

## **THE YORUBAS AND THE SEA**

### **THE IMPOSSIBLE COAST(S)?**

The normal stance in this series of papers is that they have opened with why Africans just could never have sailed on any part of the African coast and this starts with the Indian Ocean approaches to east Africa. It will also be noted that some of what seen in those other papers is repeated here. The dangers of winds plus currents at the northern end of the Red Sea have long been known and may have led to what seems to have been something of a religious tabu on going to sea shared with across the Indian Ocean.

This emerges from the codification of the laws of Hinduism called Manusmriti (= Laws of Manu) at circa (= ca.) 450 Before Common Era (= BCE). James Hornell (Water Transport 1946) wrote they tell us Brahmins (= high-caste Hindus) still object to going to sea. Mohammed wrote that a Muslim “going to sea twice was truly an infidel”. An early Caliph was Omar who was advised that “Man at sea is an insect on a splinter... scared to death..., so trust it little & fear it much”. Strabo (as Nibbi ib.) is cited by Alessandra Nibbi (Revue D’Egyptologie 1997; Discussions in Egypt 1998) about Egyptian fear of the sea plus sailors. Plutarch ((ca. 200 BCE Greek) and Porphyry of Tyre (ca. 250 BCE Phoenician) both wrote of Egyptian priests did not go to sea to the degree that Alessandra Nibbi (ib.) felt able to write Egypt had no interest in the sea.

Strabo (ca. 50 BCE Greek) for east Africa north of the Horn of Africa facing the Red Sea plus el-Idrissi (14<sup>th</sup> c. Arab) for east Africa south of the Horn facing the Erythrean Sea (= the western Indian Ocean) appear to be telling us there were no ships here. The southern coast of Sudan plus the southern end of the Red Sea were part of what Pliny the Elder (ca. 50 BCE Roman) designated the Sea of Azania going past the Horn of Africa (Somalia) down to somewhere about north Mozambique equating with more or less what some translations of Periplus Maris Erythraei (= Voyage of the Erythrean Sea = PME) give as the Auseneitic Coast.

Both at the southern end of the Red Sea plus the southwest of Erythrean Sea there are shoals that are deemed to be especially dangerous. The southern end of the Auseneitic/Azanian Coast was called Sofala. Robert Dick-Read (The Phantom Voyagers 2005) is probably correct to identify this not with the town of Beira (Moz.) but as a region (centred on Beira?) of what is now called Mozambique. Sofala seems derived from Arabic sufail (= shoals) marking dangers.

The Transkei coast was once called the Wild Coast with another part of the eastern coast of South Africa between Port Elizabeth to East London once named as the Wrecks Coast. This Wrecks Coast has also been labelled as the Freaque Coast with the most famous ship to be wrecked here was the Waratah sometimes called the southern Titanic.

The tip of southern Africa is Cape Agulhas (not Cape of Good Hope). It marks where the Indian Ocean becomes the Atlantic. The mix of currents continue to make these sub-tropical waters very dangerous and we can observe what was originally Cabo das Tormentas (= Cape of Storms) is now Cabo da Boa Esperanca (= Cape of Good Hope). Here we are now on the western coast of South Africa and the sea-swell on these shores stretches up to Namibia which is mainly has the 1000 miles of the Namib Desert as its coast. What can arise here is shown by the northern part of the Namibian shores once being known as the Skeleton Coast from the skeletal remnants of wrecked ships and/or the skeletons of dead crew.

Another feature of these parts of west Africa facing the Atlantic is near-absence of ports into which ships could retreat to escape extremes of weather. There is a famous piece of doggerel cited in the Wikipedia entry on Benin (Nigeria; **not** the Republic of Benin = ex-Dahomey) in several forms. In effect it runs “The Bight of Benin, few come out but many go in”. Equally is that in “The Canoe in West African History”, Robert Smith (Journal of African History 1970) cites 18<sup>th</sup> c. British captains saying Pre-Colonial Nigerians did not go to sea because they were too scared to do so.

Further is the French opinion cited by Roy Bridges (in *Africa & the Sea* ed. Jeffrey Stone 1985) stating that Pre-Colonial west Africans in general were too fearful to have been seafarers. Northcote Thomas (Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 1917) reported an Igbo/Ibo version of the anti-sea/water taboo shown above in that Igbo/Ibo orhenes (= priests) are not allowed to step into canoes.

Further north are the coastal archipelagos of the Bissagos Islands (off Guinea-Bissau) plus the Cape Verde Islands (off Senegal). Blundering Europeans seemingly led to the opinion that because they could not navigate the tricky channels between mainland Guinea-Bissau and the Bissagos Islands, nor could the Bissagans (as in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. Edinburgh Encyclopaedia). Messrs Reclus (*Africa* = Vol. III of *The Earth & Its Inhabitants* 1897) and Lacroix (*Africa in Antiquity* 1998) say west African canoes could not cope with the currents between Senegal and the Cape Verde Islands that would sweep the canoes back to the Senegal mainland. More could be said but the effect is to make us wonder if anyone ever had the urge to sail on the Atlantic shores.

#### **SOME NON-AFRICANS ON WEST AFRICAN COASTS**

Some of this has already been described in “West Africans & the Sea: Again”. However, it may be that another line of argument can be followed.

The carrying of Indians east of India towards Island Southeast Asia (= ISEA) and the Pacific plus those carrying them west of India across the Indian Ocean towards Madagascar and the Atlantic are discussed in “Ancient India, West Africa & the Sea”. This is repeated less fully in *India & the Sea in Antiquity: Towards the Pacific* plus *India & the Sea in Antiquity: Towards the Atlantic*. All these papers are online. Shown there are the views of Tariq Sawandhi (Yorubic Herbology online) about Indian Ayurveda and the Yorubic Ife; Catherine Acholonu (the *Before Adam* books) compared Indian material with that found at Igbo Ukwu (Nig.) on several counts; Leopold Senghor (*Dravidians & Africans* online) plus Bernard Sergent (*African origin of the Dravidians* online) do so further north in west Africa and for Sergent (ib.) this is proof positive of maritime connections.

Easily the largest ocean in the world is the Pacific. Getting to the remote islands of the west Pacific was by Austronesian raft first then dugout-canoe (acc. to Haddon & Hornell, *The Canoes of Oceania* 1936-8). Roger Blench (*The movement of plants between Africa & India in prehistory* online) also looked for a two-fold Austronesian movement but now across the Indian Ocean the first of which may link with the rati (= rafts) noted by Pliny (ca. 50 BCE). Blench (ib. & other works) also noted the claimed origin in Island Southeast Asia (= ISEA = “Indonesia”) of Musas (= plantains & bananas, esp. those in Cameroon); the nasty disease called elephantiasis as shown by Nok (Nigeria) Culture figurines; plus yet more types of musical instruments in Senegal/Mali. With no overland connection proven between the Austronesians of ISEA and west Africa, maritime routes are sought again.

Vessels from Phoenicia (= Lebanon) and/or their descendant colonists at Carthage (= Puni in Latin), Gdr/Gadir (= Gades in Lat.), Lixos, etc. Voyages of about

the same ca. 700/600 BCE date were off east Africa (& ended up off w/Af.) and off west Africa were recorded by Herodotus (ca. 450 BCE Greek) plus Hanno (ca. 700/600 BCE Carthaginian) respectively. Voyages from Gadir/Gades (= Cadiz, Spain) took days to reach the Atlantic-facing port of Lixos (Morocco) and then fished for days off Atlantic-west Africa. These ships are of the Phoenico/Punic type labelled hippoi and called very poor by Strabo. One member of this class was found by Eudoxus (ca. 250 BCE Greek) at a point of the east coast of Africa that messrs. Cary and Warmington (The Ancient Explorers 1963) regarded as Prason (= Cape Delgado on the border separating Mozambique and Tanzania).

African vessels on east African coasts also include the sea-going rafts that Henri Junod (The Life of A South African Tribe 1926) plus the Culwells (Tanganyika Notes & Records = TNR 1933 & replaced by Tanzania Notes & Records) note of the Thonga of northeast South Africa plus south Mozambique and of tradition in Tanganyika/Tanzania respectively. They were still extant well into the 20<sup>th</sup> c. Also from Tanzania in east Africa went the migration led by Kauntoni to Melanesia (esp. Fiji) on the far side of the Indian Ocean. Here yet more canoes appear to be part of those carrying migrants from Melanesia plus Polynesia to New Zealand, as Ben Finney (Voyage of Rediscovery 1994) shows (esp. about Kupe). Polynesian canoes are usually narrow with floats acting as stabilisers, whereas the Kupe type achieves stability by giant size that includes width and length.

