

## **WEST AFRICA & THE SEA IN ANTIQUITY**

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

In “East Africa & the Sea in Antiquity” it was seen east Africa is particularly well divided by the Horn of Africa. South of it, east Africa mainly faces the Indian Ocean but north of the Horn east Africa faces the Gulf of Aden, the Straits of Bab el-Mandeb plus the Red Sea.

However, west Africa does not divide so readily. There is ready recognition that west Africa lies between Cape Agulhas (South Africa) in the south at the point recognised as separating the Indian from the Atlantic Ocean and Jebel Musa (Morocco) in the north. The southern side of west Africa is treated here as Below-Bulge west Africa and consists of western South Africa; Namibia; Democratic Republic of Congo (= DRC & ex-Belgian Congo); Congo (= ex-French Congo); Gabon; Sao Thome and Principe; Equatorial Guinea; Cameroon; Nigeria; Benin (= ex-Dahomey); Togo; Ivory Coast. Above-Bulge west Africa should more strictly be labelled as On-the-Bulge west Africa. It is defined here as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea (= Guinea-Conakry), Guinea-Bissau, Senegambia, Mauritania, Morocco, etc.

Among the groups in Africa listed under the innumerable terms of the Khwe, Quena, San, Bushmen, Basarwa, Capoids, Congoids, Accas, Boskopoids, etc. It is uncertain whether all these are always the same and not all were Ichthyophagi/fisherfolk and of those practicing fishing-based economies, not all fished at sea. However, Ichthyophagi has been seen as one of the umbrella tags for these groups and Khwe can be taken as possibly covering those in Africa. The related Accas in what is now Egypt can be possibly be seen as some of the remnants of the latest of the above-noted Out-of-Africa movement(s).

Presumably related groups are now represented by the blacks still to be found in isolated pockets across what was the once-lush Magreb (= north Africa west of Egypt) became the ever-drier Sahara. It can be expected that they were pushed gradually into less attractive places by incoming Berber groups. Way to the south, something of the same seems to have happened but this time speakers of Niger/Congo (= N/C) languages called the Bantu were the aggressors. This was to leave the Khwe-type groups as occupying mainly the desert areas of southwest Africa.

As modern-type humans generally called *Homo sapiens* (variants) moved out of the African continent by circa (= ca.) 60,000 Before Common Era (= BCE), it seems there began what has been labelled the Beachcomber Trail. This means especially the coasts of the western Indian Ocean (= the Erythraean Sea, as in the title of Periplus Maris Erythraei [= PME = Voyage of the Erythraean Sea). Those using it been given the several labels of Beachcombers, Strandloopers or by the Greek one of Ichthyophagi (= Fish-eaters). Further showing the path taken would be the terms of Ethiopian (= African) applied to inhabitants of south Arabia plus India; the west African Guinea becoming New Guinea in the Indian/Pacific Ocean overlap; Melanesia (= Black Islands) applied to Fiji; Blackfellas as an early term for Australian Aborigines. Genetics attest mixing with local groups that were developing differences en route.

Just how things developed from the Late Palaeolithic onwards in India is usefully summarised in online excerpts from *La Genesse de l'Inde* (= Genesis of India) by Bernard Sergent (1997). The excerpts were translated by Sunthar Visuvalingham and placed online by Francesco Brighenti under the title of “On the African origins of the Dravidians”.

Indians on the ocean they named is also by shown Sergent (ib.), Ganeswar Nayak plus others. They also tell us about megaliths common to south India plus parts of Indonesia; Veddas of south India part-echoed by folks in Indonesia; the long-tailed bird that not only occurs in Vedic myths of India but is depicted on Dongson drums of ISEA. They became identified with the heron in ISEA and this has an Egyptian parallel seen by Classical writers as of Indian origin but coming via the Egyptian phoenix/bennu-bird said by Mohinder Deep (Legend of the Phoenix online) where it was seen as a stork, heron, crane but finally as a heron. This seemingly shows an Indian component in the early Dongson art of China, Indo-China, ISEA, etc. Nayak (ib.) shows Indian rafts in “Indonesia”.

The basic form of the rafts is shown in “The wisdom of “tied logs”: traditional boats on India’s Orissa coast before colonialism” (online). These tied-log rafts go under the various Tamil names of kattu-maran (= tied logs) plus variants of shangar, sangara, jangar, jangada, shangadam, etc. The kinship of the two emerges from the Huntingford (1980) translation of PME (ca. 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE) showing it as “vessels ... of logs tied together”. This is in east Africa where the Turturu of Tanzania plus the Thonga of Mozambique/northeast South Africa retained tales of sea-going rafts for the Culshaws (Tanganyika Notes & Records 1933) and Henri Junod (The life of an African Tribe 1926) respectively. Mozambique may result from the Indian term of musum-basa (= monsoon-boat) according to Cyril Hromnik (Indo-Africa 1984). Nor would this be the only example. Not only does PME tell us there was an Indian colony on Socotra at the mouth of the Red Sea but Strabo (1<sup>st</sup> BCE) has it that another showed his skill using the monsoons across the Indian Ocean by guiding Eudoxus across that same ocean.

Indian ships are also recorded off southwest Africa by a number of early European maps that long antedate the first European arrivals in west Africa from Portugal. Two of the most famous are those called the Sanuto/Vesconte plus Fra Mauro Maps. The former seemingly shows Robben Island in near-correct location to Cape Town and the Mauro Map notes Indians in “The Green Islands” (= Cape Verde Islands). Sergent (ib.) shows early-type instruments in the form of such as the flat cithara, musical bow, etc, and said by him to attest contacts by sea between India and west Africa. Forbes (ib.) notes a possible kattu-maran may have reached Ireland in west Europe. The jangada of Brazil shares form with Pacific craft but joins with annaikonda (= killer/destroyer of elephants) as words from Tamil India found in South America.

What has been called Island Southeast Asia (=ISEA), Maritime Southeast Asia (= MSEA), Austronesia, Nusantara (= **the** Islands), “Indonesia”, etc. Alfred Haddon plus James Hornell argued the first Austronesians (= ANs) left Philippines/east Indonesia en route to the islands of Micronesia in the west Pacific first on rafts then as the Polynesians progressed to the rest of the Pacific islands. Roger Blench looked for Austronesians leaving the Philippines crossing the Indian Ocean and reaching Madagascar and for Austronesians from “Indonesia” settling on Madagascar to become ancestral to the Malagasy. Blench is also one of those bringing attention to Pliny (ca. 1<sup>st</sup> CE Roman) noting Austronesian rati (= rafts) on the Indian Ocean.

