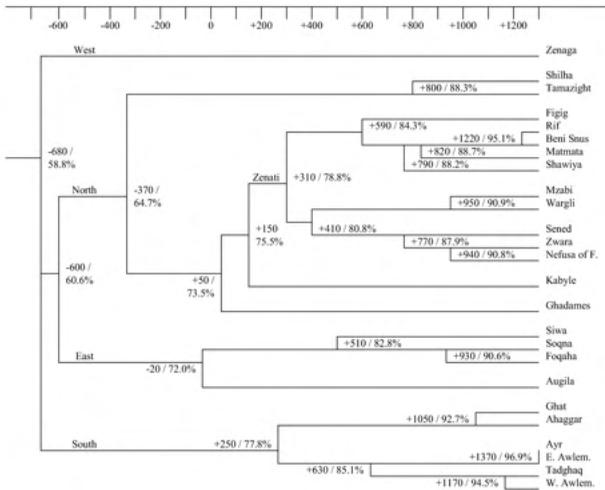


Fig. 15.2. Tree-diagram depicting the Berber dialect continuum based on minimal values in the glottochronological test.

15. 6. Appendix 2

One of the most recent models of classification of the Berber languages was prepared by George Starostin (p.c., Aug 2010). Using the wordlist radically reduced to 50 lexemes and not taking in account synonyms, he dates the first disintegration between Zenaga and remaining mainstream to the 15th cent. BCE and the second disintegration into North, South and East Berber branches to the 11th cent. This chronology of both disintegrations is too early to explain the presence of the Phoenician & Punic words which could penetrate into Berber at the earliest around 800 BCE:

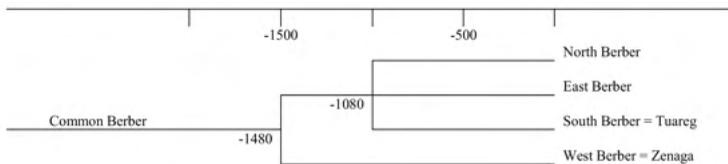


Fig. 15.3. The desintegration of Berber

15.7. Acknowledgment

The present study was stimulated by fruitful discussions with Harry Stroomer, Maarten Kossmann and Lameen Souag. The deepest thanks belong to Lameen for mediation of his unpublished lexical data of Kwarandzyey and to John D. Bengtson for his correction of English. Finally the support of the grant nr. 2817 of the Specific Research Fund of Masaryk University should be mentioned. The first version was presented at the 41st Colloquium on African Languages and linguistics held in Leiden in 2011 and published in Blažek 2014.

PART V. FOCUS ON
TECHNOLOGY

Chapter 16

Stone structures in the Moordenaars Karoo, South Africa

Boere / 'Khoisan' Schanzes, or Quena Temples?

by Cyril A. Hromník

16.1. Introduction

Just after midnight on the 15th of September 2006, this historian, ETV crew,⁴⁴² a journalist, a number of interested academics from the University of Stellenbosch, a government minister and several interested laymen together with the farm owner Mr. David Luscombe and his and my sons gathered on the summit of a small *rantjie* (little ridge) in the Moordenaars Karoo (South Africa, 300 km NE from Cape Town), where one of the two 530 m long stone walls running the full length of two parallel *rantjies* reaches its summit. The mixed gathering came to witness the Moon Major Standstill at its rising that would be observable on a fixed line marked in the veldt by three stone built shrines. I predicted this event with reference to my research of 27 years in hundreds of stone

⁴⁴² EDITOR'S NOTE: *e.tv* is the only privately owned South African television network.

structures of this kind all over South Africa and Zimbabwe. Should it work, as I was sure it would, though not all of the present observers shared the unequivocal sentiment with me, the question to answer would be: who, when and for what purpose built this kind of structures in southern Africa. My answer was simple: The Quena or Otentottu (commonly known as Hottentots), who inherited this astronomical knowledge and the religion that called for it from their Dravida ancestors, who, searching for gold in Africa miscegenated with the Kung/San or Bushman women and produced the Mixed (Otentottu) Quena (Red People worshipping the Red God of India) owners of pre-European southern Africa. None of the archaeology departments at South African Universities was interested. The Moon at its rare and extreme distance from the sun rose precisely as predicted on the line of the three stone shrines, which were marked by burning fires, plus one fire marking the monolith of the Winter Solstice Sunrise shrine. The event was filmed and photographed, and was shown the following day on ETV as well as in the local newspapers the following weekend (16Se2011). A feat that has never been witnessed and recorded on the continent of Africa (ancient Ethiopia)!



Photo C. Hromník, 20th June 2005

Fig. 16.1. A perfectly functional Winter Solstice Sunset temple/observatory at Geelbek in the Moordenaars Karoo.

The following *Weekend Argus* of 23 September 2006, p. 39, brought a comment from Prof. Andy Smith, the Head of Archaeology Department at the University of Cape Town, under

the title: 'No evidence for India star-gazing heritage: Archaeologist Andrew Smith challenges interpretation of origins of Karoo stone walls.' Smith opened his article with: 'THE ENTIRE story of the Indian origins of alignments in the Karoo to 'read' lunar events is a complete fabrication by Dr. Cyril Hromník.', *Weekend Argus*, September 16. His only explanation of these stone walls in the Karoo and elsewhere was that they 'may have been constructed by Khoisan [a fictitious archaeological name for the genuine Quena] people defending themselves against Boer expansionism in the 18th century.'

This presentation and paper will introduce and explain some of the stone temple structures in the Moordenaars Karoo in their Indo-African historical context. Cheap Marxist archaeology, which has failed to even notice these structures, is no longer sustainable. Equally unacceptable is the archaeological branding of all stone structures on the Highveld, including the corbelled huts, as Bantu cattle kraals, pens, byres, etc. – all a part of the so-called 'Southern Bantu Cattle Pattern.'⁴⁴³

16.2. The historical pointers in African History.

Let me begin with two simple questions:

*Who brought a rhinoceros to China from Africa at the beginning of the Christian era, and who brought to China this African giraffe from Malindi in 1414?*⁴⁴⁴

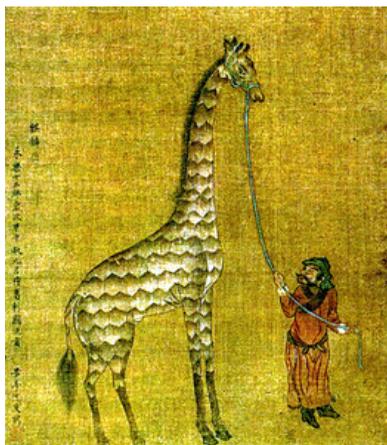


Fig. 16.2. Giraffe depicted in an Early Modern Chinese text.

⁴⁴³ Hall 1987: 46-60, 58-60, 72-3 & *passim*.

⁴⁴⁴ Tibbetts 1956: 200-1; Hadland 1999: 19. EDITOR'S NOTE: the two figures referred to here featured in the Leiden 2012 conference web page and thus formed a frame of reference shared by all participants.

Who needed this structure in Africa in the Middle Ages or earlier?



Fig. 16.3. Characteristic brickwork at the enclosure of Great Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe

Answer to the first question: Of course, the Chinese – tends to be the popular answer these days, which in approximation to the historical truth is not more wrong than the unison of the Afro-centric archaeologists, who claim that everything in Africa was built by indigenous people, who also traded as far overseas as the Moluccas and China, skipping, of course, India.

Thus, with regard to the African giraffe in China, Martin Hall, professor of archaeology at the University of Cape Town, writes as follows:

'Arab captains also carried merchants from other countries on their vessels, and the east African ports were occasionally visited by traders from further afield. Indian vessels, particularly from Cambay, made their way along the coast (Chittick 1975), while in 1414 the African coastal city of Malindi sent ambassadors to the court of the Chinese Emperor, bearing with them as a gift a giraffe. Within ten years, the courtesy had been returned by the Chinese Muslim admiral Cheng Ho, who sailed with a large fleet of ships to trade in the Indian Ocean (Davidson 1959).'⁴⁴⁵

Question remains, how far into the waters of the western Indian Ocean did Zheng He get to? As far as evidence goes, shipping between India and China was throughout the Middle Ages done on Indian ships, later also on Arab vessels. Indians from Kanchi in South India delivered a live rhinoceros to China already in the time of the emperor Ping (AD 1-6), though it is not known whether the rhino was one-horned, originating from India, or two-horned, which would have to come from Lower Ethiopia (Africa).⁴⁴⁶ One horned rhino was and still is unknown in old Lower Ethiopia and is so in modern Africa. But a gold plated rhino was made by Indian goldsmiths at Mapungubwe on the Limpopo River in South Africa in early centuries AD, as is indicated by the clearly Indian gold-working craftsmanship.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁵ Hall 1987: 101.

⁴⁴⁶ Tibbetts 1956: 200-1.

⁴⁴⁷ Hromník 2008, 2010. .



(a)



(b)

Fig. 16.4. (a) One-horned Indian Rhino from Mapungubwe. (b) Two-horned African rhino.

From the above it is quite clear that if an exchange of courtesy gifts between the coastal city of Malindi and China occurred, and if they were delivered to China by ambassadors from Malindi, it is seriously misleading to call Malindi an 'African coastal city,' which implies that the said ambassadors represented the black, Bantu-speaking population of an African city. Malindi, in fact was at that time predominantly Indian with some Arab and Swahili Muslim population, and the Swahili of those times, also known as *Maongozi*, 'The Leaders' were by no means the ordinary Limi-speakers. For centuries, Malindi was the capital city of the Indian Zanj, as we are informed by Abu al-Fida between the years 1273 and 1331⁴⁴⁸ and by Ibn Sa'id between 1274 and 1286.⁴⁴⁹ The exchange of courtesies occurred between the Indian rulers and the Asiatic people of Malindi and China. An analogous situation would have occurred had an embassy or a gift sent to China by van Riebeeck from Cape Town would be reported as having been sent by an African city. No authentic source calls the ambassadors from Malindi 'African' and none implies that they were black and Ndimi or Bantu-speaking.

⁴⁴⁸ Abu al-Fida 196: 23.

⁴⁴⁹ Sa'id, Ibn. before 1274 or 1286.... *al-Mughrib fi hulá (mahásin ahl) al-maghrib.. (or Diagrafya)*/ 1856: I, 2.46.

Above all nobody knows what Africa or African means and for this reason people covered by this title can bear any amount of credit which they never earned. But this kind of misrepresentation of the historical reality is not only common but standard and deliberate on the pages of the Marxist archaeology of the last 100 or so years. Even Hall's source, Basil Davidson, the great Soviet Africanizer of the continent's history, did not dare to call this ambassador 'African'.⁴⁵⁰ But younger, ideologically motivated Afro-centric Marxist, Martin Hall, felt no compunction to call the whole Indian and Muslim city of Malindi 'African'.⁴⁵¹ Is, perhaps, New York a Red Indian city and Sydney an Aborigine's city?

Knowing well that late medieval Arabic sources would not sanction calling Malindi an 'African city', Davidson invoked a much earlier (from AD 1083) 'Zanj' messenger to China as an 'early African envoy,' though he doubted his being such.' And he proceeded to talk about 'the African trade' without ever mentioning that this trade was in fact Indian, which spanned the great distance between China in the far East and Ethiopia – as modern Africa was then called in the West. And Malindi was an industrious Indian city mining iron ore and trading with iron products throughout the land.⁴⁵² The younger Marxist Hall easily swallowed this subterfuge. For him, all that concerns the continent is African, with the implication that all is black.⁴⁵³ But he was not the first to commit this blatant error. Already before 1912 it was popular to read Zanzibar as consisting of *zang* or *zanj* and *bar* as meaning the 'land of the Blacks.' But nothing could have been further from the truth. There were those like Cosmas Indicopleustes who already in 547-549 knew very well that 'Zingion' was a part of the Indian domain in the 'Barbarie' (Azania) of Lower Ethiopia and 'Zandj is not an Arabic word although used by them.'⁴⁵⁴ Arab travellers understood the Indian Zanj area to be the area south of modern Ethiopia and between the Nile and the coast.⁴⁵⁵ In the early 10th century the inhabitants of Zanzibar were actually described as 'white people' with obvious reference to the Indians from North India and possibly some Kena'anites from Palestine and even some Greeks.⁴⁵⁶ Among the modern scholars Schoff recognized in 1912 that *Zang* or *Zanj* belonged within the realm of 'Hind, Sind and Zinj', that is the world of ancient Indians.⁴⁵⁷ Zanj were the commercial people who supplied black eunuchs from the interior to the Arab harems, as reports al-Biruni between 970 and 1030.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁰ Davidson 1987: 186.

⁴⁵¹ Hall 1987: 101. EDITOR'S NOTE. Much as we appreciate Dr Hromnik's scholarly contribution, we are afraid that such rhetorical questions may put the reader on the wrong footing. In this book, and at the conference on which it is based, much critical and scholarly attention has been paid to the question as to what constitutes 'African'. Against the background, now long past, of White minority rule in much of Africa, for decades the answer tended to somatic and cultural criteria and to imply First Nations, which is apparently also what our author has in mind here. A less essentialising, more profoundly analytical linguistic, and more globalising, perspective would be more in the spirit of our book as a whole. One could have similar misgivings concerning our author's treatment of the word *bantu*.

⁴⁵² al-Idrisi, 1150 *apud* Theal 1910: 139-40.

⁴⁵³ Davidson 1987, *The Lost Cities*, p. 186-7.

⁴⁵⁴ Cosmas Indicopleustes. AD 547, in Devic 1883/1975: 19.

⁴⁵⁵ Sa'id, Ibn n Guillaïn 1856: I, 240.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibn Haukal *apud* Theal 1910: 138.

⁴⁵⁷ *Periplus* Ed. by W.H. Schoff 1912: 92.

⁴⁵⁸ al-Birūni In: Reinaud 1845: 96 f.

Commenting on the Black people between 902-968 Ibn Haukal writes: 'As for the land of blacks, in the west [of Libya now West Africa], and [as contrasting them with] the Zingians, Æthiopians, and such tribes, I make but a slight mention of them in this book; because, naturally loving wisdom, ingenuity, religion, justice, and regular government, how could I notice such people as those, or exalt them by inserting and account of their countries?' To this he adds that 'between the deserts of the Blacks and the other limits of the ocean [Atlantic], all is desolate and waste, without any buildings.'⁴⁵⁹ Some historians, like G. W. B. Huntingford, ventured to say that terraces and other stone structures in Azania (misnamed Africa) were built by 'Azanians', but he did so 'in order to distinguish it [the 'Azanian culture that produced them] from the Stone Age cultures [of Africa] and from the Islamic ruins found in certain parts of East Africa.' The highly diverse Negroid Limi immigrants from Libya (West Africa), who in due time developed into more recent Bantu-speakers, were not at all in question.⁴⁶⁰

These stone structures occur primarily on the Highlands of Kenya which, not surprisingly, attracted the early European colonists. The stone structures resemble those found in thousands in MaShonabar (MaShonaland, modern Zimbabwe) and Quenaland (modern South Africa) and were built by the Indian Azanians or Zanj and their mixed, Indo-Kung/San (Bushman) progeny called Quena or Otentottu (*Hottentotten* in Dutch). The latter people were sometimes referred to as 'Cafres' or 'Kaffers' and by the mid-12th century the gold-bearing Barue ('Merouat') in present-day Mozambique and Zimbabwe was considered the southern end of their land.⁴⁶¹ The Portuguese came to know them under this name as well and the same name they applied also to the Otentottu Quena further in the south. Consequently, the land of the Otentottu Quena in the far south (present day South Africa) appeared on the first Dutch maps as *Kaffraria*.