Amerinds (= American Indians = Native Americans) of the west coast of the Americas regularly plied between Peru/Ecuador and west Mexico. The voyages of these West-coast Amerinds in Pre-Colonial were on rafts that went against prevailing currents. East-coast Amerinds also went on long voyages in vessels that included rafts plus canoes said by Jack Forbes (Africans & Native Americans 1993) to have reached Europe but any evidence for Amerinds/"Red"-men in west Africa rest on other evidence. There is an oddity about some of the rafts of East-coast Amerinds. This is that the Indian shangadam/sangada seen on both sides of the Indian Ocean and possibly on both sides of Africa occurs on the far side of the Atlantic as the jangada of South America that most notably means Brazil.

If we need more evidence just how seaworthy simple vessels can be is surely demonstrated by the leather/skin-boats of the Celts of Ireland called the currach. The one called the Colmcille was taken for several hundreds of miles along the Atlantic-west coasts of Europe. This was taken further by Tim Severin (The Brendan Voyage 1978) when taking the currach named the Brendan across the Atlantic. Other and later voyages are those touched on by the expert opinions cited by my papers discussing aspects of African maritime history three of which deal with that of west Africa.

Bringing this together, we find on the opinions already cited the types shown above are to be deemed as capable of rounding Cape Agulhas included some surprisingly archaic forms. The significance of this is that Cape Agulhas is at the southern tip of Africa are the sub-tropical seas and west African canoes could not operate here. Yet whether Indian kattu-marans, Indonesian rati, Phoenico/Punic hippoi, etc, they are all simple forms yet are considered as having passed from ocean to ocean on the views cited already

### **SOME NON-NIGERIAN WEST AFRICANS ON WEST AFRICAN COASTS**

The really salient point to be made here is none of the **vessel-types touched on so far are in any wise superior to the dugout-canoe that dominated the ancient west coast of Africa.** It should also be observed that the implications of the

previous section is that everyone else got to west Africa but that west Africans were not energised or stimulated enough for them to take up seafaring in their own right

It is known that Africans were used by the Carthaginians on west African coasts and just possibly round Cape Agulhas; by the Portuguese when en route from ocean to ocean that again took them round Cape Agulhas; by Germans in Southwest Africa as the only ones trusted for ship-to-shore duties through the fierce Namibian swell. The compilers of the Ijo Genesis (online) describe a South African element that went into the formative era of the seafaring Ijaw/Ijo people of Nigeria. Really important here is to realise that that this west African expertise was acquired in canoes of the form already described.

The just-noted articles on African maritime history include “West Africa & the Sea in Antiquity” (online). There a number of European opinions were drawn together showing that something was attracting non-African attention to southwest Africa long before Europeans colonised large chunks of Africa. It should also be observed that any west African canoes going north from here did so past not just the desert drear of the Namibian coast but also the past of the same coast once called the Skeleton Coast so littered was it with the skeletal remnants of wrecked ships plus the bones of the dead crews. Yet we have shown that west Africans were held to be the only ones capable of breaching the ferocious swell of the Namibian waters.

It is also possible that copper from are labelled as “ancient” copper mines of Namibia, Angola, Congo, etc, were being exploited long before the arrival of any Europeans. Such writers as Markwat (in 1913, cited by Herbert ib.), Patterson (The Northern Gabon Coast 1975), Fage (Cambridge History of Africa 1977), Herbert (Red Gold of Africa 1984), etc, hold that copper from these sources may have been carried by west African canoes to as far north as the Gulf of Guinea. After all, west African canoes have been recorded as capable of taking 10/12 tons of cargo, carrying cattle or 80/100 men and described as small ships.

Seen over an even longer distance are groups going under various labels having among Beachcombers, Ichthyophagi, Strandloopers, etc. East from Africa this gives rise to what has been called the Beachcombers or Oceanic Negro Route to at least as India plus Indonesia and Melanesia. On the west of Africa the Ichthyophagi (= Greek for Fish-eaters) are seen the length of Atlantic-facing Africa from western South Africa to Morocco.

Angolan versions of the Ichthyophagi-type groups are most notably the Solongo and Ashiluanda who still practice a basically sea-fishing economy and in the case of the latter, they are island-based. Jan Knappert (the Aquarian Guide to African Mythology 1990) says the Kimbundu/Mbundu of Angola have a sea-god that he described as the Angolan counterpart of the Greek Poseidon. Reclus (ib.) cites Angolans en route to the Gulf of Guinea having been wrecked on the island of Sao Thome.

A series of traits from Angola to Morocco were traced by Leo Frobenius (Voice Of Africa 1913). His concept of political unity from Angola to Morocco seems very unlikely. On the other hand, there are the coastal groups over much of the same stretch evidently sharing traits contrasting with those of neighbouring groups just inland from them. To this can be added the record of **African** traditions of empires stretching from Congo/Cameroon to Ghana (= ex-Gold Coast) known via “History of Asante & the Gold Coast 1895” by Carl Christian Reindorf (1895), “Swedish Ventures in Cameroon” (ed. by Shirley Ardener 2002) and others.

Commercial facets seemingly underlie this, as does other testimony. The Congolese Democratic Republic (= DRC) plus the Congo, extensive fleets of fishing-

canoes attest more of the Ichthyophagi that were still being recorded by early Europeans in west Africa. In “Aithiopiaca” (= The Ethiopian Tale), Heliodorus (3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> CE Greek) names seven rivers in a list heading west from the Nile to the Chambi-sad that Lacroix book on identifies with the River Congo, the more so given that the Chambi-sad/Congo flowed into what another Greek writer called the Western Ocean.

That other Greek is Ptolemy (2<sup>nd</sup> c. CE Greek) and his Western Ocean is none other than what until the 18<sup>th</sup> c. was being called the Mare Aithiopiae (= The African Ocean) but now called the south Atlantic. A point to be borne in mind is that Aithiopes originally is a Greek word now mainly to the name of Ethiopia but once was used of all Africans and meant Burnt-face (= Black-face). On the analogy of such as the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Gulf, the Persian Gulf, etc, being named after those using a particular stretch of sea the most, the south Atlantic once having been called the African Ocean/Sea should be no great surprise.

Thomas Boteler (Narrative of a Voyage to Africa & Arabia 1838) wrote that the Mahongwe/Mapongwe/Mpongwe of Gabon were especially proud of their canoe – building expertise. Boteler (ib.) says Mahongwe canoes were built for “strength, symmetry & solidity”. This admiration was shared by Richard Burton (Two Months in Gorilla-land & the Cataracts of the Congo 1876). Burton was of the opinion that the distances covered by the Mahongwe and the strength of their canoes could have taken them across the Atlantic; this was some 70 years before this was actually achieved by Hannes Lindemann **in a west African dugout-canoe** (see later).

There are southern links for both the early copperwork plus ironwork for that reaching Cameroon plus Nigeria. The 650/700 miles that John Fage (as Herbert ib.) says took copper from South Africa, Namibia plus Angola in mainly Gabonese canoes to Cameroon and Nigeria. The dates for the Early Iron Age of Gabon are the earliest of anywhere in west Africa and tell for a maritime spread.

Lacroix (ib.) apparently placed the Ichthyophagi Aithiopes on or near the coast of Cameroon. Given what has been written about what the Greek words of Aithiopes/Aethiopes plus Ichthyophagi originally meant, it will be obvious that Ichthyophagi Aethiopes meant African/Black fishermen. Quite what made these fishermen any blacker than any other African fishermen is unknown.

If messrs Stecchini (online article re. Hanno) and Lacroix (ib.) are correct, there was early non-African interest in what Stecchini (ib.) called the ancient culture of Benin (Nigeria). Space prevents full discussion here but it can be said that that Lacroix (ib.) thought high-quality horse-breeding was the reason for that interest. The sea-god of Benin was Agwe and will be touched on again shortly.