If it is the case that Austronesians from the Philippines left on rafts for Micronesia, it seems this is analogous to other Austronesians some also perhaps from the Philippines likewise doing so again for rafts. The argument by messrs. Haddon and Hornell was in “The Canoes in Oceania” (1936-8). Among those of Blench are “Ancient Connections between Insular SE Asia & West Africa in the Light of Ethnobotanical & other Evidence” (2007 & online); “New palaeozoogeographical evidence for the settlement of Madagascar” (Azania 2007 & online); “The

Austronesians in Madagascar & Their Interaction with the Bantu of the East African Coast: Surveying the Linguistic Evidence for Domestic & Translocated Animals” (Studies in Philippine Languages & Cultures 2008 & online); “Evidence for the Austronesian Voyages in the Indian Ocean” [in *The global origins of & developments of seafaring* ed. by Atholl Anderson, James Barrett & Katherine Boyle 2010] & online).

Hornell (Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 1936) cited Diego Couto (16<sup>th</sup> c. Portuguese) saying ANs were also known off southwest Africa. Bananas are thought to have originated in Indonesia and Blench argued for varieties that he says seem unknown in east Africa and have no known overland route but do occur in west Africa, where they are dated ca. 500 BCE in Cameroon. Indonesian sources are also sought for the disease called elephantiasis and with no known overland route, it again occurs in west Africa to be shown by figurines of the Nok Culture of Nigeria (3000/2500 BCE). Blench is one of those noting what seems to be simple AN-derived instruments based on a noise-maker made on plantain leaf-stems plus a xylophone also based on plantain-stems in parts of west Africa. Blench also reports on a type of drum-head shared only between Indonesia and west Africa.

The Phoenicians are undoubtedly most famous group of sailors from antiquity on east African coasts. Having left their homeland, Phoenicians settled at Carthage (= Puni in Latin, hence the terms Punic, Phoenico/Punic [for combined Phoens. & their colonists), Gdr/Gadir (= Gades in Lat. = Cadiz, Spain), Lixos (= somewhere in south Morocco & probably where the foothills of the Atlas Mountains meet the Oued/River Dra/Draa/Dara, etc.). By far the most famous account of their voyages is that sponsored by Pharaoh Nekau/Necos at about 2700 B CE. As reported by Herodotus (ca. 450 BCE Greek), they went all round Africa.

Also well known are periploi (= plural of periplus = voyage) organised by Carthaginians (= Phoens. settled at Carthage) but also the Gaditanians (= Phoens. settled at Gadir/Gades) and the Lixitae (Phoens. settled at Lixos/Lixus). A The Periplus of Himilco shows Himilco sent to explore coasts of Atlantic-west Europe and the Periplus of Hanno shows Hanno sent to explore the coasts of Atlantic-west Africa. What seems to have been a vessel of the Phoenician class called hippoi from Gades is depicted on a jewel found at Aliseda (Port.) not too far from the Bay of Biscay said to be the most dangerous off west Europe. More sailed for days from Gades to Lixos, then fished off the Moroccan coasts for days and that found by Eudoxus was on east African coasts in Tanzania for messrs. Cary & Warmington (The Ancient Explorers 1963) and Somalia by Sean McGrail (Boats of the World (2005).

That what are called here the Periplus of Necho, Periplus of Himilco and Periplus of Hanno appear to have occurred at about the same date should surely strongly indicate that there was some collusion between the Phoenicians, Gaditanians plus Lixitae. So should that Pliny plus Martianus Capella (ca. 350 CE) could write that Hanno reached Arabia. Herodotus reported the Phoenicians on the Periplus of Nekau took three years to complete their voyage and that they said the sun was on their right for part of the journey. Herodotus disbelieved this but it is a major factor in modern belief their journey happened. En route they planted and harvested crops. This means that they knew when and where they could do despite seasons opposite that of their homeland. That they could also do so without incurring hostility from locals should again tell for interaction and for frequency of such voyages.

## **WESTERN SOUTH AFRICA, NAMIBIA & ANGOLA**

This indicates several “simple” types of vessel can be regarded as among those circumnavigating round Cape Agulhas. Those going west-to-east came from the ocean named as Indian from those using it the most to what was called Mare Aethiopiium (= The African Sea/Ocean) till about ca. 1700 when the term of Atlantic became the standard label for the same ocean. Other Greco/Roman terms include Okeanos (= World Sea/Stream = sea enclosing the world), Mare Tenebrosus (= Sea of Darkness), etc. In “Pillars of Hercules/Sea of Sea of Darkness”, Paul Lunde (Aramco World online) shows many pass to Arabs. Thus Bahr al-Zulamat/Bahr al-Muzlim (= Sea of Darkness); al-Bahr al-Muhit (= The Circumambient = the World-stream), Bahr al-Atlasi (= Sea of Atlas = Atlantic Ocean)

Undoubtedly, the most famous inhabitants from Indian Ocean coasts to those facing the Atlantic are the Bantu of across southern Africa. Those allowing us to further this include messrs. Cooke ((Human Migration from the rock-art of Southern Rhodesia [in Africa 1965]); Gramly and Rightmire (Man 1973); Rightmire (South African Archaeological Bulletin [= SAAB] 1978); Ajayi and Crowder (as Lacroix ib.); Lacroix (Africa in Antiquity 1998); Lenderer (article about Hanno online); Chami (The Unity of African Ancient History 2006).

The growing of yams and palm-nuts is particularly ancient in west Africa and has long been associated with speakers of Niger/Congo (= N/C) languages there. Messrs. Diamond (Discovery & online) and Lacroix (ib.) state these N/C-speakers came to southern Africa as growers of yams plus palm-nuts not cereals and that their language(s) evolved into the Bantu tongues of across southern Africa. This gives a Late Stone Age date of about ca. 6000 years ago (= ca. 4000 BCE). So too do skulls excavated at Bambandyanalo (Sth. Af.), Mapungubwe (Sth. Africa), etc.

This skeletal material is regarded as attesting features shared between Khwe/Capoid and the NC/Negroid ones of the Bantu. This is also in accord with such as Gramly & Rightmire (ib.), Rightmire (ib.), Lacroix (ib.), Lenderer (ib.), etc, noting the various spellings of Pwenet, Puanit, Punit, Punt, Bant, Bantu, Nt, etc. Here we observe this leads to an equation of NC/Bantu and Punt and for such African scholars as Felix Chami (ib.) and Catherine Acholonu (in the Before Adam series of books) to see Punt as applying to locations as far apart as west and east Africa.

A difficulty comes with Chami wanting the Bantu to be Pre-Khwe which we have seen is unlikely and the chronology coming with the Acholonu (ib.) works is longer still. However, summarising the views of those cited in the two previous paragraphs, the corollary is that Khwe and Bantu co-existed across southern Africa very much earlier than the received wisdom would allow and accept.

