

AFRICANS, CANOES & NAVIGATION

CANOES & NAVIGATION: Oliphantes to Ogowe

Dugout-canoes were scarce relative to other types over most of east Africa. However, they were still around to be reported by the unknown author of the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (= PME). An addition to this 1st c. CE reference would those that James Hornell (*Mariner's Mirror* 1948) thought were exemplified in Egypt by scenes in the tomb of Queen Tiye. Long journeys by canoes are put forward as having taken the Polynesian ancestors of the Maoris to New Zealand. More canoe-borne migrants are those from the part of east Africa that is now called Tanganyika getting to Fiji according to **Fijian** tradition cited on the Balson Holdings site (online).

There is general opinion groups going under the several labels of Khoikhoi, Khwe, San, Khoisan, Queyna, Bushmen, Capoids plus umpteen others did not use boats. More of the same comes with a contributor to the *New Advent Encyclopaedia* confidently saying the Khwe did not fish. Contrary views are not helped by the faults of "Bushman's Art" by Erik Holm (1987) being pointed out by John Parkington in the South African journal called "The Digging Stick" (1988). These faults are such that Holm's book has been withdrawn by the publisher.

Somewhat ironically, points made by Holm (ib.) are akin to some by prominent African scholars. Holm regarded scenes in rock-art at Siloswane (Zimbabwe [= Rhodesia]) attest Khwe fishing from boats. Nudukuya Ndlovu (Incorporating Indigenous Rock Art in KwaZulu/Natal online) says the same of rock-art at uKhahlamba (in the Drakensberg Mountains, South Africa). Blake Whelan (*Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 1938) compared simple multi-use tools of banjo-shape that he felt were for boat-building. In line with this will be that Khwe/San on the River Okavango so adept at fishing from boats that they called River San.

The neighbours of the Khwe across much of southern Africa were speakers of tongues the Niger/Congo (= N/C) family belonging to the N/C sub-group called Bantu. Signs that the Proto/Early Bantu were relatively few in number seem shown by excavations at Bambandyanalo (South Africa), Mapungubwe (South Africa), etc, of material showing both Khwe and Bantu affinities. They are discussed in such as "A fragmentary skull cranium & dated Later Stone Age assemblage from Lukenya Hill, Kenya" by messrs. Gramley & Rightmire (*Man* 1973); in "Expansion of Bantu-speakers vs. development of Bantu in situ" by Richard Gramley (*South African Archaeological Bulletin* 1978); Chami (2006), etc. More hints of early date would come with Graham Campbell-Dunn (*Maori: The African Evidence* 2007) giving an ancestry in reduced Bantu prefixes for the archaic Khwe clicks. The N/C ancestors evidently came south as growers of yams plus palm-nuts not cereals.

Here we plainly have expert opinions relatively few in number but apparently growing when arguing against details of what is called the Bantu Migration Theory (= BMT) that begins to resemble the Aryan Invasion Theory (= AIT) in India. This all tells us Bantu were in parts of southern Africa millennia before they were supposed to be. This goes against the received wisdom on such matters but dopes accord with a number of European maps. Some of these maps are cited by Hall & Neal (*The Ancient Ruins of Rhodesia* 1902), Cooke (*Human migration from Rock-art of Rhodesia [Africa* 1965]), "African Floods, Lakes & Random Matters", etc.

Among the cited European map-makers are messrs. Sanuto/Sanudo (13th/14th c. Italian), Vesconte (13th/14th c. Italian), Mauro (15th c. Italian), Barbosa (15th

Portuguese), Santos (16th c. Portuguese), Johnstone (16th c. English). The Santos/Vesconte Maps appear to attest the surprising detail of Robben Island in near-perfect relationship to the Cape Town and Table Bay locations of western South Africa. The most prominent feature of the Cape/Bay region is probably Table Mountain overlooking Cape Town.

How a European myth was grafted on to Table Mountain in some of my other papers but it also has a Bantu name but we should perhaps worth questioning why. Nor is this the only question. Another is just when the earliest Bantu got to the Cape/Bay region? This is usually regarded as belonging to no earlier than the 1850s. Some of the cited European maps attest the Bantu-ruled Mwenemetepe (= Monomatapa for the Portuguese) Empire reached down to Table Bay way before the first Europeans got there. This would mean that once again Bantus were present in parts of southern Africa long before academics would allow them to be.

One question from the above relates to an African name for Table Mountain. That name is Umlindi Wemingizimu (= Watcher of the South) and it is fully Bantu. Such a name could accord with the original term of Cabo da Tormentosa (= Cape of Storms) for what was renamed as Cabo da Boa Esperanca (= Cape of Good Hope). This would attest Umlindi warning against bad weather for African sailors (esp. given Bantu fishermen apparently still invoke him as a tutelary protector). Otherwise, he is warning off would-be invaders of southwest Africa.

That this may again indicate this region was attractive to non-Africans at dates that are very decidedly Pre-European. Holm (ib.) felt the Bushman/Khwe rock-art he discussed; attest a white presence in southern Africa. This was what got his book banned. Yet we also saw that this was taken up by African writers. Good examples are the several works by Credo Mutwa, Felix Chami (The Unity of African Ancient History 2006), etc. For the Bantu Mutwa, they were Phoenicians but the Tanzanian Chami was inclined to look to the Phoenician colony of Carthage (= Puni in Latin).

This Phoenico/Punic element is even harked to by some for the antecedents of the west African Iron Age. John Taylor (Oxford Journal of Archaeology =OJA 1987) and John Sutton (OJA 1988) are among those doing so and both do so via Carthage. Taylor tied the date of ca. 600 BCE for the Periplus (= Voyage) of Hanno to that for the early Iron Age site in west Africa at Nok (Nigeria).