What was Dahomey/is the Republic of Benin (**not** the Nigerian region) is generally seen as the origin of the Vodun/Voodoo religion and Agwe is the sea-god of that religion. His cult is better known on the far side of the Atlantic but on both sides that cult involved fishermen sending a vessel stuffed full of desirables. If it floated, good catches would ensue but if it sunk, Agwe had rejected it and bad fishing would result for the following season.

The god of the sea of the Ewe people of the Benin Republic was variously spelt as Hwu/Wu/Wu-nu is to be distinguished from the Ewe/Dahombe god of fishing called Avrikiti. The Ewe characterise fishing as stealing from Hwu according to Knappert (ib.) but this plainly indicates sea-fishing again.

More sea-fishing occurred with another area deemed as having Ichthyophagi in antiquity is what is now called Ghana (= ex-Gold Coast & not to be confused with ancient Ghana = Wakor). Here again large canoe-fleets appear in early European

records. The sailors here were considered by some of those early Europeans as the bravest of all on the coast of west Africa.

One of those Europeans was Jean Barbot (17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> c. French). He reports that a special kind of biscuit was baked for long trade-trips “as it would not spoil in the sea-air”. Barbot is also our main source for the other side of the trade already noted coming north on west African coasts. Something that comes as a surprise is that online histories of early surfing put Ghana alongside such as Peru and Hawaii as places where surfing emerged. The point about this is that these sites argue that surfing tells for intimacy with the sea not the above-noted fear of it.

The Ga of Ghana had a god of the sea called Nai. David Henderson-Quartey (The Ga of Ghana 2000) tells us that the Ga were so happy at sea that when failed kings had to atone for failure, they “went home” (= into the sea.).

Lacroix (ib.) says the words in the Senufo language of Ivory Coast and part of Ghana plus the Akan tongues of Ghana of [a]flatyelo plus afarefo respectively relate to the latter spelt aphricerones in Greek to indicate more Ichthyophagi/fish-eating groups in Ivory Coast/Ghana.

Another people of Liberia and stretching into Sierra Leone were the Krio/Kru. An article by James Hornell (Mariner’s Mirror 1923) says the Krio/Kru named a small type of dugout-canoe that was typical of west African fishing. He further compared the paddles of the Krio and those of the Polynesians of the Pacific Islands called the Marquesas for length, elegance plus effectiveness. The muscularity of the Krio can further be compared with that of the Polynesians that again has been attributed to the needs of seafaring in canoes

Elizabeth Tonkin (in *Africa & the Sea* ed. J. C. Stone) says a section of the Kru is still called the Fishmen. The Kru-type may be small but Pieter de Marees (17<sup>th</sup> c. Dutch) says that they could out-speed European ships even when in full rig. It was from the Kru that Lacroix says came the west Africans that replaced those that Hanno had brought southwards from the north. The type of surf-boat used by the German rulers of what was Southwest Africa/is now Namibia was apparently based on the Krio/Kru dugout-canoe. They also provided the only crew for these same boats that the Germans entrusted with ship-to-shore duties through the Namibian swell according to the “Swakopmund Mole- a history” by Keith Irwin (online).

Guinea-Bissau is outside what most would define as “Guinea” (= approx. Angola to Ivory Coast) but as former Portuguese “Guinea”, the colonial term is partly retained in Guinea-Bissau with the Bissagos Islands providing the other half of the name. These islands are reached by narrow channels said by Europeans to be too treacherous manoeuvre through. This then seems to lead us to conclude that African crews could not do so either.

This begs the question where did the ancestors of the slaves in the islands that were snatched by the Portuguese from the islands come from? The more so given that in “Vowel Harmony in Bijago”, W.A. Wilson (Journal of West African History 2001) says the islanders have the same basic language but that some dialects have now so diverged that they are unintelligible to their fellow islanders. It is uncertain just how far back this goes but a long period for this process can be assumed and this means that the Bissagans were in occupation of their islands at a very much earlier date than the Portuguese arrival in what today is Guinea-Bissau.

Equally to the point, there were women present too. To put it simply, there would be no families without them. What emerges from this is that west African canoes did reach the islands. Indeed, the Wikipedia article on Guinea-Bissau tells us

that Bissagan canoes were a pivotal point in west African sea-trade. The islanders also fought off Portuguese conquest for 400 years.

Another group of African islands are the Cape Verdes and here again, it is said the west African dugout-canoe could not have reached them. This is because it is said that the currents between the Cape Verde Islands and the Senegalese coast would sweep non-powered vessels back to the coast. That the islands were known about becomes obvious when Lacroix (ib.) says the coordinates given by Ptolemy for the Canaries are those for the Cape Verdes and islands known about but not settled till very much later times is a worldwide pattern.

So too is of such islands being used for seasonal fishing and this fits with such as Juba (1<sup>st</sup> c. Moroccan) plus el-Idrisi (14<sup>th</sup> c. Arab) referring to buildings but no people seen. The Islamic forms of “Lands Beyond” tales include that of a Malian king sending fleets across the Atlantic to explore those “Lands Beyond”. Columbus reports canoes laden with goods leaving the Cape Verdes with only the open Atlantic in front of them. Important here are that on the far side of the Atlantic, the Mayan god of trade is always depicted as black and that here too mention is made of blacks trading from canoes in what became called the Caribbean. Hannes Lindemann (Alone at Sea 1958) proved the west African dugout-canoe could successfully cross the Atlantic and did so in 55 days, whereas de Vespucci (16<sup>th</sup> c. Italian working for Spain) took 64 days in a ship in full rig over the same distance.

This becomes important when before us are past names for what is now Senegal. The name of Senegal seems to be from sunugal (= Place of Boats) in the Wolof language of Senegal. Cheikh Anta Diop (the African Origins of Civilisation 1974) says that Djahi (= Phoenicia) meant Place of Navigation in Egyptian and Djahi (= Senegal) in Wolof. It is germane to recall that Columbus learnt most of his Atlantic-based navigation in the African islands. Navigation at sea in a pre-instrumental age included use of birds and was also used to cross the equally trackless Sahara. We know from the rescue of the lost Alexander and the guides of the great trade-caravans crossing the desert that this involved Africans.

In line with this is Hanno of Carthage taking Lixitae as translators plus navigators on his would-be circumnavigation of Africa. They were named by the River Lixus (= Oued/Wadi Dra/Draa) at the foot of the Atlas Mountains. Michael Skupin (The Carthaginian Columbus online) treats the Lixus as a river of Aethiopia (= Black Africa) not of “Libya” (= north Africa). The name of Draa is also an African name for the River Senegal and it has just been seen that that it applies to the Lixus too. This leads us to expect there were Africans on these northwest coasts.

This is just what Pseudo-Scylax (5<sup>th</sup> c. BCE? Greek) wrote when saying the inhabitants of the coast of northwest Africa were black **not** white Libyco/Berbers. In like manner, Strabo (1st c. BCE Greek) described the inhabitants of Dyrus (= the Atlas region) were Aethiopian/African. Herodotus (5<sup>th</sup> c. BCE Greek) says the people of the Atlas always moaned about sun-burnt faces which takes us back to the Greek word of Aethiopes which we saw meant Burnt-faces/Africans.

### **NON-YORUBAN NIGERIA & THE SEA**

Before applying what has emerged from the previous section(s), another reminder “of why they couldn’t do it”. The treacherous conditions attendant on where the Agulhas plus Benguela Currents meet at the very tip of southern Africa and the dangers they posed to early sea-craft have been described. The general consensus is that this rules out use of west African canoes there. As to such canoes ferrying copper from these same parts, Roger Smith (ib.) has pointed out that such voyages going

south/north along west African coasts went against prevailing currents. Messrs Hair, Law and Smith (Barbot on Guinea 1992) say Barbot describing the reverse north/south journeys is based on a mistake by Barbot. Nor should it be overlooked that most writers would regard copper as coming overland to most of west Africa by of the sources in the Sahara at Azelik (Niger) not by sea from the distant mines of Namibia, Angola, Congo, etc..

If the previous section is taken as confirmed by the theories of a political unity from Angola to Morocco as called for by Leo Frobenius (*Voice of Africa* 1913), we find this undermined not underlined. Put simply, there was no such a polity. As to canoes completing the sea-trips envisaged, quite apart from the ferocious Namibian swell, south/north going against prevailing currents, etc, the opinions that west African canoes could not cope with the currents between mainland Guinea-Bissau and the Bissagos Islands and those between Senegal and the Cape Verde Island should not be forgotten. Nor should the 1000-mile desert marking the Namib Desert and for the western fringes of the Sahara Desert.