This fully accords with what is said just above on a number of early European maps. The information contained has already been said to long antedate the earliest Europeans in west Africa but continued till long after. In this long sequence of maps are those of messrs. Sanuto/Sanudo the Elder (13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> c. Italian); Vesconte (14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> c. Italian); Mauro (15<sup>th</sup> c. Italian); Barbosa (15<sup>th</sup> c. Portuguese); Johnstone (16<sup>th</sup> c. English). According the cited received wisdom, Bantu-type Africans just could not have reached the Cape Town region before the mid-19<sup>th</sup> c. Yet these **European** maps attest that the Bantu Empire of Mwenemetepé (= Monomatapa) reached to as far south as the Cape / Bay region centuries before this.

Moreover, even the earliest of these maps attest what seems to be Robben Island. This seems to have treated by Dutch as their version of the French Devil’s Island/U.S. Alcatraz. The most famous prisoner was Nelson Mandela (imprisoned by white South Africa). On the just-noted map, Robben Island seems to be set in near-perfect relationship to the Cape Town/Table Bay area of the western coast of

mainland South Africa. However, it will be obvious to anyone with even very slight knowledge of European cartography that Europeans cannot have been the original source of the information contained therein.

A further indication of the same comes with the presence of Umlindi Wemingizimu (= The Watcher of the South). If the seas off southwest Africa truly stopped Africans going to sea, it may be wondered why they would need a protective sea-god and one with a purely Bantu name at that. Likewise, his location is fixed by his name also being the Bantu name for Table Mountain overlooking Cape Town Harbour. In any case, there is more than a little evidence for there being somewhat more sea-mindedness in southwest Africa than again might be expected (especially on the basis of that famous “received wisdom”).

An earlier prisoner on Robben Island than Mandela was the Khoi leader named Automashata but called Hary by his Dutch captors. His escape from the island was in a leaky boat to the mainland. His successful escape and his reaching the coast evidently surprised the Dutch and possibly again indicates a greater maritime expertise that might otherwise remain unsuspected. So too may the South African tools that Blake Whelan (Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy 1936) compared with Irish hollow scrapers that he felt were for trimming trunks prior being turned into canoes; the nautical skills coming from the interactions of the Khwe with others claimed by Chami (ib.) and the long “journeys” made by shamans.

Among the items of Khwe-type rock-art across southern Africa is depicted an Ethiopian snipe and the shaman/shamaness (= witch-doctors/medicine-men) focuses on such images to produce the vision in which he/she was transported on the long voyages into the Other/Vision-World. Birds used as guides to the Otherworld are most notably known via the ba-birds of ancient Egypt. Birds used as such navigational aids in the real world is probably most famously known from the Polynesians of the Pacific and for whom there is no problem in seeing them as sailors and of their going long-distances at that.

On the other hand, there are still problems with some of this. It still remains uncertain what it was that attracted non-Africans to southwest Africa or what it was that was not being met by internal trading that brought Africans on to the Atlantic. Moreover, the seacraft so far described are of simple classes and it is generally held that they could not have coped in the sub-tropical waters off southern Africa, especially given the dangers of the Namibian coast.

The Namibian coast is more or less the 1000-mile tract of the Namib Desert. The swell of the of the sea here was/is considered to be particularly dangerous and northern portion gained the label of the Skeleton Coast because of it being littered with the bones of dead crew plus the skeletal remnants of wrecked ships.

Considerable mention has been made of the vessels of non-Africans in the form of Indians, Austronesians, Phoenico/Punics, etc, in this series of papers. What should not be overlooked is that those of the first two groups are raft-forms; the Phoenico/Punic ones are the hippoi seen to have seen as having come sailing for days, fishing in Atlantic waters for days, passing the two 1000-mile stretches of desert in the form of the western fringes of the Sahara plus the Namib Desert, making it from Atlantic to Indian waters yet prompted Greek descriptions of being poor ships. The “Hout Bay: Yesterday & Today” (online) adds the flimsy nature of the fishing-boats of the early Dutch settlers at Hout Bay (South Africa).

It is perhaps something of a surprise that these views have not attracted anything like the vitriolic criticism that some other theories traced in this series of articles have touched on. Another salient point here is that none of these craft are in

any way superior to the dugout-canoe dominant virtually the length of Atlantic-facing Africa. Also as we will see, it is not only non-African sea-going vessels that are to be seen as able to handle the very dangerous conditions of the Namib Coast.

This may connect with the maritime component seen to have been sought by Chami (ib.). Another linkage may be with what is shown by Thembi Russell (*The Spatial Analyses of Radiocarbon Databases: the spread of the first farmers in Europe & the first fat-tailed sheep in southern Africa* 2004). Russell does not subscribe to the “Western Route” championed by messrs. Stow (*The Native Races of South Africa* 1905), Cooke (ib.), Bousman (*African Archaeological Review* 1998), etc. However, a different reading of radiocarbon-14 dates aggregated as C14-dates by Russell (ib.) would seemingly revive Western Route theories to coincide closely with Chami’s sea-borne element. This fits with African canoes known to have carried cattle, between 80/100 people, 10/12 tons of cargo (= that of the Ulu Burun [Turkey] wreck).

We have shown that it seems there was something attracting rather more non-Africans to southwest Africa than we might surmise. Messrs. Merxmuller and Buttler are cited in “Rameses II & the tobacco beetle” by Paul Buckland and Eve Panagiotakopulu (*Antiquity* 2001) as noting tobacco from Namibia. The Merxmuller/Buttler (ib.) suggestion is that Namibian tobacco may have been the source of that found in Egyptian mummies (inc. that of Rameses II). The authors seen as having cited them regard the Namibian linkage as unlikely as any surmised to be from the Americas. This is despite the same writers also alluding to finds of Old-World THC in Peruvian mummies.

There was a great deal of copper moved about in ancient Africa but archaeology has not helped to prove the antiquity of claimed “ancient” workings at O’Okiep (South Africa), Tsumeb ((Namibia), Bembe (Angola), Benguela (Angola), Niari (Congo), etc. Nor does the talking-book/oral-history system of recording history in Sub-Saharan Africa being destroyed when griots (= keepers of traditional lore) are a specific part of what was generally being destroyed by mass-slavery help. This is because when the griot/djeli was removed the traditional lore that he/she possessed of their area also vanished or at best, is known only as remnants. Moreover, there is a general tendency to regard the copper known in west Africa to be from the Azelik/Takedda region (Niger).