Indeed, overseas trade on the eastern coast of Lower Ethiopia (later and now called East Africa) was ancient and its local practitioners were neither Bantu nor Africans but Indian Zanj and Ethiopians together with the growing population of the mixed Indo-Kung/San (Indo-Bushman) progeny known as Otentottu or Quena, also called by some Cafres or Kaffers. Much has been written about the name Azania and Zanj, which is first mentioned in the anonymous *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, par. 41, dated AD 64. The name Azania and Zanj referred to the Indians settled for centuries before Islam and the late arrival of the Muslim Arabs in the eastern part of Lower Ethiopia, as reported by Ibn Said, who knew the eastern coast at least as far as Sofala.⁴⁶² But, nobody being able to explain its meaning, it has been conveniently attached in recent times to the black population speaking Limi languages of the distant hinterland, now called Bantu.

The Limi-speaking *negroid* black population drifted to the eastern and later also southern parts of ancient Ethiopia as hired porters (*bantu*) with the foreign long distance

⁴⁵⁹ Ibn Haukal in Theal 1910: 137.

⁴⁶⁰ Huntingford 1933: 153-6.

⁴⁶¹ al-Idrisi *apud* Guillain 1856: I, 209-10.

⁴⁶² Sa'id in Guillain 1856: I, 268-72.

trade from the tropical forests of the western parts of Lower Ethiopia (modern West Africa). A fitting monument to this geography and language maps-changing human drift is the town of Bagamoyo (where the hearts of many *bantu* porters were rent) in today's Tanzania.⁴⁶³ The word *bantu* or the name *Bantu*, popular in Buddhist times India,⁴⁶⁴ but of ancient coinage, derived from the Sanskrit *bandhu* and Malaya *bantu* for a helper, associate, companion or even a friend, relative and kinsman.⁴⁶⁵ One of Lord Ganesha's names is *Loka-Bandhu*, 'People's Friend'.⁴⁶⁶ But the friendship conveyed by the word *bantu* tends to reflect a slight or even very significant difference in the standing of the two people involved.⁴⁶⁷ This opens a possibility that originally this word was Dravida, as we see it in the Kannada word *baṅṭu* for a 'hunter', a 'warrior', or even a 'man of a barbarous tribe'.⁴⁶⁸ Most of the *bantu* hired into the Indian Zanj caravans as porters in western part of Lower Ethiopia (tropical forest of W. Africa) were no doubt hunters, who changed their profession from hunters to porters. This word is absent from the core Dravida language Tamil, indicating that it entered Kannada in later times. And the professional name *bantu* was never applied to the Quena or Otentottu people of eastern and southern parts of Lower Ethiopia (E. and S^{em}. Africa). (On these people see below.)

In ancient Ethiopia (Africa) the word *bantu* was applied mainly to the long distance porters and in time became a word (not a name!) for black people of the continent east and south of the Cross River on the borders of Nigeria and as far south as the Kei River in the Quena '*Kaffraria*' of modern South Africa. For this reason the word *bantu* occurs in the majority of the immigrant languages of central, eastern and southern Lower Ethiopia (Africa) and modern linguists found useful to apply it as a name with the capital B to all closely related languages of the so-called Bantu family of languages. This historical truth cannot be subverted by the claim of Joseph Greenberg that Bantu was a tribal name of a people in the Nigerian – Cameroonian borderland before the so-called Bantu migrations, or by M Guthrie's claim that such a tribe or nuclear population once existed in the territory of today's Zambia.⁴⁶⁹ In Plateau Tonga of Zambia 'caravan' is called *i-tanga lya bantu wa li mu musinzo*.⁴⁷⁰ And the name Bantu definitely never derived from *-ntu* in the word 'aBa-ntu', which according to one of the most respected [pioneer] linguists of South Africa Wilhelm Bleek, 'means "par excellence" individuals of the Kafir race, particularly in opposition to the noun aBel-lungu (white man)'. *Bantu* is the Indo/Malayan word *bandhu/bantu* broken into a would-be personal prefix followed

⁴⁶³ Hromnik 1981: 129.

⁴⁶⁴ Stutley & Stutley 1977: 3.

⁴⁶⁵ Winstedt 1934: 139.

⁴⁶⁶ Walker 1968: I, 378.

⁴⁶⁷ Hromnik 1981: 140.

⁴⁶⁸ Kittel 1894/1982: 1071, 1163.

⁴⁶⁹ Guthrie 1967-71: I, 102; Greenberg 1972: 196; Hromnik 1981: 121-5, 131.

⁴⁷⁰ Torrend 1931: 88.

by the noun *ntu*. It follows the pattern of the Arabic word *kitabun* for ‘a book’, which, suffering the same manipulative treatment becomes *ki-tabu* in the singular and *vi-tabu* in the plural form in kiSwahili. It was Bleek who in fact first proposed that Bantu ‘be the best general term for that family of languages.’⁴⁷¹ But the word *bantu* rather than the name *Bantu* was known in the ports of England long before it onomastically colonized one half of modern Africa.⁴⁷²

The earliest *bantu* in eastern, central and southern Ethiopia (Africa) were in fact the so-called Bugi *bantu*, whom ancient Indians brought from various islands of the Indian Archipelago now known as Indonesia.⁴⁷³ These were eventually absorbed by the Indian masters and became a part of the Zanj. The much more recent, new, negroid *bantu* from the hinterland were never called Zanj, but they were brought in from west or ‘lower Ethiopia’ (Africa) by the hinterland Zanj, for whom they worked and with whom they lived in the coastal and not so coastal Zanj settlements. These Zanj had been the ancient masters of the east-Ethiopian (east African) seaboard, with effective influence far inland. These masters of the Ethiopian (African) trade were known as Zanj or Zanghi on the east coast and as Azanaghi in the far western hinterland. As late as 1432–1477, when Luís de Cadamosto travelled ‘in the land of the Blacks of lower Ethiopia’ (i.e. sub-Saharan West Africa),⁴⁷⁴ ‘the brown men’ called ‘Azanaghi’ –by which name he did not mean ‘the Arabs’ – were trading Indian Ocean cowries for gold dust with the Negroes of Guinea.⁴⁷⁵ In 1446–1447 a Portuguese João Fernandes lived in and explored the region of the ‘Azenegues’ on the river ‘Sanágá (Senegal), which separated the ‘land of the Azanagui moors from the first Negroes of the Guinea’ (‘o rio q[ue] se óra chamá Sanágá, o qual divide a terra dos mouros Azanégues dos primeiros Négrs de Guiné...’).⁴⁷⁶ They were neither Arabs nor Berbers, as confirmed by a 13th century Arabic source, which sees their origin in Himyar, also known as India, and Yemen in particular, which was a stopover station of the ancient Indian traders who navigated between India and Ajan-Bār (lower east Ethiopia, modern East Africa).⁴⁷⁷

The Himyarites were in fact Sabaeans Indians with close relationship with the Ethiopian Axumites. This is confirmed securely by the application of the Dravida name *Abbu-ši* to the people of Ethiopia. This name was first picked by Marco Polo in 1295, who learned from the Ethiopians that the so-called ‘Second or Middle India... is called Abascia’ even though Ethiopians applied the name more to the people than to the country. And to confirm the historical and ethnic identity of India and Ethiopia he repeats that ‘Abascia

⁴⁷¹ Bleek 1952 (Mss finished in 1857): 63; Hromník 1981: 126.

⁴⁷² Gleig 1830.

⁴⁷³ Hromník 1981: 139–40.

⁴⁷⁴ Cá da Mosto 1937: 1.

⁴⁷⁵ Cá da Mosto 1937: 25–6.

⁴⁷⁶ De Barros 1932: I, 50.

⁴⁷⁷ Houlel *el-mouwachia fi dikr el-akhbâr el-marrakochia* (13th c.), in Delafosse 1912, I, 197; Cosmas Indicopleustes. 547AD / 1897: 39 & n.2;

is an extensive country termed Middle or Second India.' He further adds that the first Ethiopians converted by St. Thomas were those of 'Abascia.' He visited 'Abascia' which he found 'extremely rich in gold' even though its streams did not abound in gold. Gold, obviously came to Abascia from elsewhere, from the distant south of Azania. And gold was not so much in the hills and rivers, but in possession of the Abushi people. These people wanted to know who is and who is not an Abeshí and for this reason scalded their faces on three places, the forehead, and the cheeks, 'with a hot iron - and these be considered as the second baptism with fire, after the baptism with water.'⁴⁷⁸ The most important on this custom is the fact that the name Abshi, Abeshi and all its variants (such as Habeš, Habex, Abascia, etc.) is a straightforward Dravida word *abbu-sī* for 'scalding [the face]with fire',⁴⁷⁹ leaving no doubt that these two people were at one time one nation on both sides of the Erythrean or Red Sea. Scalding of various parts of the body for symbolic reasons was in the old time and even medieval India quite common.⁴⁸⁰ On account of this painful act, Ethiopia was known to the Greeks and others as the country of 'burnt faces.' Marco Polo knew about the custom of the Abshi / Ethiopians to scald their face with 'hot fire', but he appears not to have known that this significant and unique act was ensconced in their second name Abshi (Habesh, etc.). But it was known to the Portuguese king Dom Manuel, who in a letter dated 1505 wrote that 'Abechi in their language...means scalded with iron (*ferrado*); because...they sign the cross with the scalding iron; and thus they are baptized without water.'⁴⁸¹ The Tigre people of Ethiopia were considered the 'true Abissins' (*Aabbu-sī*).⁴⁸²

The Moors of the surrounding countries continued calling Ethiopians *Habesh*, *Abax*, *Abex* etc. but by 1603-1622 Pero Pais could not find anybody in Ethiopia, who could explain the origin and the meaning of this name.⁴⁸³ Thus, both Ethiopia and India were losing their oldest history. And without it, it is difficult to understand the oldest history of *Ethiopia Media* or Lower Ethiopia (E. & S. Africa), or *India Tertia* (E. & S. Africa), allowing the Afrocentric phantasies to creep in.

Ethiopia, just as Sabaea, was an emporium of the Indian trade.⁴⁸⁴ The name *El Djesair* for the long chain of small islands along the coast betrays the identity of its name givers. *El Djesair* is an Arabized form of the half North and half South Indian name *Zamin-sīru*, meaning 'Small Islands'.⁴⁸⁵ This is corroborated by the report of a Byzantine diplomat of Syrian origin named Nonnus, who visited Ethiopia in or after AD 531 and reported that

⁴⁷⁸ Polo, M 1908/1987: 398-401.

⁴⁷⁹ The Lifco Tamil-Tamil-English Dictionary 1978: 27, 297, 151.

⁴⁸⁰ Soleyman & Abou-Zeyd-Hasan, in Charton 1855: II, 117.

⁴⁸¹ Carta d'El Rei D. Manuel..., in Arquivo Portugues Oriental n.e. I-I-I, p. 385.

⁴⁸² Lobo 1728: 66.

⁴⁸³ Pais 1945: I, p. 21.

⁴⁸⁴ Bruce 1790: III, 129.

⁴⁸⁵ The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea 1912: par. 15, p. 27, 92; Chaturvedi & Tiwari 1970: 202; The Lifco Tamil-Tamil-English Dictionary 1978: 292-3.

deep in the interior beyond Axum there was a 'Kingdom of Indians, for there were seven Kingdoms of Indians and Ethiopians.' On account of these facts the eastern parts of Lower Ethiopia and the regions deep into the interior (of Africa), inhabited and traded in by the Indian Zanj, were known to the Byzantine historians as 'Further India' or as 'India Tertia'.⁴⁸⁶ Contrary to the Afro-centric interpretation of the name, these Zanghi or Zanj of the eastern coast of Lower Ethiopia (E. Africa) 'could communicate without interpreters with the merchants of South India and Indonesia'.⁴⁸⁷ This is not at all surprising, considering that in medieval times traders in metals, pigs and other merchandise in Bengal were also called 'Azanaghi'.⁴⁸⁸ The Indian Zanj were the builders of the earliest settlements (later towns and cities) on the Lower Ethiopian coast and in the land long before their long-distance trade brought to this area the Limi ancestors of the so-called black Bantu-speakers. That is why the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* speaks not only about the coast of Azania, but also about the 'continent of Azania'.⁴⁸⁹ And that continent of Azania, in those times, long before the Arabs and long before Christ, was traded by the Dravida Indians and inhabited by the Kung/San (or Bushmen), who in the course of centuries mixed with Indian traders and prospectors, and produced the 'Mixed' population called Otentottu (mispronounced *Hottentoten* by the early Dutch). The mixed Otentottu adopted elements of the religion of India, including the concept of the Red God Śiva, on account of which they became known as Quena or Red People, thus named by the ancient Dravida traders.⁴⁹⁰

Drawing on the Dravida Indian cosmology, the stone structures of the Quena tended to take elliptical or oblong shape. Just such oblong structures, built of dressed stone around a round citadel, were discovered in 1950 by Gervase Mathew on the islet of Sanje ya Kati, near the somewhat larger islet of Kilwa. These structures are considered to be the remnants of the earliest known trading settlements off the shore of Tanganyika.⁴⁹¹ More likely, these structures represent a Quena religious complex, because they persisted in building oblong structures, such as we find at Geelbek in the Moordenaars Karoo and elsewhere in South Africa. The oldest authentic visual example of the Quena people is Eti, the abnormally fleshy wife of the Puntite king or chief Perehu, who were visited by the expedition of the female Pharaoh Hatshepsut of the 18th dynasty of Egypt, late in the early 16th century BC.⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁶ Malalas n.d.; Cit. in: Cosmas Indicopleustes 1897: 39, n.2; Kobischchanov 1978.: 265.

⁴⁸⁷ al-Idrisi, 1150/1836-1840, extracts in Theal 1910: 141; Hromník 1981: 43, 73.

⁴⁸⁸ Lopez 1578-87/1881: 20.

⁴⁸⁹ The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, 1912, : par. 16, p. 28.

⁴⁹⁰ Hromník 1987, 1988: 18, 1991: 283-290, 1990a, 1990b: 26-34, 1990c, 1992: 1-12; Hromník 1992-93, 1993a, 1993b, 1992, 1997a, 1997b, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 1999 2002a, 2001a, 2001b, 2002b, 2002c, Hromník 2002d, 2002e; Smith 2003; Hromník 2003, 2004, 2010i.

⁴⁹¹ Davidson 1987: 177.

⁴⁹² Breasted 1962: II, 106-7. Picture from Budge 1902/1968: IV, 7.



Fig. 16.5. Eti, the abnormally fleshy wife of the Puntite king or chief Perehu, in the early 16th century BC.

This, however, is completely lost on the Marxist Afrocentric writers, who entitle their study of the maritime nature of the Indian trade and towns in Lower Ethiopia (Africa) as 'On the Problems of Sea Voyages of Ancient Africans in the Indian Ocean.'⁴⁹³ For there were no ancient Afrocentric Africans who navigated the Ocean. All the so-called indigenous boats on the eastern African coast are either Indian, or Phoenician, or Indonesian, or Arabic. In fact, in pre-Portuguese times there was no Africa (apart from the later Muslim Maghreb) – only Ethiopia, and ancient writers and historians had difficulty recognizing Ethiopians from Indians.⁴⁹⁴ Even the early Portuguese knew that Indians were mixed with many trading people of Ethiopia and the Sahel (E., NE. and even W. Africa).⁴⁹⁵

'Mediaeval Muslim writers leave no doubt that Indians and perhaps some Indo-Ethiopian [and Indo-Indonesian] Zanj were the metallurgists who manufactured iron tools in lower Ethiopia [E. Africa]. The Indians excell in the art of manufacturing it, ' writes Al-Idrisi in 1100-1154, and iron 'is commonly called iron of India.'⁴⁹⁶ At the same time these sources inform us that some, often cannibalistic Negroids known as Limi, lived among them by the tenth century AD.⁴⁹⁷ It is important to remember that 'the entire complex of mining and metal-working, trade, and cattle, sheep and

⁴⁹³ Kobischchanow 1965: 137-41.

⁴⁹⁴ Megasthenes. c. 305 BC. Quoted by Arrian in Majumdar 1960 Reprint 1981, p. 220.

⁴⁹⁵ Azurara 1453/1966.

⁴⁹⁶ al-Idrisi, In Theal 1910: 142.