That one group of Africans was replaced by another on the Periplus of Hanno (ca. 700/600 BCE Carthaginian) has long been accepted and for some ancient writers, Hanno made it all the way round Africa. The same is rather more definite for the somewhat later Portuguese who very definitely made it round Africa from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. As to the non-capability of west Africans making it through the sub-tropical seas of southwest Africa with a particular emphasis on the dangerous sea-swell marking the Namib Desert itself having the Skeleton Coast as part, this can also be answered.

On the opinions cited above, the very simple forms deemed as capable of passing ocean to ocean were no way superior to the west African dugout-canoe. In the case of the canoes, it was seen that one African tradition would regard Africans from here as having reached Nigeria. If they did, the 1000 miles of the desert coast of Namibia plus the dangerous swell naming the Skeleton Coast are said by had to be bypassed. Irwin (ib.) wrote that the German rulers of what was Southwest Africa would only allow west Africans to ferry passengers from ship to shore. This means only west Africans were trusted to sail through this Namibian swell and with the acceptance of Angolans seen as capable of getting from Angola to Nigeria but ended being wrecked on an island off “Guinea” in the Bight of Benin, we come to what is written about west African vessels reaching “Guinea”.

The distance between Azelik and the Niger Delta is actually no less than that between the River Ogowe (Gabon) and the Niger Delta (Nigeria). Nor is it very obvious that crossing the Saharan sands then the forest belts through to the so-called Forest Kingdoms of Benin, Yorubaland, Dahomey plus Ashanti is any easier as communication than sailing along the west African littoral. The terms of “Azania” in east Africa and “Guinea” in west Africa can euphemistically described as flexible but if confined to the Gold Coast/ modern Ghana that it is usually accepted as having been, something else comes to the fore. Namely, if Barbot’s Guinea is just modern Ghana, then the distances between Gabon and Ghana are even longer than is than is that between Gabon and the Niger Delta.

Supporting notions of a spread of metalworking and/or carrying of metals by sea are the carbon-14 (= C14) dates apparently seen from Gabon up to Nigeria/Ghana. However, the earliest C14-dates seemingly centre on the Termit Massif (Niger) but Christopher Ehret (*The Civilisations of Africa* 2002) prefers to observe the centres of African metallurgy in the Great Lakes of east Africa plus Cameroon/Nigeria. The dating of the excavations of British archaeologists named Bernard Fagg at Nok (Nig.)

plus Thurstan Shaw at Igbo Ukwu (Nig.) has been challenged. This was by Louise-Marie Maes-Diop and Catherine Acholonu respectively. To this Acholonu (ib.) adds the comparison of Igbo (Nig.) orichalu ukame (= something precious) and Greek orichalkos for certain alloys. To the claimed South African link by sea of the Ijo is added the local etymology describing them as Beni-Otu (= Water-men).

The Fulani/Hausa also coming to Nigeria by sea has analogies elsewhere. The Old Testament tells us the Israelites were called to battle but also “Dan stayed in his ships”. That the Tribe of Dan/Danites stayed with his ships makes them somewhat different from the rest of Israel and there is of course, the claimed relationship with sections of the so-called “Sea-Peoples”. In east Africa, the Oromo are a land-bound people yet what for many years were standard histories of Ethiopia have it that the Oromo came by way of the Indian Ocean from Madagascar, the Lamu Islands, Kenya, etc, to what today is Ethiopia.

Thus when Alan Burns (The History of Nigeria 1968) cites the Yoruba using the phrase of “eyaoibi ni Fulani” it may not be so exceptional after all. It means the Fulani are from overseas. However, unlikely as it is that the Fulani had a maritime history; they are clearly not alone in this. It is also the case that although most Fulani are cattlemen, some are farmers and others are fishermen.

A much-cited piece of doggerel quoted in the Wikipedia entry on Benin (**not** the present-day republic of Benin [= ex-Dahomey]) on the other side of Nigeria from the state of Edo with its capital of Benin) was cited above about the dangers of the Bight of Benin. According to an article about Hanno of Carthage by Livio Stecchini (online), the Phoenicians plus their Carthaginian descendants (= Punics) came this way. He thought these Phoenico/Punics sought what he described as the great city of Benin.

It does appear that at some stage the Benin Empire stretched to as far west as the River Senegal and to twice the area to the east according to **non-Benin/non-Nigerian** tradition cited by Carl-Christian Reindorf (ib.). Jona Lenderer (again re. Hanno online) is one of those pointing up the highly commercial nature of the Periplus of Hanno. He instances several possibilities. So Thymeterion (= Mehidyā?, Morocco) as Place of Incense; Karikon Teichos (= Azzemour?, Morocco) as olive branch in Berber; Arambys (= Mogador?, Morocco) as Place of Grapes; River Chretes or Chremetes as River of Wine; the Broad River (= the Senegal? = Sane-Khole [another of the suggested origins of Senegal) as River of Gold; the harbour described by Hanno perhaps equating with Cape Mesurado (nr. Monrovia, Liberia) and sweet-smelling woods (another commercial product of the day). There may also be some connection with livestock.

An especially famous episode from Hanno is where the Phoenico/Punics from Carthage tried to capture some kind of hirsute primate (?) but failed. A writer otherwise only known as Pseudo-Scylax (= Ps.-Scylax) because of his being confused with Scylax of Caryanda (ca. 600 BCE) wrote about Africans from a city near the island of Kerne that had horses and who made wine from locally-grown vines. According to Graham Shipley (interim translation of Ps.-Scylax online), Phoenicians came here to trade. Another ancient writer was Ptolemy (ca. 150 CE). He wrote of a Hypodromos Aethiopiae (= Racecourse of Africans) that Lacroix (ib.) wanted to connect with what Olfert Dapper (17<sup>th</sup> c. Dutch) wrote about horse-breeding in the south Nigerian region of Warri. Presumably this too would connect with what has been shown to have prompted the description of the great city of Benin.

## **THE YORUBAS AND THE SEA**

The question-marks used just above will immediately indicate that there are doubts about some of the above. They are not lessened by attaching the theories of Leo Frobenius (*The Voice of Africa* 1913) to this. Frobenius (ib.) was of the opinion that there was a political unity between Angola and Morocco that we have already signalled is illusory.

It is also the case that what have been described as errors will further tell against the argued-for case. One has been suggested to be the mistake of Jean Barbot (ib.) seeking to illustrate the passage of west African canoes down the west African seaboard. Also the same critics state that what was written by Barbot (ib.) about a foodstuff called kankey. There are also comments that the heads of Africans supposedly echoed in sculptures outside the Africa can be based on errors too.

This includes what has been said about supposed African look of the heads of the Buddhas of across Asia, be they giant or otherwise. This is held to be based on chakras (= blessings), mistakes, volunteer snails crawling onto the head of Buddha or hair pulled out by the roots to give this effect according James Hastings (*The Encyclopedia of Religion & Ethics* 1908). A more singular example is the head of what some state is the head of an African depicted on a Zincirli/Zinjirli (Turkey) stele but which is dismissed in "Ancient Egypt as Represented in the Museum of Fine Arts" by William Smith (Museum of Fine Arts [of Boston] 1946) as a sculptural mistake by an Assyrian.

Another objection is that it is said there is no relevant tradition of giant heads in west Africa. There is also an interesting list compiled from various sources of why the Giant Heads of the Olmec Culture of Mexico plus Guatemala look the way they do. Among them are (a) errors; (b) portrayal of intended "baby-faces"; (c) depiction of "were-cats/jaguars" (= shamans turning into jaguars); (d) representation of congenital diseases; (e) depiction of genetic throwbacks; (f) the basalt spheres were too hard to carve with the soft copper tools; (g) that the sculptors had to carve with the soft copper tools available; (h) that the sculptors had to carve in certain ways to avoid fractures; (i) depiction of Olmec/Mayan ball-game players.

Readers of "West Africa & the Atlantic in Antiquity" will recognise some of this but as said already, some of what is written in other papers of this series has been repeated here. Now before us are other things that were written by Frobenius (ib.) about the spread that he discussed. He thought that there was building villages around templa; houses arranged around impluvia (= water-tanks); houses with ridged roofs; tanged arrowheads; frontally-strung bows; shapes of drum; types of loom; sand divination. Frobenius (ib.) regarded these traits as primarily confined to coastal regions contrasting with those of adjacent groups inland from them.