Drawing on non-African texts of decidedly Pre-Colonial date, contacts between Africans and non-Africans plus KwaZulu/Natal to Mozambique (?) trade-marts are shown by Tallboys Wheeler (*The Geography of Herodotus* 1854) plus Dennis Montgomery *Seashore Man & African Eve* 2002) respectively. More trade round African coasts seems shown by messrs. Tyldesly (*The Female Pharaoh* 1998); Einzig (*Primitive Money* 1949); Herbert (*The Red Gold of Africa* 1984); de Brye (16<sup>th</sup> c. German); Patterson (*The North Gabon Coast* 1975); Henzel (*The Manillas, Arm-rings & Ankle-rings of West Africa* online); Bovill *The Golden Trade of the Moors* 1968).

One the more tangible items involved in such trade were the asemi (= rings) plus manillas (= half-rings). Thus those of the trade between Egypt and Punt (= Djibouti/Somalia?); more rings seen from Somalia to South Africa; those of the Khwe/Khoi noted by de Brye in western South Africa; the manillas seen by Einzig plus Henzel (ib.) as ranging in date from the Phoenico/Punics to the Portuguese; the rings that Bovill (ib) says were traded by the Dyula (= Wangara = Mande traders) from Guinea to as far north as Morocco.

Even longer is the extent from Angola to Morocco but the political entity sought by Leo Frobenius (*The Voice of Africa* 1913) seems very unlikely. On the

other hand, underlying it may have been a possible cultural continuum. Frobenius (ib.) sought villages arranged around the templa (= temple/shrine); houses arranged around impluvia (= water-tanks); house-roofs being ridged; shapes of drum; types of loom; frontally-strung bows; tanged arrowheads; raml (= sand-divination), along these same coasts of west Africa. In particular are the bows plus arrowheads differing from those of adjacent inland groups particularly emphasise the coastal distribution.

Hingston Quiggin (Survey of Primitive Money 1949) gives support to this when showing sea-shells used as exchange on coasts and snail-shells inland. Lars Sandstrom (Google extract of The exchange economy of pre-colonial Africa 1974), shows the sea-shells called olivella from southwest Africa (esp. Angola) were acceptable to at least as far north as Congo but so too was the more common cowrie that came to replace it. This is underlined by sea-going canoes according to “The Canoe in West African History” by Roger Smith (Journal of African History 1970).

Nor is there too much difficulty with evidence of a sea-going element in Angola. If we see Umlindi at one end of west Africa, several deities intervening between and Atlas at the other end, one of those intervening deities was Kianda. Jan Knappert (Aquarian Guide to African Mythology 1990) saw him as the Angolan equivalent of the Greek god of the sea named Poseidon. The Ovimbundu saw him as their god of the sea and of the fish of the sea.

Other Angolan Ichthyophagi or fishing-based economies include the Solongo also the coast plus Ashiluanda who are also proven island-dwellers. Elysee Reclus (The Inhabitants of the Earth Vol. III 1896) underlines this when reporting Angolans sailing to that arm of the Atlantic Ocean called Gulf of Guinea divided into the Bight of Benin plus the variously called Bight of Biafra or Bonny. One such occasion led to some of them being wrecked on the island in the Bight of Biafra named Sao Thome. Here they harassed the earliest Portuguese inhabitants on this same island and here too, is something that would be unknown if not for this record.

### **DRC, CONGO, EQUATORIAL GUINEA & GABON**

Fleets of canoes engaged in fishing on the Congo are figured in Portuguese paintings cited by Michael Bradley (Dawn Voyage: The Black African Discovery of America 1991). Some are shown with sails and raise the matter of Pre-Colonial sails in west Africa but on this matter see the last section and Jack Forbes (The American Discovery of Europe 2007). Kongo or Congo (the name of nations & the river), Bakongo (the people), Kikongo (the language), etc, are but variants of the same basic term. According to messrs. Lacroix (ib.) and Lenderer (ib.), the river plus country was known to the world outside Africa.

This presumably links with Carl Christian Reindorf (History of Asante & the Gold Coast 1895), “Swedish Ventures in Cameroon” (re. Knut Knudson ed. by Shirley Ardener 2002), etc, referring to an African empire stretching from Congo/Cameroon to Ghana (= ex-Gold Coast). This would go under the name of the Biafran or Benin Empire but the caveats about the “empire” described by Frobenius (ib.) are to be borne in mind. However, Lacroix/Lenderer views are also to be borne in mind.

They refer to the much-cited episode when Hanno’s men tried to capture large hairy primates. Lacroix wrote these animals are known as nii dida (= chest-beaters) that over time plus innumerable translations of the original has come down to as gorilla. He also says an early form of novel called Aithiopia/Aethiopia by Heliodorus (ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> c.? CE) lists seven rivers across that when mapped from the River Nile westwards across Africa culminating in the “Great River”. Lacroix (ib.)

identifies the Great River with that he says is known locally as the Chambi-Sad (= the Sea) because it is so large but is better known to us as the River Congo.

Large rivers simply called the Water/Sea/Ocean are not confined to the Congo, as most notably shown among those for the River Niger. The likely mechanism for Kikongo words known outside the Bakongo may be shown by Keith Patterson (*The North Gabon Coast* 1975). He refers to words from the Kikongo-group language called Vili in the language of Gabon known as Mahongwe (= Mpongwe). Included are molaffa/malaffa/malassa (= honey), Mani (= Ruler), matambe (= bark-cloth), etc. The mechanism is once again to be seen as commerce.

There are further indications of the Mahongwe as traders but this time as carriers of copper. Remarks made by Jean Barbot (17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> c. French) are frequently seen as attached to this but are seen as errors by messrs Hair, Jones and Law (Barbot on Guinea). They also say the same of the foodstuff called kankey that Barbot said was eaten on the long trips between Gabon and Guinea. However, there is also what is written by messrs. Markwat (as Herbert *ib.*), Patterson (*ib.*), Fage (*Cambridge History of Africa* 1977), Herbert (1974; 1984), etc, saying much the reverse.

We have seen that Azelik/Takedda ores are a suggested origin of the copper reaching the Gulf of Guinea (esp. the Niger Delta). However, John Fage (*ib.*) points out that from that Azelik in the Sahara to the mouth of the River Niger is no easier to reach or any shorter than the 600/650 miles by sea from the Congo to the Niger. Fage (*ib.*), Patterson (*ib.*), Herbert (*ib.*), etc, regard it as very probable that that copper was gathered from sources by Mahongwe/Mpongwe traders and brought north to Guinea.

The west African dugout-canoe as built by the Mahongwe was admired by British sources. They include Captain Thomas Bottler (*A Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery to Africa & Arabia* 1835 & online). He wrote Mahongwe canoes were built for “strength, solidity & symmetry”. A more famous British writer is Sir Richard Burton (*Two Months in Gorilla Land & the Cataracts on the Congo* 1870 & online) was so impressed by these canoes that he believed they were capable of almost crossing the Atlantic. This was some 80 years before Lindemann (*Alone at Sea* 1958) did just this. Burton (*ib.*) wrote that the Mahongwe canoes were capable of bearing 10/12 tons of cargo and this seen comes close to the estimated 10/15 tons that the Uluburun ship could transport. Fage (*ib.*) notes they could ferry up to 100 men.