⁴⁹⁷ Hromník 1981, Indo-Africa, p. 57.

possibly also goat herding,' was established in Lower Ethiopia (Africa) long before the arrival of the first Negroid Limi at the end of the first millenium AD. That's why the so-called Early Iron Age of the Afrocentric archaeologists (that never really existed) is so different from the so-called Late Iron Age. But of course they do not admit that there was no local, pre-Indian iron working in Lower Ethiopia (Africa). This has partly been recognized on purely linguistic grounds by C. Ehret, but this historian and linguist ascribes the introduction of the livestock complex to the present Bantu-speaking Africa to the unidentified speakers of the so-called Central Sudanic languages, not to the Limi' and not to the Indians.⁴⁹⁸ This, however, is contradicted by the earliest bovine skeletal remains that attest to the presence in eastern and southern Ethiopia (Africa) of the Indian humped cattle even as far as Kasteelberg on the south-western coast of South Africa.⁴⁹⁹ These cattle were the only kind that the much older population of the said area, the Quena or the Otentottu (corrupted into Hottentots by the early Dutch and totally misnamed Khoi or Khoisan by recent Afrocentric academia), possessed since around or before Christ.⁵⁰⁰ The Indian origin of these cattle – though skeletally evidenced by the bifid ninth vertebra – has been left out from the report in Oxford B.A.R. International Series 332. Instead, it has been argued elsewhere that the Quena cattle resembled the Nilotic cattle. Moreover, the Kasteelberg site has been classified as 'Later Stone Age site,' i.e. misleadingly falling into time period predating overseas contacts with India. But there is no escape from the evidence, because the Nilotic cattle is known by the Dravida Kannada word *ettu*, while the Quena word for 'cattle' *goma-s* is a straightforward borrowing from the sanskritic *gomās* for 'beef', which points at its Indian origin in both cases.⁵⁰¹ India is the ancient cradle of the humped Zebu cattle as is indicated by the cognacy of the Tamil words *ēr* for 'plough', 'ploughing' and 'oxen for ploughing' and *ēri* for the 'hump of the bos indicus bull'.⁵⁰² Biological studies of the hump's evolution come to the same conclusion. The name Zebu itself is of a later date and comes from the Tibetan *zeu*, *zeba* for the hump.⁵⁰³ The Indian provenance of the earliest cattle in lower Ethiopia (eastern and southern Africa) is proved beyond any point of doubt by the already mentioned presence of the Indian word for beef (dead cow), *gomās*, in the Nama and generally Quena (Otentottu) word *gomas* for a cow of the humped breed (*bos indicus*).⁵⁰⁴ The humpless cattle appeared on the scene much later. And with the earliest Indian cattle came to the Otentottu Quena the law of good conduct and high regard for cattle. That high respect for cattle remained with the Quena until the arrival of the Dutch. When some Dutch Burgers alleged that the Quena at the Cape go all the way to Monomotapa in MaShonaland to steal cattle and bring them for sale to the Dutch, Peter Kolbe, the most knowledgeable man in the Colony about the ways and the language of the Quena retorted: 'Monomotapa is at least 100 leagues from the Cape and the Hottentots are too honest to steal' cattle.⁵⁰⁵

⁴⁹⁸ Ehret 1967; Hromník 1981: 105-6.

⁴⁹⁹ Smith 1983, 1987: 393.

⁵⁰⁰ Dart 1954: 9.

⁵⁰¹ Mason & Maule 1960: 44; Chaturvedi & Tiwari 1970: 61.

⁵⁰² *The Lifco Tamil-Tamil-English Dictionary*, 1978: 141.

⁵⁰³ Epstein 1971: I, 525, 197.

⁵⁰⁴ Krönlein 1969: 110; Hromník 1981: 72; Westphal 1971: 400.

⁵⁰⁵ Kolben 1731: I, 270.

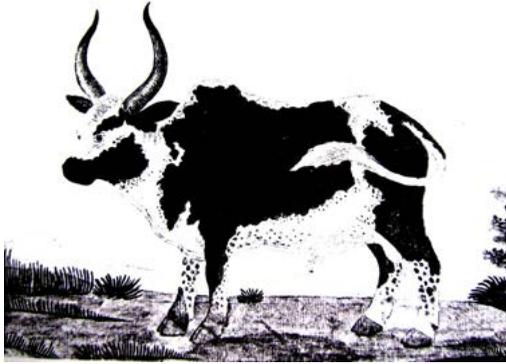


Fig. 16.6. Humped Namaqua bull (*bos indicus*), drawn by Robert J. Gordon in 1799.

16.2.1. *Ajanbār* – *Azania*.

The clue to the identity of the Ethiopian (African) Zanj is in their name, when it appears in the form of *Ajan*. In the medieval, primarily Muslim (be they Indian, Arab or Jewish) records this name appears in various forms: as the Sea of *Zanj-bār*, Sea of *Zang*, island of Zanzibar or Zanguebar, the coast of '*Barr Ajan*' and *Ajan-bār* etc. But the name existed long before in the Hellenized and Romanized form of '*Azania*,' and '*Açania*,' as recorded by Ptolemaeus in ca. AD 150.⁵⁰⁶ This was generally understood to mean, the country of ignoramuses or Barbaria, a qualifying name then shared with most of the northern Europe, which reflected the low level of theological and scientific knowledge of its Zanjian or Azanian, not the Ndimi or Negro, inhabitants.⁵⁰⁷ In these various forms of the same name we easily recognize the Sanskrit *Ajānasthān*, for a 'Place of Ignorant People' or *Ajānabar* for the 'Region of Uncivilized People',⁵⁰⁸ the precise Latin rendering of which was *Azania*. The replacement of the *-j-* in this name is the result of its later use by the Urdu-speaking Muslim traders and navigators, whose equivalent word for 'ignorance', 'innocence' and 'without knowledge' is *azaan*.⁵⁰⁹ Its appearance in the Greek form *Azania* implies that Indian *Ajānabar* existed in Lower Ethiopia (E. Africa) long before Ptolemaeus, before the *Periplus*... and no doubt long before Christ.

Significantly, *Azania* (Ἀζανία) applied by Ptolemaeus to Lower Ethiopia (E. Africa), was also known as Konkan ('Concan'), although only the early Portuguese made mention of

⁵⁰⁶ Ptolemaeus 150/1966: lib. I, 7, 8.

⁵⁰⁷ Hromník 1981: 31,

⁵⁰⁸ Chaturvedi & Tiwari 1970: 208, 707, 112.

⁵⁰⁹ Prof. Robert O. Swan, personal communication.

it.⁵¹⁰ This name was borrowed from the coastal land of South India below the Western Ghats (western escarpment of the Dekkan Plateau) north and south of the River Mandovi, on which developed the prominent ancient trading state of Goa; from 1510 Portuguese Goa. Originally, in ancient times, the name Konkan covered also the Malabar Coast in the far south.⁵¹¹ Not at all surprisingly, the earliest name for the coast of Azania was Konkan, translated into Indian languages as *Sāhil*,⁵¹² then into Arabic as *Sawahil* and today known as Swahili Coast.⁵¹³ The question remains, why is this coast called Coast (allegedly in Arabic) and why by the plural form Swahili?⁵¹⁴ There is a possibility that unlike Konkan, Swahili has nothing to do with the coast. As late as 1978 the WaSwahili people were not perceived as Coastal people, but as *Kizungu*, that is Foreigners.⁵¹⁵ This implies that the Konkani-speaking Goans must have been prominent among the earliest Dravida traders, prospectors and priests in Azania. The connection of the Konkan and of the Dravida South India with *Ajānabar/Azania* in Lower Ethiopia (E. Africa) was so strong that the first century (AD 64) writer of *The Periplus Maris Erythraei* got the impression that the southern part of Taprobane (Sri Lanka) 'trends gradually toward the west, and almost touches the opposite shore of Azania.'⁵¹⁶ Some 360 years earlier the usually well informed Megasthenes applied the same name Taprobane quite clearly to the gold regions of Lower Ethiopia (southern Africa), which was inhabited by the 'Desert-born' *Pālai-gonoi*, or 'Palaiongonoi' in his spelling.⁵¹⁷ This name most probably referred to the earliest 'Mixed' or Otentottu progeny of the Dravida goldseekers, who miscegenated with the females the aboriginal Kung/San (Bushman) hunters. There might be the oldest recognisable roots of the Otentottu Quena people

To understand the application of this name to the eastern parts of Lower Ethiopia (E. Africa) one has to bear in mind the ancient Indian terminology, in which India south of Barygaza or the land from the Jamuna River to Cape Comorin, was known as *Ari-Akam* or *Ari-kam*, the 'Place of Knowledge' or the Place of 'Love of Knowledge',⁵¹⁸ rendered in Byzantine records as *Ariakā*⁵¹⁹ or *Ariakē*,⁵²⁰ long before any Dravida Indians ventured to sail west with the monsoon winds to Ethiopia (Africa). Much ink has been spent on

⁵¹⁰ D'Almada, in Theal 1964: vol. 8, p. 32; Bocarro 1635/1937-38: Tomo IV, vol. 2, parte I, p. 3.

⁵¹¹ Smith, V.A. n.d.: 340-1, in *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, 1912: 205.

⁵¹² Chaturvedi & Tiwari 1970: 680.

⁵¹³ Hromník 1979: 290-1.

⁵¹⁴ Tolmachev 1976: 27.

⁵¹⁵ Avelot 1912: 4.

⁵¹⁶ *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, c. A.D. 64/1912, Schoff, par. 61, p. 47.

⁵¹⁷ Megasthenes and Arrian. In McCrindle 1877/1972: 62; *The Lifco Tamil-Tamil-English Dictionary*. 1978: 465.

⁵¹⁸ *The Lifco Tamil-Tamil-English Dictionary*. 1978, p. 57, 1.

⁵¹⁹ *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, 1912: par. 6, 14, p. 24, 27.

⁵²⁰ *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, 95 and 130ⁿ/1980: par. 6, 14, p. 119.

attempts to find an Aryan or Sanskritic equivalent of the Dravida *Aṛi-Akam*, though it clearly was *Jānasthāna* the 'Place of Knowledgeable or Civilized People', but results are meager⁵²¹ and tend to lead into mythological realms of the supernatural *Raakshasas*.⁵²² This, securely points at the great antiquity of the Dravida concept of *Aṛi-Akam*. The late-coming Aryans conceded that the Tamils and other Dravida people of the ancient *Aṛi-Akam* were 'a civilized nation.'⁵²³ Ptolemaios, working with the more realistic geography, subsumed most of South India from Surat to Tamilnadu under 'Ariakē'.⁵²⁴

The southern end of the civilised Ariake (*Aṛi-Akam*) was in fact far south on the island of Taprobane (Sri Lanka), but, and significantly, the southern part of Taprobane that he believed tended towards Azania was not 'civilized'.⁵²⁵ Its western extension, across the imaginary short gap between the two by ancient maritime trade connected lands, was Azania, the Land of Ignoramuses. Thus Azania, the Land of Ignoramuses, was juxtaposed to the civilized Ariake and Taprobane. The latter was also known as 'Palaisimoundou (Παλαισιμούδου),⁵²⁶ in which we recognize the Sanskritic *Pālisimanta*, 'Abode of the Law of Piety', that is Abode of the Indian *Dharma*,⁵²⁷ the Law of Righteousness,⁵²⁸ the Law of good conduct. This comparative juxtaposition of the civilized Indian *Pālisimanta* and the degraded Indo/Ethiopian *Azania* bears no reflection upon the black Ndimi/Limi (now Bantu) population of the continent of Ethiopia, because these people were not present in central and eastern part of Lower Ethiopia (E. & C. Africa) when this comparison was made. (Even T.N. Huffman, an apologist of spontaneous Negro Bantu migrations, sees the first wave only around AD 200, while other apologists, W.D. Phillipson and N.J. van der Merwe date it to the time of Christ.⁵²⁹) It reflected only the perception of the Dravida and other Indians in Lower Ethiopia as being less cultured and more ignorant than their relatives in Dravidadesa (South India, formerly all of India) and Sri Lanka. The above comparison no doubt dates to the 1st millennium BC, when Indians and Ethiopians dealt only with the Kung/San Bushmen and with their own progeny from the Kung/San women, the Otentottu Quena. Centuries later the situation did not improve, because now the religious teachers had to deal not only with the Kung/San and the Quena/Otentottu, but also with the Limi newcomers from western Ethiopia. This is reflected in the report of Al-Mas'udi dated c. 945 AD.

'The Zanj have an elegant language,' he writes, 'and men who preach in it. One of their holy men [called

⁵²¹ Aiyar 1975/1987: 95.

⁵²² Ramayana. c. 850-200 BC/1951/1990: 221, 137,146, 149-54; Yutang 1949/1954: 195-6; Knappert 1991: 76.

⁵²³ [Pillai], V. K. 1904/1979: 537.

⁵²⁴ Majumdar 1960 / 1981: 365, 376.

⁵²⁵ The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, ed. Huntingford 1980: par. 61, p. 54.

⁵²⁶ Huntingford in The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, 1980: par 61, p. 119.

⁵²⁷ W.H. Schoff in The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, c. A.D. 64/1912, p. 47, 249.

⁵²⁸ Thapar 1975: 42.

⁵²⁹ Huffman 1970: 3; Phillipson 1977: 14.; Van der Merwe 1979: 101.

suri in Dravida India,⁵³⁰] will often gather a crowd and exhort his hearers to please God in their lives and to be obedient to him. He explains the punishments that follow the disobedience, and reminds them of their [Indian] ancestors and kings of old.'

Obviously, in old times they had unmixed Indian teachers (*suri*-s) and kings, who kept higher standards of lifestyle and moral behaviour. Now, several hundred years since the uncultured Limi were immigrating as porters in trade caravans from the West, and c. 300 years since the emergence of the Quran and one century since the Arab Muhammadans began appearing on the scene, Al-Mas'udi concludes: 'These people have no religious law [no more *Palisimanta* or *Dharma*]: their kings rule by custom and by political expediency.' The ancient 'Law of Piety' has evaporated, but 'the Zanj' of his time still 'eat bananas, which are so common among them as they are in India.' However, their food is enriched from the Indian entrepot in Himyar and Yemen. But their religion has deteriorated and

'every man worships what he pleases, be it a plant, an animal or a mineral. They have many islands where coconut grows: its nuts are used as fruit by all the Zanj peoples.' However, unlike in old times, 'one of these islands,... has a Muslim population and a royal family. This is the island of Kanbalu.'

But the people, though faltering on the score of religion and morality, are still Zanj, not yet hybridized with the Limi.⁵³¹

Two hundred years later, writes al-Idrisi (1145), commenting on the Zanj of 'Sayuna' (Sena) on the lower Zambezi: 'the Zanj have no ships in which they can travel [the open sea].... but ships come to them from Oman and other places that belong to the Islands of Hind [Indonesia]. They exchange there their goods for those of Zanj...The people of Zabaj Islands [also] travel to the Zanj': and trade with ease, 'because they understand each other's language.'⁵³²

William Vincent Smith, famous British historian of India, was one of the first academics who spread the false notion about the Azanians being the black 'Caffres',⁵³³ as he calls the ancestors of the present-day Bantu-speaking people of eastern Central and southern Africa. But even in the 17th century the people of Quiteve, 'the king of the Konkan' in Mozambique, though being 'a race of degenerate Moors' [mixed Indians and Arabs] were still 'very different from other caffres.'⁵³⁴ Significantly, the name Azanians or Zanj was applicable not only to the Indians and their mixed Indo-Kung/San progeny in Ethiopia (Africa), but also to the people of Indonesia and other islands of the eastern Indian Ocean, who were considered less advanced in knowledge, mainly religious knowledge, than the Indians in their home country.⁵³⁵ Similarly, in Europe, the musically gifted but otherwise culturally retarded Gipsy communities of Indian origin were

⁵³⁰ Hromník 2011: 14 & passim.

⁵³¹ al-Mas'udi, 1861-77: vol. I, III, p. 29, in: Freeman-Grenville 1962: 16-17.

⁵³² Dick-Read 2005: 73-4.

⁵³³ Vincent 1807: 147.