The dugout-canoe plus the Ichthyophagi would have reinforced the general thesis of Frobenius but he does not really touch on them but a further line of research by Frobenius (b.) was of the relationship of Atlantis and Yorubaland. He based this on what had been passed from Egyptian priests to an ancestor of Plato. According to what was written by Plato (ca. 420-350 BCE Greek), this material came down to him from an ancestor named Solon.

Plato described luxuriant vegetation; tree-like plants that provided food; drinks plus balsams (the palm-oil tree); tough-skinned fruit that did not last long (the banana); pleasant condiments (pepper); elephants lived there; copper mined as still occurred in the days of Frobenius; natives clad in dark blue (from the tree indigo); peculiar architecture ( saddle-shaped roofs of palm-leaves).

A major difficulty about placing Atlantis in west Africa is one that applies to locate it anywhere else. Namely it is purely mythical. Another is that it has been seen as having been in almost every place in the world that can be thought of. This is shared with such as the Garden of Eden, Tarshish, Ophir, etc. On the other hand, if above-made points are telling against the arguments of Frobenius on a particular ground we saw certain points do emerge.

One is his comparison of the Yoruba god named Olokun (= Lord of the Sea) and the Greek god called Poseidon. At the beginning of this article and elsewhere in this series, the constant refrain of several expert opinions is that west Africans did not go to sea because they were too scared to do so. How then to explain the occurrence of gods of the sea in mythologies of ethnicae all along the west African littoral and why the need for gods of the sea to pray to for protection at sea if they never went to sea in the first place.

By now it will be recognised that Olokun was the Yoruba god of the sea and has analogies with gods in other pantheons. Varuna is the Hindu god of the sea but studies have revealed his former importance as the major deity of Hinduism. Joseph Olumide Lucas ((The Religion of the Yorubas 1948 & 2001) shows the same of Olokun in Yoruba myth. Lucas makes some comparison with Egyptian deities but the major parallel of Olokun is with myths outside the continent of Africa with the Great Flood myths of again of virtually everywhere on the globe.

Common to most of these myths is the Gods/God wanted to punish mankind for impiety, evil-doing, etc, with that punishment taken the form of a flood is normal in these stories. This is equally true of the Atlantis of Plato, Noah of Genesis in the Bible, Olokun in Ife myths, etc. Atlantis as Yorubaland leads us to expect the fleets attaching to Atlantis. It is undoubted the case that west Africans were rather more nautically minded than generally accepted but there is little sign of this armada that acceptance of Yorubaland as Atlantis would call for.

There is a consistent tendency in some quarters that these myths only reflect the proselytising of Christianity and/ or Islam. This equally consistently overlooks that the oldest versions of the Great Flood myths are millennia earlier than anything seen in the Bible and Koran. Of those in east Africa, the Masai of Kenya has Tumbainot in the Noah role. The dove he sent out to espy land came back, so land was still flooded. He next sent out a vulture with an arrow tied to its tail-feathers. It came back minus the arrow, so the conclusion was that there was now some dry land. The beneficial nature of the vulture is stressed in this story in that the dry land was taken as showing the anger of the deity had abated. The end of the Tumbainot myth is that rainbows lit up the sky of the basic points of the compass to north, east, south and west.

On the other side of Africa, the Yoruba goddess named Yemoja is seen as the sister, lover, brother, son, brother-self of Olokun according to someone under the nom-de-plume of “dragoncharmer” on the Black Phoenix Arts Laboratory (= BPAL) site. Such androgynous deities are also worldwide in myths. A symbol of Yemoja was the vulture sent as the messenger to the gods to get them to halt the flood sent by Olokun to punish mankind’s impiety (again the vulture as beneficial). A Yoruba cleansing ritual put online by Yuya Assaan Anu (Sadulu House) has vultures at north, east, south and west in a cross-like arrangement. Feathers of the vulture-like African Fish Eagle were sacred to Olokun according to “Olokun Mud Art” by Paula Amos (African Arts 1973). Cross-shaped images symbolising Olokun abound in “The Chalk Iconography of Olokun” according to Norma Rosen (African Arts 1987).

This reflects the age-old practice of using birds in navigation at sea. Rosen showing Olokun as also the god of the igha-ede (= crossroads/junctions) recalls the functions of another Yoruba god, this time Olori Merin (= Lord of the Four Heads). His name comes from the cross-shaped images with either heads or roundels in their place at the ends of the arms of crosses. Lucas shows his images as set up mid-village to ward off the evils of disease plus other evil things from north, east south and west.

The heads at the ends of the arms of the crosses were those of lesser gods and were also the names of the winds from north, east, south and west. Godling-names as winds are analogous to those on the Greek structure called the Horologion (=Tower of Winds) at Athens designed by Andronicus of Kyrros (= Cirrus, Syria)..

The Horologion relates to the 8-pointed type of compass-form called a wind-rose. This is underlined by 16-point wind-rose being compared with the 16 palm-nuts used in the Ife divination of the Yorubas. The wind-rose of the Horologion was thought to represent a considerable advance in the theoretical thinking about navigation at sea at the time, so what does that say about the same principle being known in west Africa, notably among the Yorubas.

Cross-shaped images have just been seen to associate with roundels/circles at the end of crosses but other crosses can be depicted inside circles in a variety of media. They have prompted such descriptive terminology as Atlantis crosses, cross-in-circles, cross-in-discs, etc. However, surely the most telling term of is when Sailors' or Mariners' Cross is used of them, as is especially demonstrated by Chrichton Miller (The Golden Thread of Time 1997).

The American Indian (= Amerind) or Native American of the Olmec/Maya sequence of Central America/Mesoamerica also seemingly employed a similar system. Lucas (ib.) has it that this can be traced to as far back as the elemental deities of earliest Egypt but it should be said that attempts of this kind have attracted some astonishing virulence yet this in turn is based is often on arguments that are of themselves troubling to say the least.

Acceptance of any of the points made about statues of the Buddha would explain their appearance. However, the idiocies attaching to many religious practices are too well known to require much comment here but the notion of hair pulled out by the roots to give a tufted look is almost too painful to contemplate. The idea behind volunteer snails creeping on the head of the sweaty Buddha sounds like a joke but one that quickly loses appeal when it is realised what is at work. What is at work is dismissal of any possible African connection.

Portrayal of Africans in the Indian homeland of Buddhism goes back to at least the period of the variously named Indus River Culture, Indus Culture or Harappan Culture (& other labels). It should be noted that most of the sites of the Indus Culture are in what is now Pakistan but could be included in "Greater" India (= Pakistan, India & Sri Lanka). The representation of an African female was as a statuette cast in the *cire-perdue* (= lost-wax) technique of bronze-work. It is held to be of the "true" Negro type of African in the terminology of the past. It came from the Indus Culture site of Mohenjo-daro (Pak.). Nor is it a difficulty that the Harappan figurine occurs outside India proper as a linkage with Buddhism, as shown by the giant Buddhas seen from the pair blown up by the Taliban in Afghanistan to the many occurring in the Far East.

This overlooks a number of features nicely brought out by John R. Moore (Black Buddha online). He describes those of early statues of Buddha as having jet-black skin, woolly/nappy hair, this being tightly coiled, also in corn-rows or peppercorn style, flat or snub noses, full lips, Masai-like ears, etc. Nor was this

confined to Buddhas in India. Such Hindu deities as Krishna, Shyama, etc, repeat the giant size plus black skin that came to be modified as blue. Further is the figure carved on a rock-face near Medina (Saudi Arabia) called “Ishmael” by Wayne Chandler plus Runoko Rashidi (African Presence in Asia ed. messrs. Rashidi & Van Sertima 2000). Their photograph shows the head of “Ishmael” compares very directly with that of a Nuba chief from Kenya.

Another representation from western Asia was seen to be on a stele from Zinjirli. One of the three figures is the one “explained” as appearing because of a mistake. The stelae set up by the Assyrians were important pieces of propaganda also involving the gods and a sculptor making a mistake that would be deemed an insult to the gods and the king as their representative in this world. We have also seen just how severely insults to the gods were deemed to be punished. On amore individual level, our sculptor would contemplate a short career, as he could expect to be the very next sacrificial victim to atone for his perceived insult.