Messrs. Burton and Barabe (*The Religion of Iboga/Bwiti of the Fang* online) are amongst those that have described the Iboga/Bwiti cult of the Twa (=Pygmies), Fang, Mahongwe, etc, of mainly of Gabon to Cameroon. Barabe (*ib.*) made a comparison of Tibet in Asia and Gabon in Africa as places of considerable religio/spiritual development. The Twa of the Mbuiti group appear to have given name to the Bwiti cult now seen to have been adopted by Bantu peoples mostly between Gabon to Cameroon that Barabe relates to the better-known Vodun/Voodoo of Cameroon, Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, etc. Khwe shamans navigating into the Other/Dream-world may compare with that of Bwiti shamans. This in turn seems to have been related by Burton (*ib.*) to the way-finding at sea by Mahongwe sailors. The yard-stick against which Pre-Colonial seamen of west Africa are judged are those of Ghana. Patterson (*ib.*) wrote those of Gabon were their equals.

#### **CAMEROON, NIGERIA, BENIN, TOGO & GHANA**

A particular section of the Ichthyophagi are those apparently centred very approximately on Cameroon called the Ichthyophagi Aithiopes meaning African or Black Fish-eaters. Aithiopes (= Burnt-faces =Africans) is but one of the many Greek terms for Black Africans and having seen that Ichthyophagi are proven all round the



African coast, just what makes these particular African fishermen any darker than the others is puzzling. It is assumed that proximity to the Equator is a major factor here

Somewhat later in Cameroon is touched on by Rosalind Wilcox (The transactions & cultural interactions from the Delta to Douala online). Wilcox (ib.) maintains the dugout-canoe continued as the essential vehicle of west African commerce. In this case, this is between the Rivers Douala and Niger. Douala also seems to be one of the many names for the Mande in Cameroon. Among other versions are Doula, Diola, Dioala, Dioula, Jola, Jula, Yola, etc. They are also known as Wangara according to Mohammed Yakin (The Almanac of African Peoples & Nations 1999). Yakin (ib.) further says Dyula plus Wangara became synonymous with trader throughout west Africa.

Cameroon is also a candidate for being where west African iron-working first emerged but for John Taylor (Oxford Journal of Archaeology = OJA 1988), where the technology came from in west Africa is from elsewhere. He thought the coincidence of the date of circa 600 BCE for the Periplus of Hanno and the not dissimilar C14-dates for the Nok Culture of Nigeria are too close for anything other than introduction by sea by Hanno from Carthage.

Taylor (ib.) was answered by John Sutton (OJA 1989) but who still looked to Carthage but by way of an overland route. It seems that across southern Africa that the methods of producing iron differ from those of elsewhere, so indicates it is probably not owed to outside Africa. Christopher Ehret (The Civilisations of Africa 2002) plus others report on African ironworking in Africa. Here between the Great lakes region of east Africa and Tanzania Africans were making iron of a quality unmatched till that of Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. The C14-dates contained in such as Ehret plus Holl and Eggers (The Archaeology of Africa edd Shaw et al 1993) appear to be as early as any others in the entire continent.

This may suggest a southern continuum and sea-borne diffusion of iron-working in west Africa involving Gabon, Cameroon, Nigeria, etc. Despite the oddities of the west African Iron Age in what Ivan Van Sertima (1976) plus many others of an Afrocentric persuasion have called Sub-Saharan Africa/Black Africa, some kind of consistent picture emerges with metallurgy diffused by sea-routes for copper, iron, etc. Here is indicated sea-routes along what till ca. 1700 was consistently called the Mare Ethiopium/Ethiopicus (= African Ocean = southern Atlantic) because of the African usage.

At approximately where the Atlantic proper becomes the southern Gulf of Guinea are a small group of islands pointed almost like an arrow to Africa. Running south to north they are, Pagalu (= ex-Annobon), Sao Thome, Principe, Bioko (= ex-Fernando Po), etc. They are roughly the same distance from each other as Africa is neared. Iyi Eweka (Edo from Sao Thome & Principe online) tells us the Nigerian language of Edo provides a considerable amount of words to the Creole language in Sao Thome & Principe. He also thought this only came with the Portuguese bringing Edo/Bini slaves from Africa to these Gulf of Guinea islands.

However, that doubt about the claim of Portuguese discovery exists is shown by something written by Charles Didier Gondola (The History of Congo 2002). He placed mention of the **supposed** Portuguese “discovery” between inverted commas. More indications of something different came from the writings of Livio Stecchini (The Voyage of Hanno online). He says Sao Thome is to be identified with Atlantis but it is more than a little difficult to regard so small an island as the genesis of the mighty island-empire that Plato (ca. 400 BCE) called Atlantis. Islands long known but

not settled till much later is worldwide and has prompted suggested bases for seasonal fishing. This will be seen elsewhere in west Africa.

A map of the Ramusio (15<sup>th</sup> c. Italian) series may have significance here in that it depicts a fish of the size of the monster-fish myths of the type (think Jonah & the “Whale”) discussed by John Brown (Transactions of the American Philological Society 1968). This too will be seen to be matched elsewhere in west Africa. The Ramusio Map also depicts a European ship plus a canoe of the size normal for west African fishing.

Whatever the truth of this, the Edos are part of what is now Nigeria. Their most famous city is Benin that was/is still Edo to the Bini/Benin and it is worth retaining the other term of Edoland for the hinterland of Benin City. It should be borne in mind the first urbanisation in west Africa seems to owe nothing to Islam or Europe but rather from the handling amounts of agricultural produce. Large enclosures also feature in Edoland. These ditch-&-bank structures are brought to our attention in several articles by Patrick Darling (online). He shows they involved more labour than did the Pyramids and that they are second in size only to the Great Wall of China amongst ancient monuments. If the Pyramids plus the Great Wall are held to attest high civilisation, what does this say for ancient Nigeria?

From such ancient writers as Hanno, Herodotus, Pseudo-Scylax, etc, may come more hints of what perhaps attracted non-Africans as the Phoenico/Punics (esp. the Carthaginians) to west Africa. The original of Hanno has been lost for millennia and the account as we now have it is merely a Greek précis of that original. Many have suggested that the original was drawn on by both Herodotus and Pseudo-Scylax. The conclusions of Robin Law (The Horse in West Africa 1987) run counter to those of Lacroix (ib.). Pseudo-Scylax (ca. 500/400 BCE Greek) wrote of horse-riding western “Aithiopians” but this to runs counter to the conclusions of Law (ib.).