⁵³⁴ Bocarro 1635/1937-38: IV, vol. 2, parte I, p. 3; Botelho 1835: 150.

⁵³⁵ Davidson 1987: 185-6.

known as 'fils du Zend-Indes'.⁵³⁶ Also, black slaves brought to Iraq,⁵³⁷ Indonesia⁵³⁸ or even to China⁵³⁹ on the Indian Zanj or Azanian ships were referred to as Zanj slaves; just as the slaves bought by the Portuguese and the Dutch in Indonesia from the Bugi shippers were known in Cape Town as 'Bugunese' or 'Bugi slaves'.⁵⁴⁰ One thing is sure, that the Land of Zanj or Azania was not an Arabic name for the 'land of black folks' south of the Sahel, as claimed by Prof. Pitika Ntuli and other shallowly educated Marxist Afrocentrist apologists.⁵⁴¹ Ibn Haukal in 902-68 clearly distinguished the 'Blacks' from the 'Zingians' i.e. Indians and 'Ethiopians'.⁵⁴² and Solyman in 880 makes it obvious that 'Zendjs' are the Asiatic leaders of the negroid warriors.⁵⁴³ Similarly, in 1145 al-Ildrisi states explicitly that 'the black Kaffirs...carry on fishing in the sea without boats, and...although they, live in such a condition of distress and of profound misery, still these people...are satisfied with their lot, and are content with that which they have. They are under the government of the Zenj'.⁵⁴⁴ These 'African' people, as Davidson and Hall call them, were certainly not in a condition to exchange 'courtesies' with the distant China. And there was no other than Indian Zanj navigation that emanated from Lower Ethiopia (Africa). Al-Jahiz, who knew not only 'the literature... of the Greeks and Persians, but also of the Indians and the Zendj',⁵⁴⁵ observed already in 869 that 'Zanj who are the real kind' were not 'our servants and slaves'.⁵⁴⁶ It is to be noticed that there was a 'Zanj' or 'Azanian' literature produced by Indians and Ethiopians in their Azania.

Consequently, as G.H. Talhami concludes, the 'equation of Zanj with 'Black...[is] completely unjustified'.⁵⁴⁷ The same applies to the misuse of the name 'African', when it is used in colonial and pre-colonial times with its current meaning of 'Black people of the continent'. And writing about 'African' overseas trade, navigation, diplomacy, etc. in the pre-20th century period is simply a deliberate distortion of the World history.

The Indian Zanj or Azanians and Ethiopians in upper Azania lived under the kings called '*Mfalme*', which title appears to be based on the Swahili prefix *M-* for a person,

⁵³⁶ Liszt 859 (1881): 412.

⁵³⁷ Guillaïn 1856-1857: I, 272.

⁵³⁸ Schnitger 1964: 172-3.

⁵³⁹ Dart 1954: 19.

⁵⁴⁰ Hromník 1981: 98.

⁵⁴¹ Hromník 1999: 4.

⁵⁴² Theal 1910: 137.

⁵⁴³ Theal 1910: 125-6

⁵⁴⁴ Theal 1910: 139.

⁵⁴⁵ Kratchkovskiy 1962: 51. Quot. in: La révolte des esclaves en Irak au III^e/IX^e siècle. Bibliographie chronologique commentée. p. 59.

⁵⁴⁶ Al-Jahiz. See: Van Vloten 1903: p. 67, cit. in: Tolmacheva 1975: 22.

⁵⁴⁷ Talhami 1977: 461.

Indonesian *fa'al* for 'prophecy', and '*ilmu*' for 'supernatural knowledge'.⁵⁴⁸ Therefore king called *Mfalme* was a 'Man with supernatural knowledge of prophecy'.⁵⁴⁹ Besides explaining the nature of the Zanj kings, the title *Fa'al-ilmu*, swahilized into *Mfalme*, indicates that in the early pre-Christian times many of the Indian Zanj followers were brought to Lower Ethiopia from Indonesia. Attempts by Zawawi to Arabize this important title is not helpful at all.⁵⁵⁰

16.2.2. Gold

The driving force behind the Indians and their Zanj progeny in Lower Ethiopia was trade, especially in gold, ivory, tin, copper, crystal, iron, rhino horn and possibly diamonds. Panning and prospecting in the rivers flowing into the Indian Ocean the Indian Zanj moved south at an early time, certainly long before the time of Christ, and all the way to Sofala. We have no contemporary records of this move, but it is implied by the records of trade, such as the *Indica* of Megasthenes (305 B.C.), the 1st century A.D. *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (c. AD 64), and the later *Topographia Christiana* of Cosmas Indicopleustes (AD 547). Later on it appears as a distant echo in the writing of al-Mas'udi and other late coming Muslim Arabs, Persians and Spaniards.⁵⁵¹ Having come to Lower Ethiopia without their females they consorted with the Kung/*San* women creating a new type of people, who on account of being mixed received the name *Otentottu*, with the meaning of those 'Mixed with the southerners' or people 'Mixed with the southerners'.⁵⁵² The southerners were the aboriginal Bushman or Kung/*San* hunters of eastern, central and southern parts of Lower Ethiopia (southern Africa). The *Otentottu* were a new mixed progeny that was growing in numbers mainly due to the better provision of food and more sheltered lifestyle. Mobility acquired with the adoption of the Indian riding oxen enable them to spread gradually from the hinterland of the Konkan in modern Kenya and Tanzania all the way to central and southern parts of Lower Ethiopia.

Those *Otentottu*, who chose to stay with the communities of their Indian and mixed Zanj fathers, engaged in panning, prospecting and gold mining activity in the area south of the Rovuma River, especially in the Zambezi River basin and on the gold-producing highlands that became known as *Sonabar*, the 'Land of Gold' in practically all languages of India and among the Azanian Zanj. The much later brought in groups of *bantu* Limi changed this name into *MaShonabar*, the 'Land of the Foreign Goldseekers'. The Portuguese came to call it *Bar do Ouro*, the 'Land of Gold', and the British adopted the name *MaShonaland*, without really understanding what they were saying. The same lack of understanding of this name prevails in today's Zimbabwe, where everybody graduated

⁵⁴⁸ Johnson 1939/1967.: 275.

⁵⁴⁹ Wojowasito 1912: 130, 184.

⁵⁵⁰ Zawawi 1979: 121.

⁵⁵¹ al-Mas'udi in: Theal 191: 131.

⁵⁵² *The Lifco Tamil-Tamil-English Dictionary*, 1978: 145, 150, 386.

from local schools is supposed to speak chiShona, the 'Golden language', but there are no *MaShona* or 'Foreign Goldseekers' (as implied by the prefix *Ma-*) any more. The foreign MaShona – mainly Indian Zanj – became the founders of various kingdoms including the pre-Muslim Monomotapa kingdom, which later turned Muslim and eventually Christian. However and in time, by means of the ongoing mixing of the Muslims with the newcomer *bantu* Limi in the 12th to 15th century, the Muslim Emo-Zaids and other Arab and Indian Muslims were absorbed, though never completely, in the new Limi languages-speaking black population that we know from the Portuguese records.

Other Otentottu(-s), who did not embrace the life connected with the Dravida gold mining, opted to continue leading a nomadic lifestyle that was natural to their mothers' folk, who had regularly followed the migrating wild animals—formerly the main source of their food. Now they began following their newly acquired Indian cattle called *gomas*, which turned out to be a more reliable, more nutritious and healthier source of sustenance. The Indian word *gomas* for the flesh of a cow or beef entered their language and various dialects as *gomas* for a cow.⁵⁵³ Despite these and many other facts of evidence and history attesting to the Indian origin of the Quena/Afrikander cattle, the Marxist Afrocentrics felt it necessary to declare them 'of African rather than Asiatic origin.'⁵⁵⁴

Using their cattle not only for milking and eating but also for riding and transporting goods over long distances, the Quena/Otentottu increased their mobility and their ox-riding traders, later known by the Dravida name Attaqua as the 'Market People', 'Trade People' or even 'Wealthy People' and 'Gold People',⁵⁵⁵ lived in many parts of the country and like much later the Jewish *smouses*, were 'seldom at War with their neighbours.'⁵⁵⁶ Originating in ancient times from the northern parts of Azania, the Attaqua linked the ports of east and eastern Lower Ethiopia (Quelimane, Sofala and *Púttu*, today MaPuto in Delagoa Bay) with the deep hinterland as well as with the distant south, called, among other names, *Zansi*, the Southern Land, the Land of the Nerherworld. This explains why the word *gomas* survives also in the Kikuyu language of modern Kenya, where the humped Indian cattle (*bos indicus*) was very likely first introduced by the Indian Azanians or Zanj.⁵⁵⁷ The trade-practicing and nomadic Quena/Otentottu and their Indian Zanj relatives settled more permanently on the Highlands of Kenya west of Mt. Kenya, where their signature can be seen in numerous stone structures, which Huntington had no problem attributing to the 'Azanians', although he was unable to tell 'who were the Azanians.' He also quite correctly understood that the 'Azanian' (Indian) 'civilization which flourished in the Horn of Africa [and downwards south].... was destroyed by Islam'. But he was wrong in saying that it happened 'some time during the first seven

⁵⁵³ Chaturvedi & Tiwari 1970: 400.

⁵⁵⁴ Deacon 1982: 449.

⁵⁵⁵ Kittel 1894/1982: 28, 448; *The Lifco Tamil-Tamil-English Dictionary*, 1978: 20

⁵⁵⁶ Kolben 1731: I, 71.

⁵⁵⁷ Benson 1964: 117.

hundred years A.D.,’ with its corollary enslavement of the black Zimi, and that ‘its makers retreated southwards through Kenya (where Islam never penetrated).’ In the first seven centuries AD there was no Islam and no Arabs in Azania. These structures are not unlike those found in much greater size and abundance in the gold-mining regions of MaShonaland (modern Zimbabwe) and in the gold-bearing MaKomatiland of modern South Africa and Swaziland. But, under the pressure of the then growing Afrocentrism, Huntington reluctantly accepted the biased dictate and calls them a ‘Bantu work,’ even though all evidence was pointing at their ‘Azanian’, i.e. Indian and Asian in a broader sense, origin.⁵⁵⁸

16.2.3. *Wakwak and the Waklimi*

The new gold-producing southern territories of Lower Ethiopia (south-eastern and southern Africa) attracted relatively large numbers of the Indo-Indonesian Azanian Zanj already in the late centuries before Christ. This is corroborated by the enormous number of stone structures particularly in MaShonabar (modern Zimbabwe) and in MaKomatiland (present-day Mpumalanga of South Africa, Swaziland and northern part of Zululand), which current Afrocentrist archaeologists, such as Andy Smith and his colleagues, stubbornly refuse to investigate. They moved over large distances on their riding oxen, which they used instead of horses that would have not survived in the climate and the sickness of the country. Thus we are told by medieval Muslim sources with reference to distant past that the Supreme King of all Zanj kings was riding ‘at the head of 300 thousand cavaliers; their mounts being the cows.’ This was made possible by the natural quality of the Indian *bos indicus* which, ‘owing to their hard feet and speedy movement,... are more suitable to take place of horses than other cattle.’⁵⁵⁹ And there were neither horses nor mules,⁵⁶⁰ which, if present, could have indicated the presence of some Arabs. But none were there. Those early centuries before and after Christ clearly belonged to the Indians and Indonesians and to their Azanian and Zanj brethren settled in Azania and as far as Sofala in present-day Mozambique. There they lived among and intermarried with the Kung/San (Bushmen), surrounded by the growing number of the mixed Otentottu Quena.

In the course of history many Indian Zanj kingdoms were formed. They lived under many small kings and often waged wars against each other, as informs Solejman in 880. In these wars the Indo-Indonesian Zanj were the external leaders of the local warriors, who in early times had to be the Otentottu Quena or even Kung/San Bushmen. Significantly, their history was a part of the overall history of India and Solejman included it in the narrative of his travel to India.⁵⁶¹ The supreme ruler of these numerous kingdoms

⁵⁵⁸ Huntingford 1933; Hromník 2003 (Ancient Indian religious astronomy).

⁵⁵⁹ Epstein 1971: 198.

⁵⁶⁰ al-Mas’udi in: Guillaumin 1856: I, 172. ⁵⁶¹ Solejman (a merchant). His accounts written down by Abou-Zeyd-Hasan, ca. AD 880. Extracts in: Guillaumin 1856-1857: I, 189.

was a powerful emperor with the title *Waklimi*, and his capital city stood at Sofala on the border of the goldbearing country called *Wakwak*. His title *Waklimi* was of unspecified antiquity, but it 'has always been that of their sovereigns,' writes al-Mas'udi, an Iraqi Muslim in 943.⁵⁶²

Attempts to interpret the title *Waklimi* vary greatly and produced explanations like 'the Son of the great Master, the God of Heaven and of Earth' by al-Mas'udi.⁵⁶³ These can only be described as sublime and unreal. However, one thing in this title is worth noticing: the repetition of the word *Wak*, which comes from the name of the gold producing country called *Wakwak*. Describing the kingdom of the Indian Zanj, al-Mas'udi (c. 890-947) states:

'we have spoken already about the Zendj and about different Abyssinian populations who are settled on the right side of the Nile and who spread as far as the lower parts of the Abyssinian Sea. The Zendj, differing from the Abyssinians [the ones with scalded crosses on their faces; note by CAH], crossed the channel which separates from the upper part of the Nile and proceeds to throw itself into the Sea of the Zendj [the coastal waters of the Indian Ocean]. They inhabit that country, and their settlements extend all the way to Sofala, which is the most distant part of the land of the Zendj. It is there, where the navigators from Oman and Syraf travel to; Sofala is the end of their voyage.'⁵⁶⁴

The following translation by G.M.Theal is significantly distorted:

'the Zendjes and other tribes of Abyssinia spread themselves out along the right bank of the Nile to the extremity of the sea of Abyssinia. Alone among the tribes of Abyssinians, the Zendjes proceeded along the channel which flows from the larger stream of the Nile and empties itself in the sea of Zendj. They established themselves in this country, and spread out to Sofala, which is the most distant frontier of the territory and the terminus of the navigation of the vessels of Oman and Siraf in the sea of Zenj.'⁵⁶⁵

The Land of the Zanj thus defined was an enormous territory of Lower Ethiopia, which since the unknown but no doubt pre-Christ period was under the control and exploitation of Indians, if not a part of India itself. That's why it was called '*India Tertia*', as reported by Jordanus around AD 1300,⁵⁶⁶ while the early Portuguese called it '*Indias Baixas*',⁵⁶⁷ '*Lower Indies*'. The Portuguese at first, from 1506 to 1572, also administered the whole of the territory in '*Ethiopia Oriental*' under their sway from Lamu to Sofala and as far as Delagoa Bay, from Goa – the source of the ancient Konkani Zanj –, as part of their *Estado Portugues da India*. The Indians in their time called it for already explained religious reasons Ajan-Bar or Azania, the Land of Religious Ignoramuses. But only the end of that enormous empire was named *Wakwak*. The distinguishing or defining feature of this southern territory was the rich occurrence of gold in rivers and rifs, the latter being exploited by means of numerous gold mines.

⁵⁶² al-Mas'udi in Theal 1910: 126, 131.

⁵⁶³ Quoted in Wilmot 1969: 107.

⁵⁶⁴ al-Mas'udi in: Guillaïn 1856: I, 172.

⁵⁶⁵ al-Mas'udi in Theal 1910: 131.

⁵⁶⁶ Jordanus Catalani. c 1330/1970: 41-5.

⁵⁶⁷ Velho 1861.

Wakwak was the real Eldorado of the Indian Azanians or Zanj, but no researcher has so far looked in that direction for an explanation of the repeatedly attested name Wakwak. Attempts to find an Afrocentric solution are entertaining. Thus R.W. Murray wrote already in 1891 that 'Wakwak... is simply an Arabic corruption of Kwa-Kwa, late Khoi-khoi, that is 'Men of Men'.⁵⁶⁸ This farce was endorsed by John Hewitt in 1921, but without any supporting evidence.⁵⁶⁹ More seriously, G. A. Wainwright in 1949 argued that *Wak* in the name of the Wakwak's king Waklimi was a Gala word *Waq* for the 'Sky', which combined with the Gala *ilma* for 'son' gave the meaning of the king's name as 'Son of the Great Lord'. But this would call for this name to be turned around and pronounced *Ilma-Wak*,⁵⁷⁰ which, of course, is never recorded. Moreover with this reading of Waklimi his land Wakwak would have turned into 'SkySky', which is scarcely thinkable. And modern Marxist Afrocentrists have seemingly abandoned the subject.