Given that two out of the three figures carved on the Zinjirli stele do not appear to any problems to the bevy of expert opinions cited by Peggy Brooks-Bertram (in Egypt: Child of Africa ed. Ivan Van Sertima 2002), it comes as a surprise that this third figure does. This relates to the third figure being someone who is black but not an African Negro. This makes our third person a Black version of the Hamites of once again an older terminology. In turn, this almost becomes funny. This is because the Caucasian/White ancestry given to the Hamites was devised to able deny Black African achievements of any kind and this makes any notion of Black Hamites a completely anomalous contradiction. In any case, the third individual is none other than a son of the Pharoah of the Kushite conquerors of Egypt. **Therefore, was a black African.**

It was also shown that it is frequently written that there could be no exporting of the concept of gigantic heads because this does not occur in Africa itself and so too that any suggestion of anything Africa-centred/Afrocentric tends to prompt some bitter vitriol. The writers espousing this viewpoint have plainly not done their homework. Where there are giant statues, they will have had giant heads. This is especially well illustrated by the head of Ramesses III among the remnants that inspired the much-cited Ozymandias poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Egypt further demonstrates this by the heads carved in giant size at Tanis (Egypt). These gigantic reliefs are of prisoners-of-war of more than one race that includes Kushite Africans. Another gigantic head would be that of the Great Sphinx at Giza (Egypt). Its scale is held to out of true relative to the rest of the monument, by being too small in relation to the body of the Sphinx. From the drawings by series of artists from Vivian Denon (18<sup>th</sup> /19<sup>th</sup> c. French) to Frank Domingo (cited in John West’s Serpent in the Sky) to the Willard photographs published by Ivan Van Sertima (Early America Revisited 1998).

The tradition of Great Heads in stone demonstrated in west Africa tends to be overlooked in these discussions. One of them is of the giant named Umlindi Wemingizimu. It means The Watcher of the South and is also the Bantu name for Table Mountain overlooking the Bay region of Cape Town (western South Africa). Linking this to the above-noted non-African interest in the Bay region of South Africa means the Bantu plus this deity were in the Bay zone of Cape Town at dates when they were not supposed to be on the received wisdom.

Another such image is that of what is seen a human face at Blo Degbo (at Paynesville, near Monrovia [capital of Liberia]). Yet another is at Abuja (capital of Nigeria). With the head of the Great Head of the Great Sphinx in mind, there are not

just the drawings plus photographs already referred to but also the comparison made by Lucas (ib.) of the face of the Great Sphinx and that of the statue of the Yoruba god named Ore at Ile-Ife (Nigeria). Easily the most famous of these giants in stone any part of Africa is Atlas (. He was turned to stone by being shown the severed head of the Gorgon named Medusa by Perseus according to Greek myth.

In Iberia (= Spain & Portugal) just across a few miles of sea from the Atlas Mountains of Morocco are the masked figures of Spanish parades. They are called Gigantes (= Giants) plus Cabezos (= Great Heads) and given an origin in the body-length masks of Africa by Graham Campbell-Dunn (The African Origins of Classical Civilisation (2008). Another severed head is that of yet another giant but this time in a story set in southwest Iberia (= Spain & Portugal). This time it is of Geryon His combat with Hercules at Gadir (= Cadiz in southwest Iberia/Spain) led to his defeat and beheading by Hercules. The head of Geryon was buried at the Torre de Hercule (= Tower of Hercules) in Galicia (in northwest Iberia/Spain). It will be noted that this brackets all of west Iberia/Spain.

The cult of the Severed Head seems to be more a Celtic feature and here in the parts of Iberia plus France facing the Atlantic it seemingly overlaps with that pertaining to tales about giants (esp. those from Africa). More giants from Africa are seen under the name of Mauriaks (= Maures/Moors) from words meaning Blacks plus Gentilaks (= Gentiles = Outsiders). These last names are from the Basque lands that in Iberia/Spain sit alongside those of Iberian Celts. The Basques stretch into southwest France. The opposite end of France is more or less the most Gaulish or Celtic of Gaul (= approx. Celtic France) here was placed the story of the beheading of the **Spanish** Giant by “King” Arthur of Britain.

Besides having the Celtic linkage, the Cult of the Severed Head plus folklore about giants, the areas of Galicia (= northwest Iberia), Brittany/Normandy (= northwest Gaul/France), Cornwall (= southwest Britain/England) plus west Munster (= southwest Ireland) share being peninsulas facing the Atlantic. Cornwall had many stories of giants that include Beler(us/os) plus those about Jack the Giantkiller as a well-known beheader of giants. The west Cork/Kerry parts of west Munster show more of the same and links with Africa via the Fomoire (= From the Sea) and the Fomoire Afraicc; Iberia through Tethba (a Fomoire king of Mag Mor = Spain); Ireland by way of Balar (A Fomoire king of Ire.). Beler/Beleros is not recorded as having been beheaded in any source known to me but Balar was. Balar was the grandson of Net (the Iberian war-god)/Neit (an Irish god) and his grave was at Carn Ui Neit (= The Cairn of the Grandson of Neit) or Mizen Head (west Cork). This means the most south-westerly parts of Britain and Ireland respectively.

Some of the many reasons put forward why there was no Pre-Columbian Africans in the Americas were given above and primarily means the Great Heads of the Olmec Culture of mainly Mexico. Having also noted the vitriol poured on the heads anyone daring to argue for anything that smacks of Afrocentricism, there are yet more objections. They are the denials that that with the Olmec Great Heads such traits as the variously called Mongoloid, Chinese or epicanthic fold of the eye, the braiding of hair, the absence of any African Great Head tradition, the type of helmet worn by the Olmec Great Heads, etc. This leads to the conclusion that there cannot have been any African connection because it is written that these are traits that are unknown in Africa.

Leading the charge against Afrocentricism being applied to Egypt is Mary Lefkowitz. She has edited/written/co-written several books taking numerous pages to tell us that her school of thought disagree with any principle of Afrocentricism

employed in her particular field of expertise. Her equivalents in opposing Afrocentricism used to illustrate matters Amerind are Bernard Ortiz De Montellano, Gabriel Haslip-Viera and Warren Barbour (Robbing Native American Cultures 1997a) plus Haslip-Viera, de Montellano and Barbour (They were **not** here before Columbus 1997b).

The welter of theories “explaining” the look of the Olmec Great Heads is the plainest evidence of something obvious that the reason(s) for their appearance is just not known. It seems the only unifying factor is that whatever else is being aimed at, under no circumstances should the African connection be allowed.

Other views involve what should be old friend by now, namely sculptors that allow their errors to be seen and that this is the only way that various sculptures can take on looking like Africans. Anti-Afrocentrics like to pretend that Afrocentrics constantly bring up what are deemed to be conspiracist theories but curious things happen when people try to support their case with the kind of facts that Anti-Afrocentrics state is missing from their arguments.

Cheikh Anta Diop (The African Origin of Civilisation 1974) showed a melanin test would confirm how strong was the African linkage with Dynastic Egypt but permission for tests on Egyptian mummies in the Cairo Museum was refused. Tests on mummies Ramesses III plus some from the Munich Museum showed the presence of New-World Drugs in these Old-World mummies from Egypt prompted Egyptologists to want to run more tests on these Munich mummies. Permission was refused on the apparent grounds of we must respect the culture they represent; a comment made with apparently no irony intended.

Matthew Stirling (cited in Van Sertima 1999) plus Keith Jordan (in African Presence in Early America ed. Van Sertima 1999) both had problems when reaching their findings about the Olmecs. Stirling (ib.) found his views about them were ridiculed. Jordan (ib.) wrote of his difficulty at a library in getting hold of a copy of the Wiercinski report on Olmec skeletons that they hold, only to be told at one time they did not have a copy but finally got it. In the same book, Wayne Chandler tells of a conversation between two eminent German anthropologists named Erwin Palm plus Walter Von Wuthenau in which Palm advised Wuthenau never to use the term of Negro but to use that of Negrito, so as to avoid having to attribute anything laudatory to Africa or Africans. Van Sertima (1992) wanting to publish the text of his talk to no less than the Smithsonian Institution (U.S.) found that permission to publish pictorial material to illustrate that text was apparently mysteriously refused.