However, it does accord with Lacroix (ib.) linking what is said by Ptolemy (ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> c. CE Greek) about the Hypodromos Aithiopiae (= Racecourse of the Africans) with what is said by Olfert Dapper (17<sup>th</sup> c. Dutch) about the southeast of Nigeria being free of the tsetse fly usually so fatal to large mammals and being a centre of horse-breeding. That this region of Nigeria was fly-free has been confirmed by Catherine Acholonu (pers. comm. to the writer). This may give us reasons for the non-African interest in this region of Nigeria variously called Great Ardra/Ifago/Warri/Edoland/Benin, especially with what Stecchini (ib.) called the great civilisation of Benin.

Jona Lendering (re. Hanno online) plus Stecchini further brought the large island enclosing a lake with further islands within to our attention. Lendering (ib.) thought it was somewhere in or near the Niger Delta. Stecchini refers to the island as the Great Island and more specifically that it marries point by point with the Bay of Lagos that he says encloses a lake that is an arm of the sea enclosing islands. The noise that Hanno reported so frightened his men has been interpreted variously as a Kwanza-type ceremony or as a determined attempt to repulse what the locals may have felt was an attempted invasion. Lagos Bay islands as seasonal fishing-bases presumably links with the groups called the Ichthyophagi by the Greeks.

This would connect with the sea-based economies shown above but this runs counter to the British opinion that the Pre-Colonial Nigerians were too scared to go to sea. If Frobenius is correct, the area was already under Yoruba influence. The enclosures already noted above to lead to signs of civilised societies in southern Nigeria also stretch into Ile-Yoruba (= Yorubaland). This may be where began the expertise that would lead to the 19<sup>th</sup> c. British admiration of Yoruba canoe-ports cited

in “The Canoe in West African History” by Roger Smith (JAH 1970). If Frobenius had known more about the enclosures, this would have emphasised even more what impressed Frobenius so much that he thought Yorubaland was Atlantis.

Frobenius (Voice of Africa 1913) was amongst the foremost Africanists of his day. He cited Yoruba legends 12-month voyages, golden cities out to sea, coastal lagoons stretching from Nigeria to Ghana in the role of canals, in support of his theories. The bronze head his expedition found at the Yoruba holy site of Ife is held to be that of the god named Olokun (= Lord of the Sea) compared by Frobenius with Poseidon (Greek god of the sea). Frobenius felt the head was too fine a sculpture for it to be of African origin. His dating would place it somewhat earlier than is acceptable today. However, it does appear to be in the tradition of craftsmanship going back to at least the Nok (Nig.) Culture.

A Masai (Kenya) version of the worldwide Great Flood myths has Tumbainot in the Noah role of sending a dove to espy dry land. After it returned, a vulture with an arrow tied to its tail-feathers was sent. When it came back minus the arrow, it seemed the land was now dry and that the anger of the deity was abated (note the vulture in beneficial mode). The Tumbainot version ends with the sky lit up by rainbows marking the four quarters of the world to north, east, south and west (i.e. the basic points of the compass).

The vulture was a symbol of the Yoruba goddess named Yemoja having Osun as sister or attribute. The vulture was sent to the gods to ask the flood sent by Olokun to punish mankind for the reasons normal in Great Flood myths to stop. Yemoja was also seen as sister, wife, brother, lover, son, brother-self, etc, of Olokun by someone under the nom-de-plume of “dragoncharmer” (Black Phoenix Arts Laboratory = BPAL online). A Yoruba cleansing rite put online by Yuya Assaan Anu (Sadulu House) has vultures at the four points of the world in cross-wise arrangement. Feathers of the Vulturine Fish Eagle were sacred to Olokun according to “Olokun Mud Art” by Paula Amos (African Arts 1973). Cross-shapes abound in the “Chalk Iconography of Olokun” according to Norma Rosen (African Arts 1987).

It seems the very ancient principle of birds as navigational aids at sea was known on both sides of Africa (as shown by other sources) but not to the Yorubas if they were too scared to go to sea. If so, why the need for gods of the sea that include Olokun along most of the west African littoral? If west Africans did not go to sea because of fear, why the need for a deity to pray to for protection at sea when at sea.

Rosen (ib.) also shows Olokun as the god of the *ighe-edede* (= cross-roads or junctions), so he overlaps the functions of the Yoruba god named Olori Merin (Lord of the Four Heads). The latter had cross-shaped images that Lucas (ib.) says were set up in village centres facing north, east, south and west to ward off evil from whatever direction. The heads naming Olori Merin adorn the ends of the arms of the crosses of this god or are replaced by roundels there and bear the names of godlings. Their names are also those of the winds from north, east, south and west and this is echoed by what is depicted on the Horologion (= Tower of Winds) at Athens (Greece). The cross-shapes of Olokun plus Olori Merin resemble the basic 4-point wind-rose known to Homer; those of the Horologion the 8-pointer; the Yoruba/Ife mode of divination of 16 palm-nuts has been related to the 16-point wind-rose. It is surely significant that the wind-rose is basically a sailor’s device.

The association of cross-shape with roundels/discs is echoed further by the severally named cross-in-ring/disc, wheeled-cross, Atlantis Cross, Mariner’s/Sailor’s Cross, etc. Messrs. Morwood (Celtic Visions edd. messrs. de Courcy Ireland & Sheehy 1985) and Miller (Golden Thread of Time 2004) show more of the same in

gold as the so-called “sun” or solar discs. This tells for day-time navigation but techniques for night-time navigation were/are known. Fishing at night is recorded of the coasts of Atlantic-west Africa from Namibia/Angola to most of the “Forest” kingdoms of Edoland/Benin, Yorubaland, Dahomey, Ashanti, etc. This would be part of what we have seen about the Mahongwe/Fang and a Yoruba connection comes with Irawa-Oko (= Canoe-star = Sirius).

A comment by Jean Barbot (17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> c. French) flatly contradicts that of those saying Pre-Colonial Nigerians did not go to sea. In any case, once again we have seen that the Pre-Colonial Yorubas of Nigeria had a deity that would have useless to them if there were no Yoruba sea-goers, namely a sea-god. Moreover, a tradition of the Ga of Ghana recorded by Carl Christian Reindorf (ib.) tells of Yorubas migrating to what is now called Ghana. Olokun is not only the Yoruba god of the sea but is also the Yoruba god of wealth, so seemingly carries the concept of wealth coming by sea.