Two artificial readings do not explain the historical term Wakwak. Yet it is easily detectable in the obviously Malay plural form of the name Wakwak. Wakwak reflects a plurality of something that should be characteristic of the given land, and gold was no doubt the most distinguishing feature of this land in the hinterland and south of Sofala. But gold in no language is called wak and gold knows not the plural form. There is yellow gold, white gold, red gold, etc., but there are no golds. Gold is simply gold, whether much or little of it. Besides this, gold was panned in many parts of Lower Ethiopia (Africa) and beyond, yet none of those gold dust producing countries was called Wakwak. At the same time the name Wakwak was applied to the gold-producing islands of (modern) Indonesia, which Indians had long since exploited and knew under the name *Suvarna-dwipa*, the Gold Islands.' It was reported to have occurred also in China and even in Japan.⁵⁷¹ If it is true, it implies that in all of these lands gold was from great antiquity exploited by the same people, in whose language the word *wak* made good sense in the context of gold exploitation. That meaningful source word *wak* has so far been missing, but each country where it appeared must have possessed the feature reflected in this word.

What distinguished Wakwak, whether in Lower Ethiopia, in Indonesia or elsewhere, from other gold panning regions, was the presence in its territory of innumerable gold producing holes or mines. And such holes or mines are called *vañku* only in the Dravida languages of India. This leaves no doubt that in all places and countries where deep gold mining took place, the Dravida prospectors and miners aided by Indonesian labourers were involved. The Indonesian presence is reflected in the reduplicated geographical name Wakwak. The principal and the most productive of the Wakwak lands was no doubt the MaShonaland – the 'Land of Foreign Goldseekers' in present-day Zimbabwe, where *shona* is an all-Indian Pali word for gold. The second in terms of gold production

⁵⁶⁸ Murray 1891, Cit. in: Jeffreys 1968: 14.

⁵⁶⁹ Hewitt 1921: 305.

⁵⁷⁰ Wainwright 1949: 62.

⁵⁷¹ al- Birūnī. [973-1030] 1030/1910, Quot. in Ferrand 1910: 325, 121.

was MaKomatiland ('*Terra dos Macomates*' in original Portuguese) -- the 'Land of Foreign Gold traders' in present day south-eastern Africa,⁵⁷² where *komati* is a Dravida word *kōmaṭṭi* in Tamil and *kōmaṭi* in Telugu, Kannaḍa and Tulu for a *Vaiśya* merchant caste including gold-sellers.⁵⁷³

An interesting corroboration of this evidence came from the Nguni languages of South Africa where the Tamil verb *bo* 'to make a hole' appears in the Zulu *mbobo* for 'a hole', *isimbo* for a 'pointed stave used for digging' or a 'crowbar', and *mba* means 'to dig up' in siNdebele, 'to excavate' in Zulu, 'to sink or dig a mine' in Xhosa, while *imbo* is 'a highly valued, precious thing, a prized possession' in Xhosa, and *abaMbo* are the 'hole people and diggers', or '*maShona*', whom the Tsonga call *Aba-Mbo* (sg. *Mu-Mbo*).⁵⁷⁴ The oldest historian of the *AbaMbo* called the country 'there beyond the inKomati' River *iMbo*', the land of holes or mines, whose *eMbo* people the local Tsonga called '*maKomati* or *Komati People*,' with obvious reference to the gold miners of the Komati and Lydenburg gold fields. The leading families of the *AbaMbo* and their relatives *EmaLangeni* of Swaziland in fact descended from the ancient *MaKomati* gold miners and traders.⁵⁷⁵ A detail study of the origins of the names of the leading Zulu, Swati, Ndebele, Xhosa and Tsonga families, such as *Ntuli*, *Lutuli*, *Dlamini*, *Lobengula*, *Mandela* etc. may prove their descent from the original Indian *MaKomati*. This is a challenge to be taken up.

The *MaShona* and *MaKomati*⁵⁷⁶ lands known as *Wakwak* with a history reaching well into the 1st millennium BC and lasting well into the Portuguese times, were huge and had many masters that ruled over them all of very old and always. Their Supreme King bore the title *Waklimi*. *Waklimi*, provided with huge armies, moved around his large empire on the backs of the Indian humped zebu type cattle. Their 'oxen are harnessed like horses, and run with the same speed,' informs *Al-Mas'udi* in 943. He was chosen to his high office by his people, many of whom in the 12th century spoke a language that included clicks ('*sifflement*').⁵⁷⁷ This most probably referred to his *Quena* or *Otentottu* subjects and their language abounding in whistling clicks. He was the king of the *Zanj* and his name *Waklimi* allegedly translated as 'Son of the Great Lord, that is to say, the God of Heaven and of Earth.'⁵⁷⁸ *Waklimi's* main duty was

'to rule over them and to establish justice among them. And when the king oppresses them in his government and deviates from justice, they kill him and deprive his children of the kingship. For they claim that if he acts in that way then it is impossible that he can be the Son of the Lord who is the King

⁵⁷² Hromník 1991: 287-8.

⁵⁷³ Burrow & Emeneau 1961: 147; Kittel 1894/1982: 498.

⁵⁷⁴ *The Lifco Tamil-Tamil-English Dictionary*, 1978: 507; Dent & Nyembezi 1969/1977; McLaren 1915/1963; Pelling 1971.

⁵⁷⁵ Bryant 1929: 289, 314-15.

⁵⁷⁶ Hromník 1991: 283-290, 1996: 69-77, 1995, 2003, 1995, 1996.

⁵⁷⁷ al-Idrisi 1150/1856, Extracts in Guillaín 1856: I, 229.

⁵⁷⁸ al-Mas'udi, in: Guillaín 1856: I, 173.

of Heavens and the Earth.⁵⁷⁹

This indicates that the religion of the Zanj under *Waklimi* was of a sophisticated and theologically advanced nature, although in the local conditions it did not meet the standards of India and was understood only by a small number of holy men named *suri*s. (cf. p. 15, 23-4) It was a Zanj version of the Dravido/Aryan Śivaism. From the description of him we know that he was both a political ruler with armies of ox-mounted soldiers at his command, but he also was a learned spiritual leader, at least in the centuries BC, before the knowledge of the early *Waklimis* in Azania decayed.

Interpretations of the title *Waklimi* vary, mainly on the side of gross exaggeration such as al-Mas'udi's (if translation is correct!) 'Son of the Great Master.'⁵⁸⁰ The problem with this and other translations is that instead of translating the whole name *Waklimi*, they translate only its second half *-limi*, and this they read in terms of the kiSwahili word *ulimwengu* for 'the world in general, the whole creation, universe,... the present world as opposite to the next world' i.e. the realm of men and God,⁵⁸¹ thus skipping entirely the first half of the name, namely *Wak*, which remains unexplained. However, when the source of *Wak*, the original Tamil *vaṅku* for holes and (gold) mines in the ground, is joined with Tamil *el* for 'light' and *mu* for 'old age',⁵⁸² the resulting *vaṅku-el-mu*, swahilised into *Wak-elimu* and arabized into *Waklimi*, describes the one who sheds light on or who has the knowledge of (gold) mining. Such a man would be worthy of the title *Waklimi*, being the most knowledgeable about the main industry and business of the land. Of course God would be on his side and he would rule his ignorant Azanian subjects with powers close to godly. But if he betrayed his mission, he could be deposed or even killed as reported by al-Mas'udi.⁵⁸³ It is also possible that *Waklimi* is an abbreviated form of *Vaṅku-el-munivan*, which would describe him as a 'Mining country' Sage of Light' or, even a 'God of Light in Wakwak'. Quena's main image of God was that of the Red God *Tsuni//goam*, who resided in the 'Red-Heaven.'⁵⁸⁴ On account of His red colour, his Dravido-Kung/San worshippers were called Quena or *Ava-khoin*, that is 'Red Men'.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁷⁹ Wainwright 1949: 62.

⁵⁸⁰ al-Mas'udi in Wilmot 1969: 107.

⁵⁸¹ Johnson 1939/1967: 496.

⁵⁸² *The Lifco Tamil-Tamil-English Dictionary*, 1978: 135, 574.

⁵⁸³ Wainwright 1949: 62.

⁵⁸⁴ Hahn 188: 124.

⁵⁸⁵ Hahn 188: 152.

16.3. The Suri-s and the Stone Temples



Built by the Dravida and Quena learned men called *suri-s* with the help of assisting pilgrims on the Ox Road from *Pitju*, today MaPuto in Delagoa Bay, to the Moordenaars Karoo and beyond Southwestwards in the early 1st millennium AD. Discovered by Cyril A. Hromnik and Jacobus C. (Japie) Van Niekerk in 1992. Photo C.A. Hromnik 1994.

Fig. 16.7. The Dying Sun Chariot temple in MaKomatiland

With the Dravida Indian prospectors, miners and traders came along their learned religious men called *suri*, with the result that until today the learned men of Quenaku or Quenaland are called *suri*. Their name, *suri*, derived from the Tamil *suṛ*, 'to know', 'to deliberate' and 'wisdom'⁵⁸⁶ and Kannada word *sūri*, for 'wise or learned man',⁵⁸⁷ indicates clearly that at one time there was a respectable theology and worship among the Quena inhabitants of the Wakwak gold land⁵⁸⁸. Their God was Red Śiva, described as Kena in Kannada, the language of the main Indian goldfields in Karnataka. And this is the reason why his worshippers in Wakwak alias Quenaku came to be called Quena, thus spelt by the Portuguese, but with the same pronunciation. It was the ancestors of these *suri-s*, who before and in the Middle Ages preached among the Zanj in Azania. The religion they preached took permanent roots among the Quena of the Wakwak and the same *suri-s*, but many generations later, cultivated the same religious and moral principles among the 17th century Quena in Quenaku (South Africa). And it was these Indian and Quena *suris* or astronomer-priests

⁵⁸⁶ Burrow & Emeneau 1961: 171; *The Lifco Tamil-Tamil-English Dictionary* 1978: 307.

⁵⁸⁷ Kittel 1894/1982: 1584.

⁵⁸⁸ Kolben 1731: I, 88.

who created the necessity to build stone shrines, temples, observatories and other structures built of stone on the Lower Ethiopian field in Kenya, Tanganyika and, especially, in the gold-bearing regions of Quenaku. The temples here presented fall within that category of stone structures that are seen in thousands in MaShonaland and MaKomatiland, even though there is no gold in the Moordenaars Karoo. But the road that forms the communication axis of this temple complex links the Western Cape both with Delagoa Bay and with Kimberley. Its main virtue is that passing through the dry Moordenaars Karoo, here at Geelbek, it crosses two streams with permanent drinkable water, called Geelbek and Kaffersleegte respectively. On the banks of the main Geelbek River stood at one time a *tangal* – a caravan rest station like the ones we know from the trade routes of India, which were patronized even by the greatest Emperor of India, Raja Raj Aśoka in the third century BC.

Besides the permanent water in the Geelbek River and Kaffersleegte, another major if not the primary drawer of the ancient Indian and Quena *suris* to this dry, semi-desert land of the Karoo (a Dravida word for 'dry land'), undoubtedly was the clear sky, without which no precise astronomy and, consequently, cosmology could be practiced. This aspect comes strikingly forward when I compare my research notes from MaKomatiland, which has more stone structures but also a long season of Summer rains and tall grass, trees and forests obstruct the visibility of the countryside as well as the sky, with my notes from the seemingly barren Moordenaars Karoo. Here, the cosmological lines can be followed for dozens of miles on the treeless landscape and the night sky can be observed and studied almost every night. This virtue of the arid land could not have been missed by the ancient Dravida and Quena *suris*/astronomers. Not at all surprisingly, the main South African Observatory was built at Sutherland within the limits of this starvoyant country. Presently the world's largest and most sensitive radio telescope, the co-called SKA (Square Kilometre Array), is being built within the limits of the Quenaku Karoo. With these developments taking place before our eyes, it will not be surprising to see a revival of the ancient Dravido-Quena Wakwak Quenaku.

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Chapter 17

Smithing in Africa, the enigma

by Walter van Beek

17.1. Introduction

This chapter is about smiths, but not just about iron. Throughout much of Africa the one who wields the hammer, does a host of other things as well with little or no evident logical relations to metal work. My argument here develops from two starting points. First, the evidence of early African metalworking, a field that is rapidly developing and yields fascinating results that challenge the traditional archeological wisdom about early iron in Africa. Second, an observation in contemporary African societies, like the Kapsiki/Higi culture in Cameroon and Nigeria, where the main occupations of the smith are not in the forge but elsewhere, and throughout deeply embedded in local culture. A Kapsiki smith, for instance, is undertaker, healer, sorcerer, diviner, leather worker, musician, potter as well as blacksmith, both in iron and brass. While the specific array of specializations varies among ethnic groups, the fact that metal work is linked to other professional activities is very wide spread. That, I think, is a phenomenon that begs for an explanation, which I will zoom in on here.

In fact, this array of tasks raises the question why we call him a smith anyway. In fact, that is a question both of consensus among scholars, and the array of the specialization itself. The literature on smiths in Africa is growing quickly, and throughout use the term

'forgeron' or 'smith' as the international translation of the vernacular terms, like the Kapsiki *rerhe*}. So for comparative reasons, speaking about 'smiths' makes sense. But there is a more generic reason as well. Kapsiki/Higi culture defines almost all specializations that are part of their ecological adaptation as work of the *rerhe*, thus smith jobs, either exclusively so - like funerals - or dominated by smiths, like divination. Other groups in the Mandara Mountains,⁵⁸⁹ living in fact 'just around the corner' viewing the density of settlement in this region, have slightly different constellations of functions for the smiths (David & Sterner 2010, Wente-Lukas 1972, see also Tubiana 2008), but they always include metal work. Elsewhere in West and Central Africa - North Cameroon in fact is the border region between these large subcontinental areas - configurations of the specializations differ even more, but metal work is almost always among them. If artisan groups are organized in several separate groups, like in the Mande societies of West Africa where leatherworkers and bards are distinguished, there always is a group of smiths as well (sometimes even more than one!), who combine their metal work with other functions. So we call them smiths.

Thus, the general picture of the African smith is a profession which has at its core metal work, but almost always packs in other specializations, most of the time including magico-religious and healing functions. Metal in Africa is never alone. Metals are 'metals-plus' and that 'plus' is the core of my argument, and indeed the Kapsiki form a very clear case of the array of smith functions. Why does metal work always accrue so many 'sidelines', which may become even dominant? That general question has been addressed many times in the literature, and I will venture a comprehensive and comparative answer, however tentative. The metals involved are iron and brass, an alloy of copper and zinc.⁵⁹⁰ Both metals not only each have their own technical exigencies, but also their own set of symbolic associations among several groups, including the Kapsiki. To have both metals symbolically charged is not unknown in Africa (Herbert 1984), but is not common, also not in the Mandara mountains, which gives the case of the Kapsiki smith as special flavor in this area. The Kapsiki smith clearly belongs to the 'transformer' type in its constellation of specializations, together with the better known Mafa smiths (David 2010, Podlewski 1966), but among these is the only case with a brass casting tradition.

But the discussion on smiths in Africa centers on iron blacksmiths, not at all on brass or bronze, for the whole continent is 'into iron', while brass and bronze have a much more restricted distribution, especially if we limit it to the *cireperdu* technique. Other ways of casting copper or copper alloys are more widespread but produces a much more restricted array of objects (Herbert 1984). All African societies depend on iron technology, also the hunters/gatherers, so the history of 'iron-plus' is crucial for Africa, and indeed the theory on smiths in Africa does focus on iron. It also focuses on smelting, on the production of iron. The large discussions center on the furnaces, not on the forges, on the smelters and not on

⁵⁸⁹ For the Mandara Mountains see Wade, Vincent, Podlewski, David, Sterner. For Mande West Africa the work of Patrick McNaughton.