Unfortunately for this theory, the Carthaginian methods of iron production differ radically from those of west Africa in terms of moulds plus furnaces. In any case, ca. 600 BCE is far too late for such as the carbon-14 dates (=C14-dates) for Iron Age sites from west African sites far to the south in Gabon. These Gabonese C14-dates run between ca. 1000-600 BCE for what are not the primary stages for this technology but attest ironworking as a developed tradition.

Taylor's article does at least allow for some iron technology having arrived by sea, a theme further touched on shortly. However, this also brings us to the matter of west African sea-craft. The dominant vessel here is the dominant vessel is the dugout-canoe about which Europeans complained loud and long. This was because the long narrow canoes were regarded as very unstable. They can achieve stability by a second vessel being attached that became reduced over the years to mere floats called outriggers. The double-canoe and/or those with outriggers appear on both sides of Africa, may originate in India but are known across both the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Another African method of achieving stability was by sheer size. It is known that Polynesian traditions tell of the Proto-Maori getting to New Zealand in such giant canoes. So there is little reason to reject Fijian traditions cited on the Balson Holdings

site (online) of east Africans from Tanzania also undergoing transoceanic journeys in such canoes when going across the Indian Ocean to reach the Fiji Islands in the western Pacific. As to unstable canoes in west Africa, opinions cited by John Vlach (*The African American Tradition in the Decorative Arts* 2007) west Africans sitting dexterously in their vessels.

In short, the Europeans were sitting in vessels they were not used to. This writer had a not a dissimilar experience when getting into a currach off Galway in the west of Ireland many years ago. A comparable underestimate of African canoes seems to be the origin of Europeans saying the west African canoes could not navigate the tricky channels between the Bissagos Islands and mainland Guinea-Bissau. Reclus (ib.) and Lacroix (ib.) say much the same about African sea-craft could not cope with the currents between the Cape Verde Islands and Senegal on the mainland. This is despite abundant evidence to the contrary. On the basis of wrecked European ships that as skeletal remains combined with the actual bones that led to part of the Namibian coast being named as the Skeleton Coast, it would be equally appropriate to suppose Europeans never got to western South Africa because they too could not cope with the conditions.

What was Sud-west Afrika/is now Namibia was under German control in the late 19th/early 20th c. They quickly manoeuvred the Hereros into war in which superior firepower won victory, the Germans took Herrero land and wanted to settle it with Germans. It will be very obvious there was no great German love for Africans yet there is a surprise about who the Germans chose to ferry the precious cargo of would-be colonists from ship to shore. They were taken through the dangerous swell that had wrecked so many European ships in canoes that were standard issue far to the north in west Africa according to the Swakopmund entry on Wikipedia.

Another German was Leo Frobenius (*Voice of Africa* 1913). His concept of a unitary state from Angola is unlikely and it was seen substituting a commercial unity over the same extent of west-facing Africa on the strength of what is said by Jean Barbot would be equally rejected by messrs Hair, Law & Jones (ib.).

Frobenius is not alone in theorising about such. So too did the African scholar named Carl-Christian Reindorf (*History of Asante & the Gold Coast* 1896) about Congo to Ghana. A Swede called Knut Knudson (*Swedish Ventures in Cameroon* ed. Shirley Ardener 2002) wrote an extent from Cameroon to an unnamed distant north.

It was seen there are real problems in attributing a Phoenico/Punic origin via Carthage and the Sahara for the west African Iron Age. That the Voyage of Hanno is best seen as a commercial venture emerges from the study of Hanno by such as Jona Lendering (online). So again, that the Carthaginians had to conform to west African trade-modes matches b the much later “Portuguese Adaptations to Trade Patterns Guinea to Angola” shown by Eugenia Herbert (*African Studies Review* =ASR 1974).

Moreover, the overland route claimed for Saharan iron resembles the claim of Saharan copper coming via Saharan copper at Tazelik (Niger) to the mouth of the River Niger. As John Fage (*Cambridge History of Africa* 1977) points out, the ca. 600 miles between Azelik and the Niger Delta approximates to that of the Congo to the Niger. Having seen that the commerce of an earlier period may be illustrated by that of the Portuguese adaptations referred to by Herbert (ib.), there is still the objection already seen as being raised by messrs. Hair, Law & Jones (ib.). This is readily answered by Fage (ib.), Roger Smith (*Journal of African History* 1970), Kevin Patterson (*The North Gabon Coast* 1975), Herbert (ASR ib., *Red Gold of Africa* 1984), Chami (ib.), etc.

Hints of antiquity emerge from Lacroix (ib.), Lendering (ib.), Patterson (ib.), etc. The first two regard it as likely that a word for gorilla from the language of the Bakongo also naming the Congo passed to the outer world via Hanno. Lacroix further suggested that the Congo is the most westerly of the African rivers listed in “The Aethiopia” by Heliodorus of Emessa (3rd c. CE Greek). More Bakongo words came to the Mahongwe/Mpongwe traders of Gabon according to Patterson (ib.) who in turn were also traders with the outside world.

An aspect of Hanno not often touched on is the sea-craft in which his Periplus took place, as they were of penteconter type. As the penteconter is a warship, they make unlikely carriers of passenger that is made even more improbable when read they totalled 30.000. What the penteconter indicates is a need for speed and here we have what may be another echo passed down to much later times, namely the west African desire to prevent incursions on their internal waterways. One such was the dramatic encounter between a native canoe-fleet and the Portuguese squadron led by Alvise Cadamosto leading to Cadamosto being forced away from the mouth of the Gambia, as shown by Ivan Van Sertima (They Came Before Columbus 1976).

If one group of seagoing Bantus were operating on these coasts as early as Hanno, those of Gabon were clearly absorbed or replaced by the Mahongwe. They were evidently very proud of their canoe-building skills to judge from remarks made by an experienced captain of the Royal Navy. He was Thomas Botteler (A Narrative of a Voyage to Africa & Arabia 1835) and wrote that Mahongwe canoes were built for “speed, symmetry & solidity”.