According to Knappert (ib.), the god of the Ewe people of Benin Republic (= ex-Dahomey **not** Benin/Edoland in what is now Nigeria) goes under the several labels of Hwu-nu/Wu/H-nu. He says the Ewe made a distinction between Wu as god of the sea and Avaiki as the god of fishing. Notions of fishing as stealing from Wu are an obvious reference to sea-fishing (as seen many times). Knappert does not say if Wu relates to (Ag)we (the Vodun/Voodoo sea-god) but the sea-based links plus the like spellings help to make this possible. So do the maritime aspects of Agwe known on both sides of the Atlantic that include boats stuffed with desirables sent out on to the open sea. If they floated, good fishing ensued, but if the vessel, bad fishing ensued.

Ashanti is the last of the “Forest” kingdoms. It was the backbone of the British Crown Colony of the Gold Coast. The name taken on independence was the ancient one of Ghana. The term of Ghana originally meant military or political leaders of what was variously spelt as the Ouadagou/Wagadu/Wakar Empire but increasingly became that of the state. What had been the Gold Coast took the Post-Colonial name of Ghana despite being ca. 400 miles south of the ancient Ghana (= Wagadu).

There are many links between Old-Ghana/Wakar and modern Ghana. They include the shared state-name; tribe-names of Mamprus, Dagombe, Gonja, etc. The Soninke section of the Mande/Mandinka grouping were probably the major component in the founding of the Wakar Empire and Danso names are held to have come from the Mandinka to the Akan-speakers of ex-Gold Coast/modern Ghana. Kings of Wakar and in Ghana practiced matrilinear succession, spoke to their subjects only through intermediaries, had whisks as symbols of power, etc. The scripts of Saharo/Maurusian inscriptions are often said to parallel those of some of the shapes of the Akan gold-weights.

Ghana and Guinea may also relate to each other but there was/is confusion about what “Guinea” meant geographically. It could be all of Atlantic-facing Africa; what we called here Above-Bulge west Africa; the parts of west Africa facing the Gulf of Guinea (= Cape Three Points [Ghana] to the Niger Delta [Nigeria]); according to Barbot, the English “Captain” of Guinea had west Africa from Angola to Senegal as his remit. The general consensus is that Guinea refers to what is now Ghana.

The extent of the “English Captain’s” remit may be another of Barbot’s errors according to the expert opinions cited already cited in the form of messrs. Hair, Jones & Law (ib.). They were also seen to consider Barbot describing voyages of Africans trading between Angola and Guinea was a mistake. On the other hand, it was seen that other authorities of equal standing have given us what is probably the other side of the Angola-to-Guinea journeys, namely Guinea-to-Angola. The metals-trade this

involved especially means the copper that we have shown by Herbert (ib.) to be Africa-wide in its application for decorative and other purposes.

Distances to be covered by frail canoes, inability to cope with currents, fear of the sea, etc, are all suggested reasons why west Africans were mainly “boatless” people. Not so long a distance as southwest Africa to the Gulf of Guinea would be the five days that Reindorf (ib.) says took people from Benin to Ghana. Further indicating that this is not just cliché comes with David Quartey-Henderson (The Ga of Ghana 2000) showing that failed kings were sent home (= into the sea). Another connection of Nigeria and Ghana is that Tuesdays were sacred to their respective gods of the sea and fishing on the day dedicated to them was banned.

Henderson-Quartey (ib) adverts to yet another god of the sea. This time it is Nai who seems to have been a Pre-Ga deity but was probably taken over from the Guan to become a god of the Ga pantheon. Lacroix (ib.) refers to yet more Ichthyophagi on these same coasts and Reindorf (ib.) to their fish-hooks being much better than those imported from Europe. For Lacroix (ib.), a local name for these Fish-eaters in the Akan language for *afarero* (= fishermen) that he says passed into Greek as *Aphricerones*. In this light is that the Akan god of the sea plus fishing is *Bosumpo*.

If what is written in these pages does not of itself dispel the myth that west Africans were too scared to go to sea to venture on it, then reference to online histories on early surfing history may assist. Some propose ca.2500 BCE but more normal is ca. 1000 BCE for the date. This connects with Ghana, Hawaii plus Peru as primary entrants in such histories and shows intimacy with **not terror of the sea**. The more so as youths messing about on boards in the shallows stood a good chance of being taken by sharks.

Perhaps rather unexpected is the influence of west African canoes on those of elsewhere during the slave-trade period. Peter & Ginger Nemeier (The Voyage of the Marcy: Madagascar Canoes online) referred to some canoes of Madagascar echoing those of the Chesapeake Bay (US). John Vlach (The African American Tradition in the Decorative Arts 1990) looked for origins or strong input from west Africa. Where this has been mentioned in my other papers, not stated there is that the west African component harked to by Vlach (ib.) was from Ghana was by a slave from there in the US. A question posed is whether there is a west African tradition that was transmitted to the far side of Africa and to the Atlantic that is otherwise now lost?

#### **IVORY COAST, LIBERIA, SIERRA LEONE & GUINEA**

Lacroix (ib.) further brought attention to something to not often touched on, namely that Hanno had to sometimes change those that he was using as pilots and interpreters at points of west Africa. Lacroix pointed to one such occasion and concluded that this was in parts of where languages of the Krio/Kru family were/are spoken. This very roughly corresponded with either side of Cape Palmas (Liberia). To the south is the underside of what is regarded here is the Bulge of Africa and to the north is what for my purposes is defined as the Bulge of Africa.

Krio/Kru-speakers also appear in works by James Hornell (Mariner’s Mirror = MM 1929; 1946). Some of Hornell’s comments about Africans and the building of the east African sea-craft called the *mtepe* leave a lot to be desired. However, his tireless cataloguing of archaic forms of water-craft on the verge of vanishing worldwide made him the leading British authority on such matters.

His description of west African canoes including the classification of some as the Kru type. They were/are small and crewed by one or two during fishing. Hornell (1946) reported a Kru dugout-canoe returning from fishing with two tarpons being

carried on board. The tarpon is described by Hornell as a monstrous member of the herring family and it is known to reach up to eight feet in length and weigh between 550/600 lbs. Such fish are at the maximum end of the size-range but “The Tarpon—The Silver King of the Florida Keys” (online) refers to the tarpon as “the most exciting game-fish in the world”. It is worth noting the elaborate equipment that goes with modern game-fishing and contrast this with that of the Krio fishermen that is very much simpler. Equally to the point is Hornell showing that the scene concerning the returning fisherman with treated as being nothing out of the norm,

Elizabeth Tonkin (in *Africa & the Sea* ed. J. F. Stone 1985) tells us a section of the Krio/Kru is still known as the Fishmen. She also wrote that the Kru were considered to be the boldest of west African sailors by some of the earliest Europeans in west Africa. Settlers from Germany coming to colonise what for a while was the German-ruled Sud-west Afrika (= Southwest Africa = modern Namibia) had to cope with the ferocious sea-swells of the Namibian shore to cope with but it is of considerable interest just who the Germans turned to assist in this.