⁵⁹⁰ For the inherent complexities of West African alloys, see Herbert 1984, 92-100.

the smiths. But these debates are of relevance as the forging of iron always carries the larger umbrella of iron production; after all, when we speak of transforming and transformers, the fundamental transformation is from 'earth' to metal, and the transformation of bloom to tool is a secondary one, though often more closely associated with the smith craft.

17.2. The age of iron

Three technical questions dominate the present iron debate: the original provenance of the smelting technology, the invention of technical refinements of the melting process, and the astonishing variety of furnace types and melting techniques. The first question is, indeed, a classical anthropological one, between diffusion and independent invention. Given the archeological fact that for long the earliest furnaces have been excavated in Anatolia, the consensus holds that the first invention of iron production has been in that region. However, increasingly early dates for iron production sites have been established in Africa, dates that are gradually crouching into the early first Millennium BCE, getting closer and closer to the earliest Anatolian ones.⁵⁹¹ So, quite a few African archeologists posit an independent invention of iron production in Africa, not per se earlier but independent. Not only the early dates are an argument, but also the rapid proliferation of furnace types as well as the deep engraining of iron production in African culture, my contemporaneous argument. And evidently, this question is not without its political and ideological consequences. African scholars, and many others with them, would love to have a major invention in Africa independent of the region where most of the crucial ecological revolutions have originated from. Even without the presumptuous Black Athena thesis, this would mean a welcome reevaluation of African technological acumen.

But the notion of independent invention is not without its problems. The main issue is the absence of a previous copper technology in Africa, as it is difficult to envisage how an iron technology could develop without a metal smelting technique that demands much lower temperatures, also in the absence of fully developed pottery kilns. Also, the North Sahelian iron production dates seem to be the oldest, which fits in with diffusion from the North. Finally, this area is not overly suited for sustained production, as the ecological demands on especially wood for charcoal production seem soon to exceed the local resources.⁵⁹² At present the technological objections against independent invention have not been fully countered as yet, but anyway if diffusion is the case it must have been a fast and many-stranded diffusion of knowledge and techniques,

⁵⁹¹ Africa: 900-400 BCE, Anatolia: 1500-800 BCE.

⁵⁹² Haaland estimates for the Darfur region, with a similar climate, that two volumes of ore need four volumes of charcoal, to produce two volume of bloom iron and two volumes of slag (Haaland & Shinnie 1985: 62). However, de Barros stresses that the efficiency of the various techniques differed greatly, even with a factor 40! (de Barros 2000: 153). The exact parameters of these differences are not very clear.

possibly also of people. However, the evidence for independent invention seems to be mounting, but then this invention would have to be done at least twice. The jury is still out on the issue, and probably the question will be resolved only when the political implications have faded away and the emotions assuaged.

The second question is the 'preheating hypothesis', as one of the possible partial inventions in Africa. The notion is straightforward: in any kind of furnace air has to be brought into the burning pile of charcoal and ore, either by natural draft (in high furnaces) or by forced draft, *i.e.* by bellows. In that latter case often in African furnaces long tuyeres (earthenware blowing pipes) are used, which presumably lead into the air being pre-heated when finally blown into the fire, making for higher temperatures in the furnace, especially at the mouth of the tuyere. The debate centers on technical issues, mainly.⁵⁹³ For the Mandara case this is relevant because in the special furnace type of the Mandara mountains, there can be no debate on the question whether or not preheating occurs, as in Mandara furnace the air is blown down through the fire column, and is preheated to a large extent. However, the effect of preheating in this case seems to be small (David & Sterner 2012), maybe even negligible, and anyway even if the African preheating is an independent invention, it is by no means unique, as preheating and air blasting have been invented in Europe as well.

The third issue is the great variety of furnace types, which is astonishing indeed. From a technical standpoint there are just a few options for reduction in charcoal furnaces, and the African continent seems to have produced almost all possible options. That is not an argument for independent invention, I think, but more for the creativity of local adaptations independent of the original place of invention, and rather reflects the differences in qualities of iron ore, of wood for charcoal and clay type. The Mandara furnace is a special case, the only one with a top-to-bottom forced draught, and its provenance is not clear at all. It does produce specific blooms, and at least has made a sustained major production in one village, Sukur, possible. The variety in furnace types stands in curious contrast with the technique of lost wax brass casting, in which almost no variety seems to be possible (see below).

17.3. Iron plus

That is, for short the argument from archeology. But smelting is only a part of the picture. I started out with the notion of metal-plus, and that is precisely the aspect where the forge is more important than the furnace. The questions about these additions are in principle not technical, but social and religious. Three questions surface here, the first the specific array of additional functions, the second the tendency towards endogamy, and finally the third question is on ranking, *i.e.* on the relations within the society as a whole. The actual array of the specializations, the 'plus', varies across the area, across the

⁵⁹³ For a comprehensive treatment see Schmidt 1996.

whole of West Africa in fact. Some commonalities emerge, though, in fact four clusters of the 'plus' specializations.

The first, the most universal cluster is the smith-potter combination, with the male smith working the iron and the smith woman as potter. As with all combinations, it has its exceptions, but it is a dominant one. The reason, maybe, resides in the notion of specialization itself. Given the male definition of smithing, about the only major specialization which is available for a woman is indeed potting. In those cases where pottery is not considered a specialization at the village level, the association does not hold. For instance, where villages as a whole specialize in pottery, as among the Dogon in Mali, all women pot and smith's women have no monopoly.

The second is burial, for the men. In an astonishing high proportion of West African cultures, the smith is funeral director, or at least has an important role in burial proceedings. The man of iron tends to be also the man of death. For a large part this undertaker role, forms the high point of a more general function, in ritual.

Third, healing with a large variation in importance between smith groups, forms another nexus, with magic - also the black variety - as a logical part of the healing function. For smith women similar options are child healing and midwifery, as throughout West Africa the association of smith women with the welfare of children is rather strong. For the men, divination may be part of this healing function, though it does lead to its own proper specialization, often open for any people interested in the craft, or - in the case of inspirational divination (see Peek & van Beek 2012) - open for anyone 'called'.

The fourth option is music. In quite a few cases are the smiths also the musicians, though in other parts of West Africa this craft often demands its own endogamous group, the bards-cum-musicians. The same holds for leatherworking and carving, which are tied into the production of musical instruments first, and into status definition and ritual production second.

The most difficult question is the one pertaining to endogamy, that is often combined with notions of purity and pollution. For instance, Kapsiki smiths have different food habits than the non-smith, called *melu*, and the two groups do not eat together nor drink from the same vessel. Such a clear case of non-commensality is relatively rare (Wente-Lukas 1972, Schmitz-Cliever 1979), and a more straightforward endogamy without the notion of 'dirtiness' is more common, the simple fact being that smiths tend to marry among themselves. As an intra-Mandara comparison shows (David 2012) endogamy is not an either-or variable, but should be treated more as a continuum, in which also rule and practice not always coincide. Anyway, the combination of a marriage strategy with notions of pollution as an aspect of professional specialization, inevitably evokes the notion of caste.

In more general terms, the phenomenon is one of professional closure, and the association between group closure and professional specialization is much wider than the smith in Africa. Throughout history and all over the world, artisan groups have and have had the tendency to self organize or be organized into groups with clear boundaries and fixed relations between them. For this closure of artisan groups two major models are apt, guild and

caste. In his classic 'The Preindustrial City' Sjöberg (1960) noted that 'The most obvious aspect of the preindustrial city's economic organization is its guild system, one that pervades manufacturing, trade, and services, even marginal forms of economic activity like begging and thievery'. And 'the overwhelming number of craftsmen, merchants, and persons in service occupations are organized along guild lines' (1960: 187, 188). Hobsbawm calls it a 'type of organization which appears to be quite universal wherever and whenever there are pre-industrial cities' (Hobsbawm 1971: 111; Cited in Black 1984: 7). The formation of larger and more centralized polities may have boosted the institutionalization of guilds as well, as exemplified by the rise of guilds after the installment of the Ottoman empire.

Guilds have arisen all over the world, always in cities, where they were either under the tutelage of the ruler, or - gradually - formed a kind of civil society (Black 1984) and in some cases took over the city in terms of power. In principle a guild is a voluntary association of free people who share the same craft, and organize into a fraternity of colleagues. The guild was made up by experienced and confirmed experts in their field of handicraft, called master craftsmen. Before a new employee could rise to the level of mastery, he had to go through a protracted schooling period during which he was first called an apprentice. After this period he could rise to the level of journeyman. Apprentices would typically not learn more than the most basic techniques until they were trusted by their peers to keep the guild's or company's secrets. Guilds regulated the craft, but also monopolized it, thus eliminating, in principle, free competition, which in the end proved their undoing.

Crucial for guilds are a high level of organization and a guild ethos, as they did 'provide a milieu moral for their members'⁵⁹⁴, who should consider each other as 'brothers' or 'friends', and had to defend the 'honor of their trade', as well as the standards of their craftsmanship. From an African perspective surprisingly little is mentioned in guild literature on the relation with family. Black notes: 'At no point, it would seem, did they [the guilds] outweigh family ties which, craft guild membership usually being hereditary, were actually incorporated in the guild system' (Black 1984: 27). Though the son of a Carpenter often became Carpenter as that road was wide open to him, in principle, and often in practice, guilds were open associations, where that son of a Carpenter could apply for apprenticeship in a Weaver guild. The core of the guild system was the regulation of new craftsmen, through a thorough and long training system. This transmission of knowledge resulted in high standards of performance on the one hand, and in a focus on esoteric aspects of the knowledge on the other, the 'secrets of the craft' (Black 1984).

17.4. West African gradients

In quite a few West African cultures, the smiths have been compared to guilds indeed. This is a popular description in cultures far to the South of the Mandara Mountains, such as among the Ibo, Ewe, Akpafu, and less explicit Krun, Dan and Losso (Burkina

⁵⁹⁴ Black 1984: 26, italics in original.

Faso)⁵⁹⁵. Especially in cultures engaging in initiation into secret societies, like *poro* and *sande* (Bellman 1986), smiths are important as mask makers as well as mask chiefs, and there the smith position is invariably very high, as members of a deeply respected and often feared craft. In most of these forest based societies, recruitment to the non-endogamous smith profession is not exclusively on the basis of descent, but smiths also take non-kin pupils, a crucial indicator.

For a considerable part, these are also the cultures engaging in *cire perdu* brass casting. Brass casting has a specific distribution with a large presence in the South and the West of the subcontinent. Probably because of this association, brass seems not to correlate with the formation of endogamous groups, though the brass casters and the smiths tend not to be the same subgroup, even if they all fall under the category 'smith'. Clear however is that brass casting smiths and gold/silver smiths tend to be highly ranked profession in these societies. These West African groups of smiths are quite comparable with guilds, as they are recruiting by free association, and do have a concise internal organization, though not to the extent that there are master pieces to be produced in a three tiered learning system. Guilds in Medieval Europe were not endogamous, especially the smaller ones, even if an intra-guild marriage would facilitate apprenticeship and general acceptance within the city community. The African situation is different, as the smiths guilds, also the brass casters, are much less urban, more integrated with village life as well, where not only the regulation of production is important but also the esoteric side of the knowledge, the 'power' of the smith (McNaughton 1988). Within the group a smith may choose his specialization, and then does have to go into training, and any on the job training is easier done with kinsmen than with non-kin. But the kin relations between smiths are so dense that with any other smith some kind of kin relationship is easily found. So the comparison with guild is more apt in the western part of West Africa, also the region with the densest population and the most urbanized one, suitable for guilds.

West Africa shows several other gradients in the relative position of the smiths. We saw the association between secret societies, brass casting and a high position of smiths in the forest based cultures, in fact forming a North-South gradient in West Africa. But also an important West-East gradient is clear in the savanna region, with the Mande area in the West showing a more complicated system of occupational groups, which are often called castes, such as in the case of the Bambara, Malinke, Soninke, Kuranko, and even the Dogon and Songhai.⁵⁹⁶ In the East, towards the more central part of Africa, especially in the region South of Lake Tchad with as its core the Mandara Mountains, most of the relevant specializations are reserved only for one separate group of the smiths, occupations that are always centered around iron. On the Western and Eastern flanks of this gradient, the smiths are more or less nomadic groups, e.g. Bikom, Rukuba, Dyerma, Ibo and Kpelle, or often form or stem from separate ethnic groups, Bororo, Tamacheq and Dakari. Relations between smith and power, as well as religious func-

⁵⁹⁵ Consulting the list of Schmitz-Cliever (1979).

⁵⁹⁶ Again, Schmitz-Cliever 1979.

tions for smiths are found throughout the region, with no particular centre, and the same holds for the smith woman as potter.⁵⁹⁷

So it is in the more Eastern part of the subcontinent that the other model, that of caste, is relevant. There, the tendency towards endogamy among the smiths is one main argument why the debate on caste is relevant, a debate which leads into more general theory of social inequality and stratification. In the Kapsiki-Higi case both endogamy and purity/pollution are crucial, including specific food taboos, but that does not hold for all smith groups. Yet, in the larger region the tendency to combine craft specialization and endogamy is marked enough to generate a more general debate on the term 'caste' than just for the Mandara area. Usually reserved for the Indian subcontinent (though the word stems from Portuguese - *casta*, something non-mixed), some cultural aspects of the smith/non-smith division look remarkable like the Indian caste system. For instance the Kapsiki smith group combines hierarchy, notions of pollution, endogamy, special occupation and specific food habits, a cluster of features that positively invites the comparison with Indian caste systems.

Yet, many scholars working on smiths in West Africa are reticent to use the term 'caste', and so am I. 'Caste-like', or in French the slightly ambiguous *caste*, or more cautious still 'endogamous professional group' are the terms of choice, thus avoiding the implicit identification with the Indian subcontinent, if only by a shallow margin. A for West Africa suitable definition runs: 'a specialist endogamous group socially differentiated by prescribed behavior and genealogically inherited professional capacities' (McNaughton 1988: 165), but in fact this definition includes Indian castes as well. The overview of Schmitz-Cliever (1979) shows that the older ethnographers had less compunction in using 'caste' than the more recent anthropologists. There are two reasons to shun the use of 'caste'; the first is a general movement of anthropology away from large scale comparison, feeding into a proclivity of Indianists to consider the Indian caste system as *sui generis*, beyond comparison. For instance, Dipandar Gupta (2005:410) argues that the 'obsessive attention to the slightest variation in ritual ranking... marks out caste from other forms of stratification'. Though the extreme ends of a continuum can accrue special characteristics, this does not preclude comparison; anthropology should never abandon half of its fundamental project, engaging not only in ethnographic description but definitely also in wide ranging comparison.

The second reason is more valid: the notion of a caste-system is not nearly as clear as in India, and many Indologists, like Dumont, have stressed the idea of a system. The Indian hierarchy with four *varna* each with thousands of distinct *yati*, plus hosts of castes or 'tribal groups' outside the *varna* system, all of them set in a complex political and geographical framework, is a rather far cry from the superimposition of just two layers, smith and non-smith inside a lineage based society. Also absent in West Africa, for a

⁵⁹⁷ This runs parallel with Childs' division in unstratified - stratified societies, Childs & Killick 1993:329. ⁵⁹⁸ Even the model of a pyramid might be wrong, if we follow Quigley 1993, 1994. See also for this fundamental discussion Heesterman 1985, Kolenda 1980, Millner 1994, Poggio 2006, Smaje 2000 and Snodgrass 2006.

large part, is the huge influence of religion; even if smiths are constantly defined and redefined as a separate group in Kapsiki religion, there is no way in which one could state that the whole system is 'religiously generated', as scholars of Indian caste often do (Dumont 1980, 2006). Also demographics are very different. The non-smith group in Kapsiki comprises about 95% of the society, the *rerhe* 5%, so in fact there is just one dominant group plus one caste. Indian castes form a complex - and continuously shifting - pyramid, even several competing pyramids, with a relatively small elite and a huge body of lower echelons.⁵⁹⁸ If we would represent Kapsiki society by a pyramid, it would be an inverted one, with a narrow base, the smiths, while the bulk of the population forms the main body of the pyramid above them.