It begins to look as if the Mahongwe are the west African equivalent of the Mantenos in the Ecuador-to-west Mexico trade of West-coast Americas. Nor should it not go unnoticed that once again there is once again the implication of a requirement of speedy sea-craft. Botteler’s (ib.) admiration was picked up by the better known Richard Burton (Two Months in Gorilla Land and the Cataracts of the Congo 1870)

Messrs Burton (ib.) and Barabe (The Religion of the Iboga/Bwiti of the Fang online) are among those holding there was a religio/spiritual dimension to this when Mahongwe shamans went into the Spirit-world. Barabe compared Gabon in Africa and Tibet in Asia for religio/spiritual development. Back in this world, Burton thought Mahongwe canoes could have navigated to the Americas and that they carried 10/12 tons, so is close to the capacity guesstimated for the wreck excavated at Uluburun (Turkey). Patterson adds the detail that they could carry 80/100 people.

CANOES & NAVIGATION: Gabon to Ghana

The alliterated title of the previous section took us from the River Oliphants in western South Africa to the River Ogowe in Gabon and this section equally has a alliterated title. Incorporated under these alliterations it is the parts of Africa facing the Gulf of Guinea that are under discussion.

The suggestion here has been that what some writers regard as political systems stretching from Angola to as far north as Morocco has to be set aside and that commercial ties are more probable. In this it seems Gabonese traders played as major a role in Atlantic-west Africa as that of the Mantenos in the trading of West-Coast Americas from Peru/Ecuador to west Mexico.

Serious doubts exist as to whether East-coast Amerinds ever had sails. Jack Forbes (The American Discovery of Europe 2007) refers to the story of a Father Blaseus as told by an Englishman named John Stoneman. Thus to Amerinds of

Mesoamerica held not to know anything about sails is added Stoneman recording this Spanish priest as having taught use of sails to the Caribs.

As far back as Julius Caesar (1st c. BCE Roman), questions about the form and material of the sails of the Atlantic Celts were being raised. Caesar was writing about the sails of the Celts of that part of Gaul (= France & Belg.) that was Armorica/is Brittany. He wondered if the sails of Veneti of Gaul were of leather because Celtic Europe knew nothing of cloth-making.

There are several descriptions of Africans knowing nothing about sails. This is said of Africans of the open waters of the Great Lakes of east Africa. Of west Africans in canoes, probably the closest attention has been paid seems to have paid to those on the River Niger. In fact, it may even be wondered if the crews on the great rivers of actually needed to know anything sails.

As to Celts not knowing how to manufacture of cloth, we need only refer to the Manapi. The Manapi were Celts of what is now mainly Belgium, were known in Britain as Manaw and Monapia with another branch of the Manapi in Ireland. They made cloaks that became very well known to the Romans. In any case, Caesar himself felt the Venetic leather sails result directly from Atlantic conditions.

Amerinds of West-coast Americas are proven to have had sails and taking the Circum-Caribbean Culture theory of Julian Steward (The Handbook of South America 1946-50), the spread of sails to the Caribbean seems no problem. More on this are Pacific-like sails of the Brazilian jangada and Mayan Motul words of Pre-Spanish date of bub (= sail) plus bubil (to sail/to navigate under sail).

Nor can west Africa be charged with not knowing how to make cloth. Not only was/is there an enormous variety of west African fabrics but such as Columbus and Cortez wrote of almaizor being exported to Iberia and Mexico. If the Portuguese truly brought sails to the west of Africa, a question arising is why the form plus material of European and west African differ so much.

Moreover, nor do the sails of local form, being of matting, methods of the use of masts and sails, etc, of west Africa greatly resemble those of sailing-ships of Portugal or any other part of Europe. Bradley (ib.) pictured vessels with masts and sails in the Congo and more on the Niger. Those on the former river can be assumed to be in what today are the Democratic Republic of the Congo (=DRC) plus Congo. The more so as early Europeans record fleets of canoes engaged in fishing here and as seen, west Africans reportedly went fishing at some distance from the nearest coast.

Unfortunately, Bradley does not give a source or date for his pictorial testimony but Lacroix does mention Ichthyophagi (= Fish-eaters in Greek). He notes Ptolemy (150 CE Egypt/Greek) citing the Aethiopiae Ichthyophagi of somewhere around Cameroon. This incorporates the Greek term of Aithiopes (= Burnt/Black-faces) for the darkest of Black Africans. It is uncertain why the African fishermen of this region were regarded as blacker than any of the others in the regions immediately adjacent to where the Aethiopiae Ichthyophagi were first recorded.

One of the adjacent countries is that called Nigeria. Here were fishermen that were not confined to the river giving Nigeria and the more inland Niger their names. In the way that it seems more was going on around the Cape/Bay region of western South Africa, so it may be that this was also so with coastal Nigeria. Indeed "The Ijo Genesis" (= Ijo-Gen.) site has it that at least part of the makeup of the Ijo people of south Nigeria originated in western South Africa; so on this view would involve more long-distance voyages.

So too would those seen to have involved the territory of ancient Nigeria variously called Benin, Edoland or Biafra. Thus those already theorised to have

stretched south towards to possibly Angola is added the traditions behind voyages northwards to Gold Coast/Ghana. Yet another writer, Livio Stecchini (re Hanno online) has invoked The Periplus of Hanno (online) as a relevant connection. Reindorf (ib.) is a major source about Biafran sea-craft on their northward navigations that can assumed to date to the period of Phoenico/Punics in Atlantic-west Africa when Stecchini wrote of the Carthaginian admiral named Hanno trying to contact what he described the great civilisation of Benin.

A major difficulty with anyone neutral trying to make sense of the Nigerian material is the welter of theory plus counter-theory that is hardly helped when writers of the separate ethnica are mainly concerned with propagandising and scoring points on behalf of their particular group. On the other hand, staying with things nautical and Nigerian but moving on to the Yorubas, there are again numerous opinions but one that may be of interest relates to Olokun (= Lord of the Sea/Deep).