Nor is it true that the conclusions leading to Olmec Great Heads being described as those of Africans or of combined African plus Amerind parentage is only by Black Americans trying to wish themselves a more glorious past for their history, as is so often implied. The first rediscovery of a Great Head was reported by the Mexican scholar named Jose Melgar in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. Another was that by the above-noted Matthew Stirling (ib.). He too concluded that Olmec Great Heads were truly “Ethiopian”. The words of Aithiopiae/Aethiopiae or Ethiopian came from a compound word of the Greek aithios (= burnt) plus opes (= face) used of most Black Africans.

Our trio of expert authors of messrs de Montellano, Haslip-Viera and Barbour (ib.) appear to follow an interesting school of thought. It is akin to that whereby the epicanthic fold of the eye, the braiding of hair, the type of helmet worn by the Great Heads, etc, are to be regarded as lacking on the continent of Africa.

The epicanthic fold is one of the traits that in “Evidence of the Early Penetration of Negroes into Prehistoric Egypt”, Eugen Strouhal (Journal of African

History 1971) says was a feature that once figured in claims that Chinese-like migrants reached Egypt. Statues of Pharaohs showing the Mongoloid/epicanthic fold further demonstrate this in later Egypt.

Unless we join those wanting to divorce Egypt from the rest of the continent it is physically part of, this gives us very firm testimony of the fold in Africa. (re. Charles Meek (A Sudanese Kingdom 1931); Charles Seligman (Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan 1932) about the Dinka, Nuer, etc.; Evan Hadingham (Ancient Chinese Explorers 2001 [= online re. Pate Island, Kenya]); Orville Jenkins (The Hadza of Tanzania); Jeffrey Mays (The Chinese People & DNA: re. the Fulani of across northwest Sub-Saharan Africa); several writers about the Khwe of across southern Africa; Frobenius (ib. re. Nigeria); are among those showing this right across Africa.

The dates attached to this are of interest. Jenkins (ib.) is interesting about the close comparisons of most ancient of human tools at Olduvai Gorge (Tanzania) and the Hadza). Of equal interest must be the comparisons of the human remains of what is called the Sangoan Culture and the present-day group(s) severally named Khwe, Khoi, Khoisan, Bushmen, Capoids, Nama and innumerable general other labels. To this is what is demonstrated by the dates for Pre-Dynastic Egypt and what is shown by Strouhal (ib.). In short, not only is this seen right across Africa but seemingly has thousands of centuries behind it. The Frobenius (ib.) reference has a particular relevance in that it is to the Yorubas.

Such sources as “Locks” by Ewoki Kenyatta (online), “The Egyptian Type, Egyptian Hues (online); Ivan Van Sertima (Early America Revisited ib.), etc, tell us that braided locks are also continent-wide in Africa. A particular feature is that in west Africa there is a close connection with gods and/or their intermediaries on earth between gods and men called priests. Thus “Cornrows (Hair Braiding) in Nigeria-Nairaland”, Google extract from “Orisa Devotion as World Religion: The Globalisation of Yoruba Culture” by Jacob Dupona & Terry Rey (2008), etc. They especially attest close associations with priests having the braided hair of the Yoruba god named Shango.

Not all Euro/U.S. writers hold the same opinion as the cited three writers. A dissenting European is Andrej Weircinski (Proceedings of the 41<sup>st</sup> International Congress of Americanists 1974 & cited by Jordan ib.). His studies of Olmec skeletons were from three separate cemeteries and his conclusion was that an African stratum was of ca. 15% of the whole in the earliest phase dropping to ca. 5% later on. He also described finds of Africans in the same graves as their presumed Amerind wives to stand with what is also shown by the epicanthic eye-fold of some of the Olmec Great Heads. With separate research by Vargas Guadarrama (cited by Jordan ib. & others) confirming that of Weircinski (ib.).

Studies by yet another European anthropologist named Alexander Von Wuthenau (in Van Sertima 1999) were of terracotta figurines. Our three Afrocentric scholars noted above reject the Wuthenau (he of the above-noted conversation with Palm) figurines as fakes. Not reported by them is that Wuthenau (ib.) paid for thermoluminescence/TL-tests. More Germans are the family behind the Stevenhagen Museum. They too paid for TL-tests to help to confirm authenticity and this further is not told to us by messrs. De Montellano, Haslip-Viera and Barbour. Having paid for these TL-tests, the museum bought figurines from the Wuthenau Collection. Of particular interest here is the comparison made of a photograph of the head of a young Yoruba woman with that of a figurine from the Wuthenau Collection.

Such writers as Flora Lugard (A Tropical Dependency 1906), Lucas (ib.), Frederick Peterson (Prehistoric Mexico 1961), etc, are among those bringing attention

to the consideration reputation of west African shamans. Lucas calls our attention to Yorubic akari[g]bo plus Egyptian kharib/kherib. He says the Yoruban akarigbo and the Egyptian kharib are but versions of the same word for priest or magician. That this shows Egypt called on west African priest/shamans is confirmed by the later Abd al-Sabd (compiler of the *Tarikh es-Sudan* [= History of the Sudan]). This spreading of the influence of west African influence over thousands of miles of trackless sands of the Sahara according to Lugard (ib.) is matched by that of the west African priest/shamans that Peterson (ib.) says came among the Olmec over thousands of miles of the trackless seas of the Atlantic Ocean.

It has always been interesting what is accepted as archaeological evidence and what is not. This can lead to some significant anomalies. The Austronesian migration(s) to Madagascar are accepted but the case rests mainly on linguistics not archaeology. The Strabo-made comment about there having been ca. 300 Phoenico or Punic colonies is much quoted but excavation gives little sign of them. Some kind of Viking presence in North America has now been proven and academics now fall over themselves to prove how open-minded they are to accept the new evidence. What this hides is the former reluctance accepting what was always good literary evidence for this plus that despite diligent searches very few further hints of the Viking presence has been forthcoming and that there is very little showing Viking/Amerind interaction.

A continuing sign of Black prestige on the western side of the Atlantic would be shown by the Wuthenau figurines, those undertaking sacrificial rites, comments about guanin and almaizor, the name of the Mayan god of trade, etc.

It is suggested west Africans provided religious influences to the east of Africa (esp. on Buddhism & Hinduism), north of Africa (esp. the claimed Af. builders of stone rings) plus west of Africa (esp. shown by some Olmec Great Heads). In this light it should be important that carried on according to the murals on the walls of the Temple of the Warriors at Chichen Itza (Mex.) copied by Earl Morris, Jean Charlot & Ann Axtell Morris (1931). These murals attest what these three writers describe as blacks with heads that once again parallel those of the Great Heads that are described as looking very Ethiopian (= African) who are doing the sacrifices there.

The god we saw was called Olokun was not just the Lord of the Sea but also the Yoruba god of trade, so clearly carries the implicit recognition of trade plus wealth coming by sea. Across the Atlantic, the Mayan god of trade is named Ekchuah that like the Hindu god named Krishna plus the Egyptian Osiris all seemingly meaning the Black One. Something written by Columbus is much quoted, namely that distance rules out any connection between west Africa and the Caribbean/American parts of the western Atlantic and this seems supported by Samuel Morison (*The European Discovery of America: The northern voyages* 1971).

Having happily cited comments by Columbus plus Morison on this count, the critics then neglect to state that Morison plus others that in no sense are Afrocentrics also look for trade across the Atlantic. Even more to the point is that they look for this to have occurred before the voyages of Christopher Columbus. The evidence for this Pre-Columbian commerce across an ocean is such as guanin, almaizor, etc.

When some past writers have discussed the material from which west African sails were made come close to almost restating what Julius Caesar (ca. 50 BCE Roman) wrote about the sails of the Atlantic Celts called the Veneti. This was to the effect that it seems that cloth-making was unknown. The enormous variety made in west Africa gives the lie to such thoughts. That called almaizor was seen as widespread in west Africa and as having been exported to Iberia according to sources

cited by Harold Lawrence (in *African Presence in Early America* 1999). Columbus plus several Spanish authors wrote that the almaizor made in west Africa was identical to that worn by Amerinds in central parts of America. Also similar was use of cotton cloth as a form of currency rather like the way that strips of paper called cheques plus banknotes function today. Almaizor was also known as breeches, shawls, headscarves, in west Africa and central America, etc. We may also recall the comparison of the head of a young Yoruba woman and that of a Wuthenau figurine from Mexico. To this can be added matching earrings plus headscarves.