17.5. Smith and inequality

For our smith case this means several things. First, social echelons are a pervasive feature of West African life, and despite the inevitable social cost of rigid social echelons such a system must have survival qualities in offering feasible socio-technical solutions for the challenges facing the society as a whole. *Homo hierarchicus* has his social logic. Also, we have to consider the whole array of occupational specializations if we are to understand their unique position as part of the larger society, viewing them as a nodal point in a socio-occupational network. However, notions of inequality will have to be integrated into the dominant African kinship discourse as the village level is more dominant in Africa than in India. Kinship and lineage organization form the dominant discourse, sometimes overriding vertical distinctions. Marital relations similarly are used to bond as well as to separate. The combination of kinship with territoriality, like in the *yati* case, in Africa brings in ethnicity, often undervalued in the smith literature, *i.e.* through their very mobility. De Barros (2000) indicates that historically iron smiths often had their own ethnic identity, or formed migrating lineages of ethnic groups, or at least were quite mobile. The deeply rooted identity of many African ethnic groups - at least in their historic discourses - is not for the smiths; in many case they are the indwelling newcomers, the strangers-that-belong. This mobility of the smith can have various reasons; for the smelters the depletion of resources, for smelters and smiths the control of an ambitious king over their production, and throughout history for all iron workers the economic need to disperse evenly over towns and villages (de Barros 2000: 184-6), as a service industry for farming.

Second, also in the case of smiths we should not surmise a timeless institution. Despite its legitimacy as being traditional, the smiths' position must have changed through times, and now is changing rapidly again. Specific historic conditions have led to the formation of caste-like social formations, conditions that are not unique but might be unique in their configuration. So we have to delve into the large scale history of the region area in order to view the rise of the caste-like institutions. Thus, the deep history of West African state formation, including its history of slavery and slave raiding (the exploitation factor) should be drawn into the interpretive and explanatory model, as

well as the early cities in the region.

Third, the internal organization plus its links with similar groups and the majority of the society, have to be viewed as a relational system, including the politics of knowledge and the monopolization of production and trade are crucial. Finally, the very content of the specializations, and the logic of their interaction, the intricacies of the craft and transmission of knowledge, as well as the exigencies of specific knowledge systems have to be set against the external dynamics. Why this ordering and ranking of the smiths, as either a lower or a higher group? And, in the Kapsiki case - and in the majority of the Mandara cultures - why is a group that is as essential as the smiths' one, ranked so low?

My *a priori* is that we try to explain differences, not similarity, which in part stems from my own cultural proclivity to problematize human inequality⁵⁹⁹. So my attempt at an explanatory chain runs as follows. Craft knowledge is always a social process, and especially metallurgy is an embodied and social activity, so the craft of ironwork has its own political economy/ecology, easily leading to a distinctness of the artisan. This distinction can be articulated in several fashions, depending on the techno-ecological adaptation characterizing that particular society, including its division of labor. This adaptation in turn is informed by the political, economic and ecological history of the larger area. Given this historical adaptation, local identity politics and internal cultural logic integrate the local definition of the smith into a system of meaning. Let us see what the main factors are.

The village based horticultural societies of West Africa with their pre-industrial iron technology produce a small surplus only, in which a limited division of labor is feasible. Of the limited number of crafts possible, only the iron smith is absolutely essential, as only that craft is difficult enough to need a long learning period, while they have to be in the immediate vicinity of the users of their products.

The early iron age of the Middle East, Iron I, provides a good example of what happens when that latter condition is not met. In I Samuel 13 a situation of blacksmith' scarcity is portrayed:

13:19 A blacksmith could not be found in all the land of Israel, for the Philistines had said, 'This will prevent the Hebrews from making swords and spears.' 13:20 So all Israel had to go down to the Philistines in order to get their plowshares, cutting instruments, axes, and sickles sharpened. 13:21 They charged two-thirds of a shekel to sharpen plowshares and cutting instruments, and a third of a shekel to sharpen picks and axes, and to set ox goads. 13:22 So on the day of the battle no sword or spear was to be found in the hand of anyone in the army that was with Saul and Jonathan. No one but Saul and his son Jonathan had them.

Here Israel is depicted as a full-blown iron ecology without local smiths, which cries for explanation. Generally, the meaning is construed as a means to highlight the dependency of Israel on the Philistines: what better image could be found than 'we had no blacksmiths'.⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁹ See Ingliss & Bone 2006.

⁶⁰⁰ The historic correctness of the text is dubious for several reasons. First, the line reads like an editor's comment inserted at the time this text got its final editing in the post-exilic phase of scripture construction. So like other lines in the same chapter (I Sam. 10:12b) it harkens back to the old days, looking from the 5th back to the 10th century BCE. Second, the scene in the 10th century BCE depicts a fully agricultural society, i.e. with plows and shares, not a horticultural one with just hoes,

African pre-colonial cultures knew few technologies as intricate, difficult and spectacular as metal work, especially smelting and casting, so from a materialist perspective this is one technology that can easily stand out. Wood carving, plaiting, weaving, pottery, leatherwork, but also singing, drumming and recitation require their own expertise, but they do seem to stand closer to everyday experience, lacking the danger of the fire, the stubborn hardness of the material and the need for a separate infrastructure, the smithy. And of course, smiths' products are absolutely essential in food production and war, so life-as-Africa-knows-it simply would not be possible without them. Iron is crucial, and so is the smith. But that does not explain the whole gamut of specializations, the iron-plus, neither does it say anything about the endogamy, nor about hierarchy or religion. Why do specializations coagulate?

The caste system gives a clue here, as here too the association between occupation and *yati* is close, but never definite, never fully closed, and also here the *yati* identification remains long after the occupation has gone, especially in a modern urban setting. In villages being born in a *yati* points to a preferred occupation by excluding most other options, thus leaving just a few options open for individual and collective agency, but in the city all new jobs are open to almost anyone. So castes may be a limiting case of the institutionalization of the division of labor, still with some flexibility.

17.6. Smith, state and slavery

What are the possible influences of state formation on the organization of specializations? The history of state formation in West Africa is dominated by an West-East gradient of state formations: after the empires of Ghana (in Senegal-Mauretania) and Mande (Mali, Guinea) a series of jihad-triggered Islamic reform movements, from Futa Jallon in the 14th century till the largest one, the Usman dan Fodio *jihad* that resulted in the Sokoto Caliphate in the 19th century. These large scale empires contrast with the much more local kingdoms of the West African Coast, like Asante, Benin or the Yoruba states. Two elements are important in state formation, the availability of weapons and slavery. For a centralizing state, for any predator state like the polities in the West African savanna have been, control over smith production is crucial, and either creating or officializing a hereditary position of smiths does offer some guarantee for a constant supply of craftsmen. Of course, a court generates other specialties as well, like the bards/musicians who may have formed their caste-like organization in the early phase of the Mande realm, but the crucial position of the smith in state formation is undisputed.

In 1825 Major Denham describes in detail the two days' siege of Musfeia [Maroua] by the sultan of Wandala, the Moslem emirate at the North rim of the Mandara Mountains. During the night it was difficult to sleep, he writes, as a constant barrage of ham-

and is probably an anachronism. Also, if smiths were a later introduction in Israel, this would have been mentioned as part of the deliverance from the Sea People (Philistines).

mering came from the town: the local smiths worked through the night to replace the weapons of the defenders. The next morning the sultan of the Wandala let his guests take the lead in the attack, which failed. Denham escaped just by skin of his neck. (Denham 1825)

Besides this military necessity, a system of endogamous craft groups provides a handy order for any ruler or elite, in fact like the guilds in medieval cities. Such a system assures a diversified production under tutelage of the ruler, regulates competition, guarantees the transmission of knowledge and links the various crafts into a network of mutual obligations. Closed craft groups bring order and stability to a realm, and are needed for war as well. Cities appeared with these states, and cities are crucial in the formation of multi-tiered system of inequality. The same West-East gradient is discernible again, the first cities in the West of the subcontinent developing centuries before the earliest Eastern ones.

Effectively, hierarchy is built into such a system, first through the suzerainty of the elite under which it operates, second through the relations the crafts have with that elite and with each other and finally through the relative pricing of the products; after all, in the Israel example we saw the prices of smiths' work explicitly mentioned (probably because they were quite expensive). Closeness to the court would be one factor to establish a higher status of the craft - such as in the case of the Mande *jeli*, bards (Jansen 2000) - but then those inter-craft differences will continue to shift, and be renegotiated continuously. That is exactly the situation Quigley analyses as the core of the caste system, an ever shifting circle of occupational *yati* around a ruler, including the Brahmans (Quigley 1993, 1994), vying for status in the *varna* system. Again, West African processes are quite comparable.

The differences are relevant as well, *i.e.* in religion, degree of urbanization and the crucial factor of slavery in Africa, probably the principal distinguishing factor between the two areas. In my view, slavery takes the explanatory place of the religious pollution complex in Dumont's analysis. Slavery is one major theme that runs throughout West African history, and does have a clear and unbreakable link with iron, so with smiths. In the Mandara area this link was obvious. Scott MacEachern relates how the mountain people traded iron with the Wandala emirate, against salt and fish, but on the other hand were enslaved by their trading 'partners', or as a *montagnard* put it: 'They bought our iron, then used it to make the shackles they held us with' MacEachern (1993: 260). As Denham's incident shows, slave raiding was part of general warfare in the area, an ever present threat for the people living in mountains. The search for refuge has been one of the reasons for settling the mountains, so by no means the only one, and much earlier than the arrival of the jihadists. Whatever its actual incidence in history, slavery has been extremely important, both slave raiding and what has been called the 'slave mode of production' (Lovejoy 2005), the use of slaves in state building. Slaves were essential for plantation labor (Klein 2007, Lovejoy 2005: 153ff), as domestic slaves (117ff) and simply for progeny, but then women (Lovejoy 2005:81 ff). Craftsmen usually were not enslaved but their products were crucial for trade, like the iron produced in the Mandara Mountains. These empires did have a continuous hunger for slaves (van Beek

1992) and organized small or large slave raids like the one described by Denham, above. In fact the open countryside of the Sudan permitted easy travel, on foot or horseback for the war parties, and for the victim populations offered only a limited number of places for refuge, just a few mountain areas and some major inundation zones. On these rugged hillsides populations who wanted to stay 'out of history' could defend themselves against the marauding Muslim, the Mandara mountains being one of these places. In between the plantation economy and the slave raids, important slave markets have flourished, such as Mora, just north of the Mandara, seat of the Wandala emirate, mentioned above.

The mountain populations like the Kapsiki did not readily submit to this threat and fought back wherever they could, even if they faced a better organized enemy with superior armament (van Beek 1992), *i.e.* mounted marauders, later armed also with guns. They did also have their own, internal warfare and slavery, catching enemies - in Kapsiki, people from other villages - to sell to slave merchants, or to have them ransomed back by their kinsmen (van Beek 1989). The total toll in loss of life is hard to establish, though the tales of horror about one particular Fulbe chief, Hamman Yaji from the Nigerian side of the Kapsiki/Higi still reverberate through the whole mountain area (Vaughan & Kirk-Greene 1989, van Beek 2010). But whatever the loss of life, the main effect was one of high insecurity, a Hobbesian situation of 'Warre', of armed conflict against each and everyone.

For our smiths' group this meant several things. First, weapons involve iron, barbed spearheads, arrow points, iron clubs, throwing knives and later also shields (the earlier versions were from buffalo hide, but also a smith product). The tales people tell about war, internal as well as external, keep the smiths themselves out of the fray; the craftsmen are essentially non-fighters who make war possible. Like women. Second, the smiths furnished the poison for the arrows, and provided medical services after the battlefield as well, antidote as well as wound dressings. Agriculture was not possible without the smiths' products, but war made that dependency immediately visible.

The third effect is more profound, I think. Slavery is hierarchy incorporated and inequality hammered in. With iron. The presence of slavery and the continuous threat of slave raiding make one thing above all crystal clear: people are not equal. Either by descent or by accident, people are or become fundamentally unequal. The notion of slavery is rather complex, and the strictly legalistic definition as 'someone who is not a subject but an object', *i.e.* slavery as a property relationship, is not very helpful. Better is Patterson's definition as 'an institutionalized alienation from rights of labor and kinship' (Patterson 2006: 136) as this reserves more room for different kinds of bondage such as serfdom and debt pawnship as well as the distinction between house and chattel slaves (Lovejoy 2005: 355ff). Slaves have no rights to their own products and lack the natural rights that should accrue to their kinship relations; in slavery the relation with the master is dominant and compulsory. Slave raiding generates a world view in which the other is the enemy, and as all others are enemies, the enemy is always stronger and more numerous than oneself. This is, essentially, a minority worldview, and as such an inferiority one. Slave raiding creates victim populations, which tend to fragment and

very seldom organize at a higher echelon than the village level (van Beek 1992). My point is here, that such a worldview makes ranking of categories easy and acceptable, not only outside the own society but also within, generating a pervading experience of inequality.

Once enslaved the loss of rights is permanent and in most cases hereditary. West Africa, especially in the last few centuries before colonization, was replete with slave groups, either slave villages in a kind of plantation system producing for their emir or laves in households. For instance a Muslim emirate like Sokoto fed on slaves. The Caliphate in its heydays kept a huge court⁶⁰¹, having to realise a standing army, crop production as well as slaves for domestic purposes. For some realms guarding cattle has been an important slave task, as transhumance was organised mainly through slave labour in some emirates. So most emirates in this part of Africa had many uses for slaves, so were slave-hungry; in fact, the machinery of the state largely ran on slaves. Many slaves were put to crop production, in plantation villages which produced a variety of food crops. These agricultural slaves lived in separate villages, supervised by other slaves, and worked the morning and the early afternoon on the masters' fields, and the rest of their time in their own. Though bearable in peace time, their situation worsened when war induced a higher production (Lovejoy 2005)

Lovejoy estimates that at the time of the collapse of the trans-Atlantic slave trade Adamawa, the Sokoto province that includes the Mandara mountains, exported 5000 slaves per year to Sokoto, 'a policy of relocation on a gigantic scale' (Lovejoy 2005: 15, 192). Though not all of these were 'pagans', as against accepted custom also some Muslim were enslaved, the 'land of enslavement' was definitely the area where 'unbelief reigned' (Lovejoy 2005: 20). The great majority of the slaves entered into production, as nearly all edible and tradable products came from slaves, with the huge and labor intensive cloth production as one major industry (Barth 1857-58: 190-6).

'Under the guise of pursuing the *jihad*, slave raiding and war were institutionalized into a coercive system for the mobilisation of labor and for the redistribution of peasant output.' (Lovejoy 2005: 175). Smiths are seldom mentioned in these texts, and oral history concurs in that they stayed out of the fray, and usually were not enslaved. Their products were too important for war. Also, they usually did not fight themselves, just furnishing the wherewithal's, so ran much less risk of enslavement; theirs is an inside job, with the smithy close to the home inside the village, the craft a rooted one. Also, as they did not fight in the internal wars, they were not captured and sold either. But whatever the actual involvement of smiths in the slave system, the argument of slavery as a societal model holds here even stronger. The fundamental hierarchical division in West Africa is between nobles and slaves, reminiscent of Dumont's emblematic opposition between Brahmans and Untouchables in the Hindu caste system (Dumont 1980, 2006). Here the skewed demographics of the smiths (5%) is of less importance, as in the

⁶⁰¹ See Klein 2007 for an analysis of the seemingly most irrational side of the court, the harem.⁶⁰² R. Brunsvig, cited in Patterson 2006: 124. The same holds for India, by the way, as the Mughal empires, Muslim as well, have at least solidified the caste system (Baily 1999).

Muslim states between 30 and 60% of the population was slave, which meant for the Sokoto Caliphate a total number of slaves running into the millions (Lovejoy 2005:3).