Among the welter of views are comparisons of Olokun and Poseidon, Olokun in a story marking the quarters of the world, linkage with a form of wind-rose plus that with Atlantis, etc. Frobenius (ib.) clearly did not subscribe to the viewpoint by such as Roy Bridges (in *Africa & the Sea* 1985) plus others that Nigerians before contact with Europeans were too scared of the sea to go on it.

This does not seem to square with the Yoruba god named Olokun. He is decidedly a Pre-Contact and his name means Lord of the Sea. However, if Yorubas and other Pre-Contact Nigerians were too frightened to go on to the sea, why would there be a need for a god of the sea? The more so given that Frobenius (ib.) felt Olokun as the Yoruba god of the sea compared with Poseidon as the Greek god of the sea and that Yorubaland and Atlantis were one and the same.

Here Yoruba myths of golden cities under the sea; vultures marking cardinal points of the compass; heads of godlings also marking north, east, south and west; connection with early wind-roses, etc, play their part. Not only are there innumerable gods of the sea stretching along most of the west African littoral but with Olokun also being the Yoruba god of the sea, there is recognition of wealth coming from the sea. A Kenyan story has Tumbainot sending out a vulture and Amerinds from Mexico named the Cora also have a myth involving vultures. What links this with Olokun is that involved forms of Great Flood myths and have some reference to vultures as points of navigation (see *West Africans & Ancient Navigations* for more on this).

As to the names of lesser gods naming the winds blowing from the basic points of the compass, this compares with the same feature of godlings again marking winds on the Horologion (= Tower of Winds at Athens, Greece). If the Horologion attests the 8-point form of the early version of compass called a wind-rose, the writer of the Eden Saga page (online) makes a comparison of the 16 palm-nuts of Ifa or Yoruba divination and the 16-point wind-rose.

Stecchini (ib.) and others refer to an incident recorded by Hanno of Carthage approaching what has been called the Great Island identified by him with the original Lagos Island (Nigeria). This episode has been variously interpreted. Some regard it as a Kwanza-type ceremony or as having driven off what the wary locals perceived was an attempted invasion. If the latter, this is not the only example of the inhabitants of Lagos Island doing so as later islanders appear to have seen off an intended conquest by the Benin Empire at its height according to standard online histories of Lagos Island. Yet if so, at some stage, the island came under Bini/Benin rule.

Ijo-Gen (ib.) states Beni-Otu translates as People of the Water and that Aromire is a Yoruba term meaning Lovers of the Water. The same source has it that not only did some of the mix making up the Proto-Ijo come from as far south as

western South Africa but also that some of the same group(s) went even further to affect the speakers of languages of the Krio/Kru family of Ghana, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone but mainly Liberia.

CANOES & NAVIGATION: Accra to Atlas

This section will more take a look at the rest of the west African coast that is mainly being dealt with here. The distance in a straight route from Accra (Ghana) to Rabat Morocco) is roughly 2500 miles. Somewhat longer are sea-routes approximating to the distance across such as the Indian Ocean. The Austronesian/AN-speaking forebears of the Pacific islanders were capable of considerable feats of navigation. Views of AN-speaking Indo-Malays coming across the Indian Ocean in one go are no longer tenable but still a considerable distance was being covered. Apparently a whole year was involved, as seems to be the case with the equally transoceanic voyages of the Chinese fleets led by Cheng-Ho (= Zheng-He) across the Indian Ocean.

In the western Pacific lie the Fiji Islands. Among the cave-art here is a depiction of what seems to be canoe sailing towards the star called Sirius shown by Roderick Ewins (Journal of the Polynesian Society 1995) at Vatuele. We saw Fijian tradition has it that AN-like voyages were undertaken by east Africans reaching Fiji and of interest should be that there may be an African parallel for the Vatuele cave-art scene of canoe plus Sirius in the Yoruba term of Irawa-Okò (= Canoe-star) for Sirius (= ancient Egyptian Sothis).

Other long African sea-routes are indicated by Ijo-Gen being from western South Africa to the Gulf of Guinea; the long Yoruba voyages briefly mentioned by Frobenius (ib.), the traders also shown above that also involved the going against prevailing currents in simple vessels that so impressed writers when describing the Ecuador/Mexico commerce.

Genetic research by Serge Plaza et al (joining the Pillars of Hercules... online) indicates lengthy voyages from the Gulf of Guinea, bypassing Morocco to Iberia at some time during the overlap of the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age. This distance matches that across much of the Atlantic. More signs of this would include the traits of the Ikom/Cross River menhirs matched on Wuthenau figurines; Frobenius-noted Yoruba voyages of the same 12-months as those of ANs, Cheng-Ho, etc; the name of Yemoja/Yemoye (sister of Olokun) echoed (?) by Yemoye (a Pre-Spanish spelling of Jamaica); Barton (ib.) noting Akan-like (Ghana) outline of the lips compares with that of some Olmec Great Heads of Mexico.

Akan-speakers are the dominant factor in what was the Gold Coast but took a name very resonant in west African history, that of ancient Ghana some 400 miles to the north (note again, that ancient Maurusia/Mauritania [= approx. Morocco] & modern Mauritania are ca. 150 miles apart.).

The Akans are one of the west African groups praised by early Europeans for their swimming ability. Online histories of early surfing include mention of “Africa-Birthplace of Surfing”. This has it that there is an ancient surfing tradition stretching from Angola to islands in the Gulf of Guinea and to this can be added the recording of surfing from Ghana round to Senegal. If west Africa is to be regarded as a birthplace of surfing, presumably this stands alongside what is shown by rock-art at Chan-Chan (Peru) of ca. 2500 BCE and apparently coming with the first ANs in the western Pacific at ca. 2000 BCE as a major ancestral factor in the populations of Melanesia, Micronesia plus Polynesia (esp. Hawaii).