The Nigerian phrase of orichalu nkame was seen to be relevant for the alloyed metal called orichalkos that as described by Plato sounds remarkably like that widespread in west Africa called guanin. Columbus via the las Casas reports that from Portuguese sources he learnt of canoes heading west of the Cape Verde Islands full of goods. When it is realised that all that is west of this tiny archipelago is the then hundreds of miles of open sea that is the Atlantic Ocean, we have before us only the land-mass of the Americas. To these blacks in canoes leaving west Africa is added that very separately, Columbus was told of blacks in canoes on the far side of the Atlantic by Caribbean islanders.

These canoe-borne Africans apparently came from islands to the south of the Espanola inhabited by the informants of Columbus. The west African connection of these traders seems confirmed by the content of spearheads given to Columbus as a gift. Items taking on a value because of prestige is well shown by reference to the axe-trade of the British Neolithic when axes from north Ireland reach as far away as the Orkneys and Kent, despite it surely being much easier to fashion axes from nearby flint. The imported axes were of igneous rock with the most famous movement of such stone being the bluestones at Stonehenge (think of locally-made training shoes not selling, not because of inferior manufacture but because of brand-image [thus Nike, Adidas, etc.]). A west African parallel would be guanin there of 18 parts gold, six of silver plus eight of copper that Columbus found were identical to the spearheads given to Columbus.

The word of aguanile presumably relates to that of guanin. The Amerinds judged the value of metals by colour not price-wise and the fact that they presented these items to Columbus as a visitor proves they were prestige items that if brought by west Africans to more southerly Caribbean islands, there is a possible echo of the severally spelt named Yemoya/Yemoja (wife of Olokun [seen already as the Yoruba god of the sea]). Yemoya (= Yoruba goddess of the River Niger & of waters?) seems reflected in the name Yemoye (a version of the Amerind name of Jamaica).

Underlying many of the adverse remarks about the lack of seaworthy vessels in west Africa pertains to several others of around the world but it seems this can be countered to some extent. The more given so if the argument of messrs. Haddon and Hornell (ib.) and Blench (?) about the Austronesian raft-first/canoe-next phases on the west Pacific and Indian Oceans respectively stand. The Indian raft-type known as a katta-maram (= tied-logs) plus sangara (= logs tied together?) is said by Ganeswar Nayak (The wisdom of “tied logs”: traditional boats of India’s Orissa coast online) to have carried Indians to the island of Sumatra and to have got to Madagascar in the opposite direction.

Likewise, Indian plus Austronesian vessels of these forms are evidently to be regarded as capable of rounding the southern point of Africa. Views suggesting this are cited in other papers of this series but what is surprising is that this has not excited the kind of amazing amount of vitriol already noted as having been poured on that form of diffusionism called Afrocentricism. A curious extension of Indian vessels is

that the sangara/sangada under the spelling of jangada occurs on the far side of the Atlantic. On this same western side of the Atlantic were the Amerinds that Forbes (Africans & Native Americans 1995; The American Discovery of Europe 2007) thought took their simple vessels across the Atlantic Ocean to Europe.

Forbes (ib.) has little time for Pre-Columbian Africans in the Americas or for Amerinds in west Africa. However, he does cite John Heaviside (American Antiquities: The New World the Old, The Old World the New 1868; reprint 2009) wanting to trace Amerind influence on early Egypt. This is now reinforced by the finds of what appear to be substances originating in American plants in Egyptian mummies. Moreover, there are the arguments of Serge Plaza et al (Joining the Pillars of Hercules: mtDNA Sequences Show Multicultural Gene Flow in the Western Mediterranean online) and Blench (The intertwined history of the silk-cotton & baobab in Fields of change: Progress of African archaeology ed. Rene Cappers 2007).

Plaza et al (ib.) plus others in this same field will be touched on shortly but Blench (ib.) takes the matter of American plants in west Africa further. He touches on a tree of probable American origin called Ceiba in parts of west Africa in an article showing literally the intertwined history shared with the baobab tree. Blench cites a baobab dated ca. 3200/3000 B.P. on an island off Senegal. The Rough Guide to West Africa by Jim Hudgens & Richard Trillo (1992) cites an example of a Ceiba tree called a baobab on a Cape Verde island and that a Rev. Thomas (a chaplain of the US Navy's West African Squadron in the 19<sup>th</sup> c.) wrote that it was there when the Portuguese first reached the islands. The arrival and dispersal of the silk-cotton from the Atlantic-west coast across Africa seems to be when the Niger/Congo and Bantu languages diverged somewhere close to the headwaters of the River Niger at about 5500/5200 B.P.

If the wood of the Dufuna (Nigeria) dugout-canoe being African mahogany stands for that generally used for most west African canoes before that date, it seems there was a change to the wood of the silk-wood or Ceiba. This may be due to its massive height as much as any other factor but once its superior qualities were recognised; it became a standard timber for west African canoes.

Some indications of the seaworthiness of the west African dugout-canoe have been given already. The Indo/Erythraean-like vessels of katta-maram type are shown to have parallels in Nigeria by Bradley (ib.). So too are canoes with sails on the Rivers Congo plus Niger. The sub-tropical seas of southern Africa are said to have been impossible for west African canoes yet the sea-going Ijo canoes are said to have been capable getting from western South Africa to Nigeria plus an expertise gained via a type of vessel identical in western South Africa as the Kru type of Liberia/Sierra Leone. The general Kru-type fishing-canoe is of a size to take a crew of one or two men yet James Hornell (Mariner's Mirror 1928; Water Transport 1946) could describe one bringing home not just one tarpon but two of these monstrous fish. Equally to the point **is that this was apparently treated as an everyday occurrence.**

A dugout-canoe of this type and size was taken across the Atlantic Ocean by Hannes Lindemann (Alone at Sea 1958) **successfully**. To what has been said about American plants in Africa brings us back something else said by Blench (ib.), namely that that the African oil-palm went west to become the American oil-palm. To this is added to possible elephants depicted as a model at Jalapa (Mex.), on a vase at Yalloch (Mex.), etc. Whether transfer of plants or depiction of elephants, there is movement of people indicated. The significance of Ceiba is that it brings us to the spread of the timber used throughout Africa for canoes. Something of the implications is further shown by a story recorded by al-Umari (14<sup>th</sup> c. Syrian).

He reported that at the height of the Malian Empire, the ruler sent a fleet to “find out what was on the other shore of the ocean”. It seems the fleet ran into problems with all but a single vessel was sunk. The captain of this vessel reported “a stream under the sea” that would appear to indicate his vessel had come close to one of the currents at some distance out into the Atlantic. Harold Lawrence (in Van Sertima 1992) described this as “a river [of the sea] with a violent current”. From what is written by al-Umari, this was at a considerable distance from west Africa and yet our captain knew how to navigate his return to his home port.

This is added to what has been said about long Yoruba voyages. In the account by Plaza et al (ib.) cited above, they tell us that genetics attest voyages from Yorubaland or elsewhere in “Guinea” that bypassing the Magreb came directly to west Europe non-stop. This would be a distance equalling that of man routes across the Atlantic. More on this comes with not just a Yoruba female head matched by that of a Mexican ceramic; the eyes of Ikom/Igbo menhirs of identical form by those of yet more of those Mexican figurines; one of the innumerable spellings of the name of the Yoruba called Yemoja echoed in Jamaica in its Amerind spelling; Jamaica evidently being one of the southern islands from where blacks in canoes traded northwards where Columbus came across their trade-goods.

It is known that at least one of the voyages of Zheng-He (= Cheng-Ho) of China across the Indian Ocean took a full year. Arabic sources tell us of a people named the WakWak (from waka/vaka = canoe) who are probably Austronesians/Indo-Malays or Nusantarans from “Indonesia” who sailed for a year to east Africa to seize some of the trans-oceanic commerce. These voyages involved taking twelve months to cross an ocean and before us are the Yoruba voyages mentioned by Frobenius (ib.). Infuriatingly, this is an almost by-the-way comment but the fact that Frobenius wrote that they lasted a full year should make us wonder what & when these voyages led to.

Harry Bourne (2011)