The oldest realms of Ghana and Mande were not Muslim, but from the 12th century all major polities shared an Islam ideology in which slavery is deeply rooted: "Throughout the whole Islamic history down to the nineteenth century, slavery has always been an institution tenacious of life and deeply rooted in custom"⁶⁰². With the advent of Islam, inequalities intensified. Islamic doctrine proscribes the enslavement of fellow Muslim, but that rule was not always heeded, as in fact the jihad movements that generated the state formation processes zoomed in on Muslim rulers who were deemed lax in the observation of Islam; often they were accused of 'siding with the idolators', the non-Islamic populations they ruled over. In quite a few cases the cooperation of Muslim rulers with 'pagan' chiefs was forced because the emirate was attacked by another Muslim warlord.⁶⁰³

A fundamental contradiction at the very heart of Islamic ideology generates this polarity between human beings. On the one hand, all men are equal before Allah, but on the other hand the distinction between believers and unbelievers is deep and lasting. In the case of slavery, the chasm becomes unbridgeable, as once enslaved also conversion to Islam does not free the ex-slave, not even those Muslims enslaved by mistake could be free again. So a religion of open access becomes an ideology of closure, and the ideal of equal submission becomes a reality of structural inequality.

This Islamic contradiction resonates with the general ideology of Fulbe social life, the group which was at the core of the West African jihad. In Fulbe culture, based upon nomadic pastoralism, an ethos of equality combines with clear hierarchies, both between them and all 'others' - especially the horticultural societies they live between - and internally between the various Fulbe groups, and their chiefs (De Bruijn & van Dijk 1995). Freedom and equality in nomadic life as well as in Islam, is just for the in-group and even in a recruiting religion this means an exclusive, clausulated equality. So in the end Islam is an ideology that stimulates and supports inequality, not only for slaves - the limiting case of inequality - but also for craftsmen. In the Islamic cities craft guilds have been a lasting feature, and still are, also with hierarchies between them.

If the noble - slave opposition is reminiscent of the Brahmin - untouchable dichotomy, the position of the smith is hierarchical, though in a varying way. To an extent his 'otherness' is cast in the same discourse, as either lower or higher, but then in an encompassing fashion. McNaughton uses the analogy of a 'joking relationship' a notion strongly institutionalized in the Mande area (McNaughton 1988: 10) with also endogenous repercussions. Though this aspect is clearer in the western than in the central region, it highlights both difference and bonding. In the Kapsiki case there is more to the relation of inequality than joking. Inequalities are not only larger, but much more charged, loaded with social and symbolic meaning. Within the model of an encompassing hierarchy, the smith status is definitely lower, made all the more poignant through

⁶⁰³ For instance, when El Hadj Umar attacked the Masina state of Cheick Amadou; the very pious Amadou only cooperated with the 'pagans' under the threat of war (van Beek 1992).

the pollution/food taboo complex. If Islamic state formation has been a factor indeed, the lower rank of the smiths, in fact of all craft groups, forms part of the Islamic state formation complex, elitist as it is. Characteristically, smiths in Central Africa, far away from any pastoral nomadic influence, occupy the social high ground, and are closely associated with kingship.

A crucial discourse is kinship. Indian caste identity is shot through with kinship (Quigley 1993), a discourse seemingly at odds with the closed groups generated by endogamy. But in the end also *yati* organization is kin based. In African society the dominance of kinship is uncontested, though often more in terms of descent than of affinity. Smiths, as said, often form an endogamous group, yet are still considered kinsmen in the village. Various mechanisms allow for this exclusion-through-inclusion, ranging from separate but recognized smith lineages to inclusion of the smiths in regular lineages. Throughout, local discourse defines the smith in kinship terms, as 'children of the village' or as 'woman of the village'. This characterization, however, illustrates one fundamental aspect of the generalized kinship discourse, *i.e.* its hierarchical nature. Kinship indicates always two principles at the same time, bonding and difference. Kin terms express a close but partial identity, bonding over the chasms of generation, age or gender in order to bind lineages together as brothers or sisters. But the hierarchies of the same principles, generation, age and gender, are stressed even in bonding expressions: father and son are close, but vertically, brothers are identical but one is older than the other, spouses form one union but through difference. *Homo hierarchicus* is at home in the family. This underlines Dumont's thesis that hierarchy is a form of holism, creating a system where everyone has his own, specific and different, place (Dumont 1980). This basic discourse also conflates the opposition between equality and hierarchy. However different people may be, they still are kinsmen, and however close they are, there is an inalienable bond between them: the bond of difference and the equality of hierarchy.

So, there, finally is the smith, the one who belongs and does not belong. He unites in his many crafts all those tasks that are part of normal daily life, but still not fully so. His tasks demand expertise that is part of the general cultural repertoire, but can never be available for everyone. The smith is the insider-outsider, and as such deeply embedded within the local or regional cultures. The many configurations of his various positions, the actual composition of his various crafts, his specific relation towards the dominant non-smith groups, and the religious connotations of these relations, all depend on specific historical and ecological factors. But throughout, we are dealing here with a phenomenon which has deep roots in the way Africans carved out a living in their soil, not a recent phenomenon nor a fleeting one. The smiths' position has waxed and waned with the incidence of slavery, but that very notion of inequality combined with the closure orientation of the craft itself, gives us a tool to interpret the smith's craft as one of the deep realities of African life.

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Chapter 18

Glass beads and *bungoma*

The link between southern India, and southern-African traditional knowledge designated *bungoma*

by Robert Thornton

18.1. The argument

This paper examines possible links between the southern African practices of 'traditional healing' (known as 'bungoma' as practiced by initiated practitioners called sangoma) and trance and healing in southern India. The paper is based on archaeological evidence and artefacts in southern Africa (Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique) and southern India, and on new archaeological analysis of these materials, especially the material culture associated with this. It also utilizes a reading of South Indian iconography, but is not primarily based on historical reading of texts or oral evidence. Evidence for an early link – perhaps dating from 600 CE to 1600 CE – is developed by comparing instances of material culture from traditions of the sangoma in the southern Africa and the iconography of southern India, especially of Ganesha and Hanuman. In particular, the ritual use of metal tools and glass objects, specifically beads (*ubuhlalu*, *insimbi*, made of metal and glass), the 'mace' (*sagila*), 'axe' (*lizhembe*), 'spear' (*umkhonto*, *sikhali*), the knife (*mukwa*), and the 'fly whisk' (*lishoba*, made either of tails

of hyaena [*impisi*] or of blue wildebeest [ngongoni]). All of these items are found in the ritual practices and iconography of the sangoma and of iconography and practices of devotees of Hanuman and Ganesha, among other gods, in south Indian Hinduism. This material culture, especially the 'weapons' of the southern African sangoma and the south Indian icons and ritual practices, show strong similarities that suggest more than trade was involved in early links between the southern Indian region and the southern African region. It has long been known that the Indian Ocean trade distributed beads across India, the Middle East, southern Europe and Africa. Scholars have long known, too, that Africans traded items like ivory, metals (iron, gold, copper), gums, woods and slaves out of Africa in exchange for beads from other sources around the Indian Ocean, especially India. These beads are often associated with dry-stone walled structures such as Mapungubwe on the South African- Zimbabwe border, and with others in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Botswana, and they are found on the coast of Mozambique and farther north into Swahili coastal regions. Recent compositional analysis of the beads from the interior of southern Africa, however, have failed to show detailed similarities in shape and elemental composition with other bead industries in other continental areas that are known to have traded in the Indian Ocean trade.

This raises the possibility that beads were made in Africa in response to the local demand for beads for ritual and religious use, and that these were manufactured by specialist syndicates or guilds of technicians who were skilled in pyrotechnic arts. Beads were certainly made of iron or steel, copper and gold in this period (600-1600 CE), and were made of ostrich eggshell and other shells much earlier, so the model for and practice of bead manufacture existed. Metal and ceramics were also made in this period and earlier, so complex pyrotechnical arts also existed in the region. These skills were almost certainly controlled by secret or secretive guilds of technically adept craftsmen, since this is the pattern seen in all instances elsewhere in the world prior to industrial-type and industrial-scale manufacture and global distribution of metal and glass objects. Little evidence has emerged so far concerning manufacture of glass in Africa.

Considerable evidence exists for traditional smelting of iron and manufacture of iron, steel, copper, bronze, and gold artefacts in southern Africa. By contrast, almost nothing is known about manufacture of glass, except that a certain kind of large bead cylindrical coloured beads appear to have been made in Mapungubwe and elsewhere locally by means of re-melting smaller glass beads in moulds in order to fuse them into larger beads. If it was possible to fuse smaller glass beads into large glass beads using moulds, then it was almost certainly possible to produce smaller beads in the first place using local technologies. The manufacture of glass, and fusing or melting of glass for shaping, require extremely high temperatures, well in excess of 1000 degrees C. This is much higher than temperatures required for iron smelting, or working of gold or copper. It appears that temperatures above 1000 degrees were possible, however. There is also evidence that it was achieved at a relatively large scale, although the archaeological materials involved have not been correctly identified.

An anomalous substance that has been called 'vitrified cow dung' or 'biomass slag' has been discovered at a number of sites in what is now central and northern Botswana, and

extending eastwards towards the coast through the site of Mapungubwe on the Limpopo. This apparent and so-called 'biomass slag' or 'vitrified dung' is also found in southern India. It is found nowhere else in the world.

In Africa, this archaeological material occurs in relatively large masses usually on the tops of steep sided hills, and is usually buried and surrounded by soils rich in ash and sometimes other organic materials. It has not been studied extensively, nor with contemporary high-tech analytical equipment, but earlier studies present sufficient chemical and physical evidence to identify it unambiguously as a glass, that is, as fused silicon dioxide, with other minerals and materials included within the mass. This material however shows very low values for all metals (iron, manganese, magnesium, copper, nickel, aluminium, titanium, etc.) that would be expected in metallurgical slags as a by-product of metal smelting or forging. Despite being labelled in some work as 'biomass slag', it is clearly not slag. It is also clear that 'biomass' (wood, straw, dung, waste vegetable matter, etc.), and especially dung from cattle or other livestock does not contain enough silicon dioxide to make glass. It generally burns to ash in all normal and natural fires, and without producing any great heat. Although experiments have shown that the ash, like any ash, can be vitrified at sufficiently high temperatures (1100-1300 degrees C), it is not possible to achieve such temperatures by accident in nature or by natural means. The morphology of the material also excludes fulgerites that form as the result of lightning strikes on earth or sand.

The apparent presence of large quantities of 'dung' in a 'vitrified' form has been used to support the contention that these sites were used for intensive cattle penning and that such large concentrations of cattle signified a highly class structured society with 'elite' owners of large herds, and therefore emerging or proto-state, or state-like social structures with class divisions, kings, and hierarchies of chiefs over subservient 'commoners' who herded cattle and tilled fields. This distinctly European model is extremely unlikely to have flourished in southern Africa in the period that most archaeologists have claimed, that is 600-1600 CE, and then entirely vanished.

Similarly, since dung and biomass do not 'vitrify' under any natural conditions, and because it is extremely unlikely that kings deliberately set out to turn dung into glass, that the 'vitrified cow dung' or 'biomass slag' hypothesis is not tenable.

Evidence shows, however, that large deposits of glass of this anomalous sort do exist in southern Africa, and in southern India. Both types of archaeological sites are associated with intensive ritual use of beads and are connected in other ways through similarities in ritual forms and material culture, and are known to have been connected at least through trade links. Both regions also show strong similarities in manufacture and use of metals, including gold and iron/steel in particular.

The material is in fact glass, and not 'biomass' or 'dung', and since it is not possible to reach temperatures required for glass to form in nature — excluding volcanic lava that is generally cooler (at 700-1000 degrees C). In fact, glasses manufactured by humans require temperatures in excess of 1000 degrees C. The conclusion that this was glass made deliberately by humans is compelling. Given this evidence, it appears very likely that the 'biomass slag' is in fact remains of deliberate early manufacture of glass, and

that this was in turn used to manufacture beads in the southern African, and very probably in the southern Indian region where these deposits are found.

How could this have been done?

The glass already existed in large chunks that have been called biomass slag. First, it probably would have been possible to select zones of desirable glass from a large mass of foamy and partially consolidated glass that might have been produced in local traditional furnaces. These could have been chipped out of the large mass using simple tools that were already available in stone and metal. Areas with particular colours might also be segregated using mechanical means in this way. Once the glass exists, it can also be powdered by grinding, put into moulds and re-fired to make beads. Alternatively, it can be re-melted and dipped hot, wound on mandrels as some of the beads seem to have been made, or cut into globules that could be punched using an awl-like metal tool. All of these technologies and methods have been documented elsewhere in traditional glass making sites.

But how did the glass come to exist in the first place?

The large plates of 'glass foam' or 'biomass slag' may have been produced in a way similar to the way in which charcoal and iron was produced. For charcoal production, it is likely that the same methods in use today throughout Africa were used in the past since there is no evidence of innovation, and considerable evidence for conservatism. Wood is stacked tightly, then covered in clay and ignited. Some of the wood burns to ash, providing the heat for the rest of the tightly packed pile to convert to charcoal as the gasses, water, and other organic compounds are driven out of the wood in a reducing environment, leaving more or less pure carbon behind. By restricting oxygen in-flow to just enough to create the heat to convert the rest of the pile to carbon, a reducing environment is sustained. This required careful control and skill borne of experience, as it does today. If the airflow is too large, the pile converts entirely to ash. If it is too little the fire is extinguished, and one is left with partially burnt wood. Neither outcome is desired since a great deal of labour is required to gather and stack the wood, create the temporary oven structure in which the charcoal can be formed, and to monitor the process. The same thing is true for iron smelting. A great deal of skill and experience is required in order to prevent failure in the highly labour intensive process. Since both processes are highly likely to fail unless skilful and careful control is exercised, they are also highly protected by magic, and ritual. By extension, the magic that is deemed to be effective in preventing failure of charcoal and smelting processes, is also expected to be more generally effective. Craftsmen were not just people with technical knowledge, but also persons who were considered to have great magic as well.

If metal processing and charcoal production were both possible, then it is also probably that glass making was indeed within the range of possibility. Since some types of beads were probably locally produced from re-melting other glass beads, it is clear that the temperatures for re-melting glass were possible. Given this, it is well within the range of probability that the 'biomass slag' was produced deliberately. It is also possible that the masses that have been identified were mistakes, or that the glass was too foamy, or not of a sufficiently high quality to have been used. Alternatively, it is also possible that all of

the usable consolidated glass from the sites was mechanically removed (chipped away) and that what is left is simply waste from the process.

Accordingly, it is possible that glass-making furnaces might have been constructed on tops of steep sided hills of rough stone work or clay furnaces that was ultimately destroyed in the process or after the glass had cooled. Remains of these furnaces, however, should ultimately be discoverable. If such furnaces were constructed with flue holes and packed with silicon dioxide, fluxing agents, and charcoal, it would have been possible to produce a mass of glass for subsequent extraction, remelting and use. Alternatively, the glass produced could have been ground up, placed in moulds and heated in a furnace of a similar design to melt it into bead shapes.

If glass beads were manufactured in southern Africa by skilled guilds of glass makers who also, perhaps, made iron and other objects of metal and glass, then a new approach to southern African history would have to be undertaken.

Specifically, it would be possible to imagine the link between India and Africa as a two way link, with beads not only traded in to Africa against raw products such as ivory, but also as a two way complex trade that involved traders from both sides of the Indian Ocean trade network. This would place Indian technical specialists in the southern African arena, and African technical specialists in the southern Indian arena.

Since metal and glass were primarily utilised for ritual, healing, medicinal and 'decorative' application, it is clear, also, that ritual knowledge and practices that were associated with glass and metal manufacture would also have been included in the interactions between the two regions.

This would help us to explain not only the preponderance of beads in southern African sites that have no obvious, or yet discovered, source outside of southern Africa. It would also help us to understand the parallels in ritual costumes, iconography, regalia and ritual techniques in both places.

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