What is held to emerge from this is an intimacy with the sea on the part of the Akans at more or less one end of the Gulf of Guinea from Gabon. If Gabon is one polar end of the argued-for commerce, it seems likely that Ghana stands at the other. Comparison of Ghana to Gabon in west Africa and Peru/Ecuador to west Mexico has further significance shown in Smith's (ib.) article on "The Canoe in West African History". The Manteno crews en route to west Mexico did so going against prevailing winds and currents has provoked much admiration but not very well known is Smith (ib.) saying that south-going west Africans on the trade-trips noted by Barbot also navigated against prevailing currents.

To Ghana from Benin (Nigeria) was apparently a five-day journey by dugout-canoe according to Reindorf (ib.) but there also maps showing a spread of the Yorubas to ad far west as Liberia. Underlying this would be that the Grebo people of Liberia had Sea and Land sections, so presumable means that once again elements of the formative stages of becoming an identifiable group came from different directions.

Undoubtedly, even better known as sailors in Liberia but also Sierra Leone are speakers of the Krio/Kru language. Indeed, the terms of Kru and crew have become synonyms. Well known from Hanno is that the pilot/interpreters that he came south with reached a point that they of little further use to him. For Lacroix (ib.), that point was Liberia/Sierra Leone and that Krio were the replacements.

Another sign of antiquity comes with the term already noted above about Ichthyophagi (= Fish-eaters.). From at least the Ashiluanda of Angola to the fleets of canoes noted by the first Europeans in such as Congo plus Ghana, fishing was still of considerable importance to west Africans. Elizabeth Tonkin (in Stone ib.) adds the detail some of the Krio are still known as the Fishmen.

Krio fishermen came in for considerable praise by James Hornell (Mariner's Mirror = MM 1928; Water Transport 1946). He described the enormous fish called tarpons carried home in the small canoes normal for Krio fishing contrasting with the expensive boats and tackle used by sportsmen today. Hornell (ib.) also compared the paddles the sea-going canoes of the Marquesas Islanders of the Pacific and the Krio/Kru of west Africa for size, elegance of design and functionality. It can be seen that if there is no difficulty with the Marquesan Polynesians being seen as seafarers, there should be few problems in accepting the Krio as yet another west African group that belong here.

Hornell (ib.), Vlach (ib.) and others have described how thin-walled the Krio make their canoes. This means they are so light they can be carried by their crews, to resemble another vessel also used in fishing at sea. That other vessel is the Celtic skin-boat called a currach and now mainly confined to west Ireland.

Standing for how seaworthy west African canoes can be is the Krio-type called "Liberia II" that was successfully taken by Hannes Lindemann (Alone at Sea 1958) on to the Atlantic Ocean. It will recalled that Burton (ib.) was of the opinion that Mahongwe canoes could have made it across the Atlantic Ocean and just this was the achievement of Lindemann when successfully navigating this Krio/Kru type of dugout-canoe across that very ocean.

Especially salient about Liberia II is that it was an everyday dugout-canoe that in British terminology was bought off the peg and not a specially built one like the Kaimiloa, the Ra boats, the Brendan currach, etc. This makes it an everyday norm for the Krio. It is also noticeable that the feature naming the Ichthyophagi was also that followed by Lindemann (ib.) when eating only an all-fish diet en route.

At the opposite end of the 1/2-man sized canoes of the Krio were those of such as the islanders of the Bissago Archipelago. Canoes of this size are known from

Gabon way to the south right up to those just noted on the islands off Guinea-Bissau called the Bissagos/Biyagos/Bijagos. There seems to have a one-time opinion that native vessels could not have coped with the tricky channels between mainland Guinea-Bissau and the Bissago Islands and those that separate the various islands of this small archipelago. Just how this may have arisen is uncertain.

However, a story cited by Pamela White et al (*Exploration in the World of the Middle Ages* 2005) has it that a Portuguese ship could not cope with the tides and currents between the islands. George Brooks (*Eurafricans in Western Africa* 2003) says an 18th c. French captain employed a Bissagan pilot who did not appear to know how to do so either. In such tales may have arisen such as the erroneous opinion of the time that neither European nor Bissagan craft could navigate these channels. Nearly a century on, a later Frenchman was still writing how difficult it was to for ships to navigate these channels. That other Frenchman was none other than Elysee Reclus (*ib.*) but by this time, Europeans had generally learnt how to do so.

What seems to have been overlooked is just where the inhabitants that the Portuguese slavers tried to capture came from. A normal “explanation” put forward for Africans on islands offshore is that they have an African population because of the activities of European slavers. Yet the Portuguese as the first Europeans known to have reached the Bissagos found these islands already populated. The Wilson article on “Vowel Harmony in Biyago” (*The Journal of West African Languages* 2003 & online) plus others attest that some Bissagan dialects are unintelligible to other islanders. This by itself is more than enough to indicate there was a very considerable antiquity of the Bissagan islands having been occupied and this had happened well anterior to the Portuguese arrival.

Well to the south there may be something exemplified bringing us back to Guinea-Bissau. Reclus refers to Angolans recorded on the island of Sao Thome in the Gulf of Guinea and felt that they were survivors of a wreck. However, it may be that their presence in the Gulf of Guinea may attach to the Barbot-noted commerce, the more so given that the Angolans continued to harass the Portuguese. Certainly this would hardly be the only example of protecting assets. Another instance may involve Nigeria. A suggestion has been made that an episode noted by Hanno may have been the driving of his Carthaginian fleet away from the Great Island identified with Lagos Island point-for-point according to Stecchini (*ib.*). Another case may be that section of the Yorubas called the Awori apparently driving an Edo/Bini force away from Lagos.

We know Angola had not only Kianda as the Kimbundu god of the according to Jan Knappert (*The Aquarian Guide to African Mythology* 1990) but also the Ashiluanda standing as a latter-day case of Ichthyophagi. The Awori evidently had used Lagos Island as a seasonal fishing-base and here was a god of the sea who was also the god of trade. The Ewe people of the Benin Republic are said by Knappert (*ib.*) to have had a god of the sea named Wu (& other variants) but also a god of fishing named Avaiki who was seen as stealing fish from Wu.

To this can be added the line of lagoons that Reclus says stretched from the Niger (Nigeria) to the Volta (Ghana) that were part of what prompted Frobenius to regard this part of part of west Africa as Atlantis. What emerges from this is not just apparent recognition of wealth of the sea/from the sea expressed in various ways but also that valuable assets needed to be defended.

Bringing this back to Guinea-Bissau is that are few places in west Africa where this better attested than here. Not only did the Bissagans have a repute of being corsairs prepared to go some distance out to sea to raid European ships but were

probably offered the most successful resistance to a would-be European colonial power, in that they saw off Portuguese invaders from 1535 to 1936.

They did so in canoes of the size of those encountering Cadamosto at the mouth of the River Gambia (as above). They appear to have been canoes of a sub-group of the Serer called the Niominka (= Coast-folk in Mandinka). The confrontation with Cadamosto's ships mentioned already was far from the only one according to a contribution about the Niominka on Wikipedia. Admiral-types are indicated by Egyptian titles; the Axumite Barnagash (= Lord of the Sea) placed over the Solates and Ethiopian fleets (as Stuart Munro-Hay [Aksum: An African Civilisation of Late Antiquity 1991]); Mkuukwa Pwani (= Master of the Shore in Swahili); Aromire (= Friend of the Waters in Yoruba); Hari-Forma (= Friends/Lovers of the Waters in one of the Mande/Mandinka-based languages).

This by itself is more than enough to demonstrate that Africans in general did not need Europeans to inspire them to form fleets to protect coasts from predated Europeans. Nor did the Europeans need to prompt the appointment of Admiral-type officers in overall command of fleets. After all, we have just shown that the first Europeans met with stiff resistance from various west African groups, as those against the Portuguese. In the light of the Solates being given the task of guarding the shores of Axumite Ethiopia, it may be wondered if such as Bissagans, Niominka, etc, did not fulfil the same function during the Tichitt (?)/Wakor/Mali/Songhai imperial sequence.

It can also be realised there was recognition of the need to control internal waterways. An especially famous example is how Egypt gained victory in the Battle of the Nile Delta by trapping groups called the Sea-Peoples in a branch of that river. David Jones (The Origins of Civilisation: The Case of Egypt & Mesopotamia from Several Disciplines 2007) is one of those noting early Egyptian canals. A Persio/Arabic term for east Africans was Zanj. A number of writers with what appear to mainly Persian/Iranian or Arabic names appear to have satisfactorily in their own minds decided a trans-Islamic/trans-Muslim trade in African slaves never took place.

We can assume that the trans-Atlantic slave-trade will equally vanish from history on this kind of opinion. Such writers will be less than amazed that others have a different opinion. Probably the best known slave revolt is that of 73-71 BCE led by Spartacus. His 18-month campaign stopped the all-conquering Roman Republic pales into insignificance against the 15-year Great Zanj Revolt (869-883) that stopped the all-conquering Arabs of the Islamic Empire of the Abbasids.

The Great Zanj Revolt was led by Sahib as-Zanj variously seen as Man of the Zanj, leader of the Zanj, Friend of the Zanj, etc. If Man of the Zanj is correct, this may do something to explain why an exalted ancestry was claimed and an Islamic name of Ali ben Mohammed (as per Moses & the Hebrews?) before he threw in his lot with the despised Zanj.

Just how despised is brought out by Robert Collins & James Burns (A History of Sub-Saharan Africa 2007) when saying the bodies of dead slaves were treated as animal carcasses and thrown into pits. They say the term for slave in the language of the Islam of east Africa is the Swahili word of mutumwa (= one who is seized). Collins/Burns (ib.) also describe the number of skills that the Zanj performed for their masters. This included being sailors, fishermen, boatmen, etc. The atrocious conditions in which the enslaved Africans were forced to work were a major factor why the Zanj revolted so many times culminating in the Great Zanj Rebellion (as above). A major component of any Zanj success was a riverine fleet that again enabled tight control of internal waterways of south Iraq.

The conditions in which African slaves were forced to work in marshes of Abbasid Iraq appear matched by those of Africans building levees in the US southeast (esp. facing New Orleans). Yet African slaves did not only provide muscle for work that Arabs felt was beneath them, as just cited from the Collins/Burns book. Indeed, what they wrote might equally be stated word for word in “The African American Tradition in the Decorative Arts” by John Vlach (1990) under boat-building.

Just how important the skills of west Africans for the nascent industries in North America in several cases has long been recognised. Expertise gained by west Africans by west Africans from Angola to Congo was especially significant in the rise of ferry systems in the US southeast. This does lead to suspicions that there was targeting of Africans with skills by slavers.

Where some of this expertise was acquired was as part of what we saw at the Angola/DCR/Congo end of the trade-trips referred to by Jean Barbot. Nigeria held to be Atlantis by Frobenius would very decidedly attest maritime skills. They are further noted by Vlach showing Ghanaian traits influenced the form of the oyster fishing-boats of Chesapeake Bay (U.S.A.). Vlach also makes reference to the Krio/Kru canoes of Liberia/Sierra Leone also praised by the prominent maritime historian named James Hornell (MM 1928; Water Transport 1946).

A place in west Africa providing good testimony of just how important canoes were for the natives is Guinea-Bissau. Despite apparent opinions to the contrary, the offshore islands of the Bijagos or Bissagos Archipelago were reachable by west Africans and that this may have been as early as the 1st millennium BCE at latest was shown above. The Bissagan canoes were not only a constant menace to unwary European ships sometimes at some distance out to sea but were also the basis of an extensive sea-based commerce.

They were also the basis of a resistance that kept the Portuguese at bay for 400 years. Nor need fighting have been the only way to have kept outsiders away. When Hugh Clapperton (19th c. Eng.) met Mohammed Bello of Sokoto, Bello told Clapperton the Niger flowed west but the map he gave Clapperton showed it as flowing east as part of the combined Niger/Nile. It was shown that a Bissagan pilot nearly wrecked a French ship. Reference to the Carthaginians gives a possible context for these events. Stecchini (ib.) wrote no Carthaginian cities south of Cerne/Kerne (= Arguin?) seemed to attest the sea beyond it was un-navigable. A story from Strabo has a Carthaginian captain deliberately wrecking his ship so that Romans could not obtain knowledge of trade-routes. Both the Bello and Bissagan episodes are fully explicable in terms of belated efforts to turn European attention away from Africa.

That west Africans were fully prepared to defend not just coasts but also internal waterways. The Niominka have been cited as having faced down Cadamosto and this was not the only example of such actions. The Niominka were but one ethnica of what is now the modern state of Senegal that would have been the subject to the long sequence of empires in west Africa that seemingly starts with the empire-like Tichitt Culture, Wakor, Mali, Songhai, etc.

Senegal seems to have been named from the term of sunugal (= [place of] canoes/ boats) for the Wolofs of Senegal. This again suggests large numbers of vessels on the river that was the Dar in the Wolof language. The more so given that Cheikh Anta Diop (The African Origin of Civilisation 1984) compared the term of Djahi in Old-Egyptian for Phoenicia and Djahi in Wolof for Senegal that he tells us means Place of Navigation.

According to messrs. Reclus (ib.) and Lacroix (ib.), Senegalese canoes could never have navigated to the Cape Verde Islands because the current would have swept

them back to the shore. This runs counter to the traditions collected by Luis Feijo (19th c. Portuguese Bishop of Cape Verdes). He says such Senegalese ethnias as the Serer, Wolofs, Lebou, etc, used these islands as bases for seasonal fishing. The distance from Senegal to the Cape Verde Islands approximates to that Bradley (ib.) cites Pacheco Pereira saying west Africans were fishing at “100 leagues” (= 300/350 miles) from the nearest coast.

Surely even plainer testimony of such distances is tales cited by al-Umari (13th c. Syrian) telling the story of an unnamed Malian captain. This captain returned home alone from a fleet of 200 other vessels from a point of the Atlantic that evidently means where the Canarian Current meets the North Equatorial Current. Even stronger is what is said by Serge Plaza et al plus Christopher Columbus.

Plaza et al (Joining the Pillars of Hercules... online) spoke of strands of west African DNA from the Gulf of Guinea and/or Senegal but unknown in Morocco but occurring in Iberia. Important here is to recognise this means voyages direct from the Gulf of Guinea to Iberia (= Spain & Port.) bypassing Morocco/west Magreb. Also that this means Bronze Age distances equal to routes across the Atlantic ranging in date from the Bronze Age to those of the Columbus report. Columbus wrote of Africans in canoes leaving the Cape Verdes for points west that can only have meant the Americas where he was told of blacks that were again trading from canoes but were in the Caribbean where islands include one possibly a west African god-name. Lindemann (ib.) showed west African could achieve such voyages.

The city in modern Senegal called St. Louis by the French is called N’Dar in Wolof. Dar/Dra is also a native name for the Senegal that is the southern end of the stretch of arid shore having the northern Dar/Dra (= Oued/Wadi Draa) at the other end. The name of this shore seems to incorporate that of placenames involving an interchangeable hard c/g/k, thus Ganar, Gana/Ghana, Canar, Canari, etc.

Gana/Ghana is more strictly the title of the west African empire otherwise called Ouauadugou/Wagudu/Wakor. Ghana/Gana seems to provide a more plausible etymology than does the Latin canes (= dogs). The more so given Ptolemy refers to Gannaria extremis (= the Gannarian promontory [= Cap Blanc = Ras Nouadhibou]) shared between Mauretania and Morocco.

With the Senegal as the northern Dar/Dra and the Oued Draa, there is general acceptance of the Oued/Wadi/River Draa as the River Lixus referred to by Hanno. Michael Skupin (The Carthaginian Columbus online) refers to the Lixus as a river of “Aithiopia/Aethiopia” (= mainly Sub-Saharan Africa) not Libya (= mostly Saharan/Magrebi Africa). This in turn would indicate that those living on the banks of the river were also Aithiopian/African Blacks. These Lixitae are the people that Hanno says were his interpreters for much of his journey down the coast of the Bulge of west Africa. To this is added that for some writers, the Lixitae were also the blacks that were the pilots for Hanno until he reached a point of west Africa where he encountered African tongues that the Lixitae could not understand. Lacroix was seen to regard this meaning they were languages of the Kru/Krio type.

To the Lixitae plus Ganari/Canari names seen to indicate Black Africans south of the Atlas are the Canari that Pliny apparently put north of the Atlas range. It would appear that a one-time general name for the Africans of the Atlas/Dyris region was Gaetuli/Getulae. Richard Smith (What Happened to the Ancient Libyans online) felt Gaetuli may mean “from the South” to parallel the Egyptian nsw (= n y swt = Man from the South) to both indicate blacks coming from the south but on opposite sides of Africa.). Gaetuli/Getuli was related to Keita (= the ruling clan of the Mande kings

of the successor to the Ghana Empire called the Malian Empire) by Richmond Palmer (The Carthaginian Voyage to West Africa 1931).

The fishing regime of the Great-lakes period of Magreb/Sahara may continue with black-skinned Bafours seen as Proto-Berbers and who are called Imraguen (= Fishermen) in Berber. Another echo from this period may be the cattle-herding of the later Fulani and subsequent events are shown by such as Ptolemy (2nd CE), Ibn Hawkal (11th c.), etc. Ptolemy refers to Melanogetuli (= Black G.), Leukaithiopes (= Light-skinned Afs.) and Hawkal to Berbers made up of 22 Banu Tanamak (= Black) and 19 Tuareg clans.

This apparent increasing Berberisation of the Magreb seems the opposite of the Bantuisation of southern Africa where the blacks increased over the millennia. However, there is good textual evidence for the situation in the Dyris/Atlas region. Skupin (ib.), Smith (ib.) are among the many wondering why Herodotus (ca. 450 BCE) separated the Atlantes and Atrantes and there is some suggestion it came from the problems of the person passing information to him had in pronouncing Atrantes. If correct, this means they were one and the same.

The Atlantes/Atrantes occupied the Dyris/Atlas region and are not directly known to have called Aithiopes by Herodotus but their constant complaint of sun burning skin plus face plainly relates them to the Greek term of Aithiopes (=Burnt-faces = African Blacks). This having to endure the sun clearly relates to Strabo (1st c. BCE) still describing the Atlas region as Dyris that seems to relate to another Greek word of douros (= to endure). Underlying this is yet another Greek term, namely the Gaituli/Gaetuli seen to mean Blacks of the south plus that Strabo could write the inhabitants of Dyris were still black. Moreover, Stecchini (ib.) is one of those having it that Herodotus describes the inhabitants as Aithiopians.

Atlas is the name of a range of mountains but above all, links more closely with water. Thus as the name of a tributary rising in the Pyrenees (= mountains between Spain and France) in the mistaken Herodotian attribution of the River Danube flowing right across Europe. This brings mountain and river together but more famous is the Atlantic (= Sea of Atlas). As far back as Homer (10th c. for Bernal ib.), Atlas was noted not just as a Titan turned to rock as the giant idiot beloved of Hollywood films but as an astronomer and master-pilot.

At the opposite end of west Africa was another giant turned to stone in the myth of Umlindi in western South Africa. He seems to represent one of the visual markers so useful for maritime navigation. Easily the best known instances of sailors in these waters is that of Phoenicians and/or their kinsfolk called the Carthaginians (= Poenis/Punis in Latin) plus Gaditanians. Egypt sent Phoenicians east/west round Africa according to Herodotus (5th c. BCE) and Carthage sent Hanno west/east according to Pliny (1st c. CE), Martianus Capella (3rd c. CE), etc. Carthage also sent Himilco on a similar expedition at about the same date to explore what was what on the coasts of Atlantic-west according Rufus Avienus (4th c. CE).

Just how difficult it is to accurately date these events is surely well shown by the several guesstimated ones put forward that vary widely. However, it seems equally hard to escape the impression of collusive actions by Phoenicia plus its colonies that from the date suggested by the Herodotian context place it to ca. 600 BCE. A Gaditanian component is indicated by the finding of that typically Phoenico/Punic vessel called a hippos thought to have gone round around Africa only to end as a wreck somewhere in east Africa. Eudoxus of Greece found it and he too is regarded by some ancients as having rounded Africa.

Landstrom (ib.) thought some of the much-praised craft of the Greeks were no better than dugout-canoes. George Rawlinson (History of Phoenicia 1889) apparently felt the same about **fragile** Phoenician ones. Yet they are classed as ships by most authorities as **ships**, as is the hippos in turn described as a very poor kind of vessel by Strabo. Yet they are seen by the ancients as having gone round Africa and Eric de Bisschop (The Kaimiloa Voyage 1940) showed canoe-types could achieve this too.

The more so given that names of giants attach to landmarks very prominent for sailors around Africa. An east African example would be Jillinda (= Red-band?) marking Mt. Karthala (in the Comoros) highly visual for those sailing between east Africa and Madagascar. The name is as Bantu as that in west Africa at Table Mountain seen to have the Bantu name of Umlindi (as shown already). Few of the vessels are superior to the west African canoes and to those of antiquity holding Carthaginians went round is added Chami (ib.) saying that such occurred much more than usually felt.

If doing so, they went on precisely the north/south routes of returnee west African traders already described and on this model, both Carthaginians and west Africans would have been going on the so-called harder routes for rounding Africa. Typical African canoes were also seen to been used to breach ferocious Atlantic swells so fatal to many European ships.

Another east African legend is that of the Ahl-i Hava (= Spirits of the Wind) discussed by Iraj Bashiri (Shamans or Muslims online). We might quibble at Bashiri only allowing Africans can only ever have been in the Persian Gulf as slaves (& overlooks other possibilities) but of immediate interest is that blacks were apparently seen as capable of controlling winds. The wind is of course so essential for seacraft navigating under sail, as shown above for canoes from the Congo to the Niger. Also close to the River Niger we further saw the Yoruba listing of winds sharing the same feature of winds having the names of lesser gods as the highly-praised as scientific Horologion (= Tower of Winds) at Athens (Greece).

A book titled African Cultural Astronomy (edd. Jarita Holbrook et al 2007) shows native astronomy all over Africa and more specifically, stone circles of east Africa at Namoratunga (Kenya) plus Nabta Playa (Egypt). Oddly, this book does not have discussion of the stone circles of Senegal and Gambia (= Senegambia) in west Africa. However, Andis Kaunis (Stars & Stones 2007) does. His research leads him to conclude dates based on astronomy of between 3500/3000 BCE. He also cites a comparison of the ground-plan of the Wassu (Gambia) complex of stone circles and the Virgo star-system (note too that of the Giza [Egypt] Pyramids & Orion).

Given how closely megaliths in the form of these stone rings associate with maritime navigation, the Plaza et al research showing African genes that evidently came directly from west Africa to the Iberian Peninsula (= Spain & Portugal) must have significance. The more so given the sources cited in “Africa, Ireland & Prehistory” about legends of Africans building such stone circles in England, Ireland plus Scotland. Moreover, maritime way-finding in Senegambian parts of west Africa seems shown by the Wolof term of Djahi for roughly the Senegambian region that also probably means Place of Navigation.

Way-finding overland across the Sahara