The ruthlessness with which the Germans in Sud-west Afrika dealt with the natives which included wholesale massacres probable suffices to indicate just how the German rulers regarded the Africans. Yet notwithstanding all this, the Germans turned to a group of Africans that they employed to ferry passengers from ship to shore and vice-versa. They were the west Africans mentioned already in connection with the settlement of Hout Bay, as shown in the Wikipedia article on Hout Bay. The west Africans they turned were Krio/Kru. **Their expertise was acquired using the west African dugout-canoe on the open sea.**

It is thus appropriate that Liberia named the west African dugout-canoe called Liberia II. This was the vessel that successively carried Hannes Lindemann (*Alone at Sea* 1958) across the Atlantic Ocean. It is perhaps somewhat surprising that this achievement has not received the attention that has come in the wake of such as the Egyptian-type papyrus-barges as the as Ra I and II built for Thor Heyerdahl plus the skin-boat of the Irish currach type built for Tim Severin. All three classes successfully achieved the crossing of the Atlantic and yet Lindemann (ib.) has not received nothing like the publicity of Heyerdahl and/or Severin.

As Sierra Leone is not strictly the homeland of the Kru, the title of the Hornell (MM 1929) article is slightly wrong. His title was “The Kru Canoes of Sierra Leone” but Yakin (ib.) tells us the Krio/Kru centre on the coasts of what are now Ivory Coast plus Liberia. It is known that the Kru-type of dugout-canoe was usually small with 1/2-man crews and mainly for fishing out to sea. That called Liberia II on its successful crossing of the Atlantic Ocean was not only of a dugout-canoe, was of the size normal for the Krio fishermen and Lindemann’s voyage was mainly fuelled by the all-fish diet that prompted the Greek terminology of Ichthyophagi on the voyage.

Pieter de Marees (16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> c. Dutch) is cited by messrs. Van Dantzig and Jones (in a British Academy edition 1987) as showing these small canoes were faster in calm waters than European ships even when the latter vessels were in full rig, albeit that the cannons of the European could make this a risky business. The European ship in full rig of Amerigo de Vespucci (15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> c. Italian) took 64 days to cross the Atlantic, whereas Lindemann alone in his dugout-canoe took 55days.

The size of the Lindemann vessel puts it at the opposite end of the size-range from those already referred to Gabon plus those met by Alvise Da Cadamosto (another 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> Italian working for Portugal) at the mouth of the River Gambia. Cadamosto was an Italian but working for Portugal and met with canoes of the

Niominka people who were under Malian rule that could carry up to 60/100 warriors. His encounter led to a withdrawal of the Portuguese fleet led by Cadamosto.

What is now the republic of Guinea does not actually face any part of the Gulf of Guinea. In “Status of the Guinean Fishery Resources” (Summaries of contributions presented at the workshop on west African fisheries: UNESCO 1995), Samba Diallo wrote that Guinea has been called the “west African water tower”. This is because so many of the great rivers of west Africa appear to begin in what is now Guinean territory. It is also the case that there was not just fishing that occurred on these same rivers but also canoe-borne carriage of goods. Use of the double-canoe shown by Bradley (ib.) plus Stewart Malloy (in *Blacks in Science* ed. Van Sertima 1984) evidently has long history on the Niger. An example of very recent date is shown by a writer under the name of Julianus Africanus (online) on the River Bafina (Guinea).

At various times, Guinea was part of one of the great west African empires that seemingly develop out of a Tichitt/Wagadu/Mali/Songhai sequence. The coasts of Guinea plus Guinea-Bissau are contiguous and dissected by rivers. It seems this led to the development of fleets that Clyde Winters (Old Ghana/Wagadu on EgyptSearch Forums 3/6/07) says led to a fine navy by the time of the Wagadu Empire stretching from the Sahara to Ganar/Gannar (=Mauritania) in Atlantic northwest Africa. The Soninke founders of Wagadu are also an ethnic component in modern Guinea.

The ruler of the Wakar/Old Ghana Empire was also the leader of the snake-cult of the same region. The Epic of Sundiata (13<sup>th</sup> c. Malian) depicts Sundiata slaying the snake-god of the Soninke to presumably attest the passing of power from the ancient and dying Wagadu (of ca. 300 BCE to ca.1100 CE acc. to Winters) to the rising Mali. In the manner of Amenophis III of Egypt crossing the Orontes (Syria) over a bridge of boats, Sundiata of Mali crossed the Niger over a bridge of canoes owned by the ancient fishing collective of the multi-ethnic Somono.

#### **GUINEA-BISSAU, CAPE VERDES, SENEGAMBIA, MAURITANIA & MOROCCO**

Guinea-Bissau is also outside “Guinea” proper. Basseyy Andah (in Shaw et al ib.) says this was a place of the development of early west African farming-systems. The yams, sorghums, African rice, etc, are said by messrs. Porteres (in Shaw et al ib.) and Blench (The Movement of Cultivated Plants between Africa & India online) to be known outside Africa at early dates. These are among the crops that have already been seen prompting suggestions that handling large amounts of them probably led to the earliest west African urbanism plus expansion.

Andah (ib.) attributes much of this to the early Dyula already seen to equate with the Wangara and that both translate as trader. A European concept apparently going back to Diego Gomes (18<sup>th</sup> c. Port.) and still being commented on by Elisee Reclus (The Earth & its Inhabitants: Africa 1896). This was that some of the channels of the rivers of Guinea-Bissau were difficult to navigate and may be the point of origin of a wrong conclusion about the Bissagos/Bijagos Islanders. That wrong conclusion was that African canoes could not reach the Bissagos Islands because of the difficulties of navigating the channels.

The validity of extending this from the rivers to the islands is especially well demonstrated by following what is written by Stecchini in his article on Hanno (online). He wanted the immense bay described in Hanno to be identified with the estuary of the River Geba that he says is truly immense as it encompasses all the islands of Bissagos Archipelago.

For it to even be contemplated that that the Bissagos Islands could not be navigated to by native canoes begs a very obvious question, namely just where the

Pre-Portuguese population of the islands came from? The more so given that the language of the islanders has been clearly proven to belong to the same family as that of the adjacent mainland. Furthermore, some of the island tongues appear to be unintelligible to those of their fellow islanders and may indicate upwards of 1000 years of settlement. Moreover, the latest of those canoes are still the basis of fleets using the islands for seasonal fishing. Such seasonal fishing-camps are shown by messrs. Kaczinsky and Djassi (*Illegal Activities in Marine Protected Activities: The Case of Guinea-Bissau 2006 & online*) to be mainly illegal these days.

Reclus (ib.) also says that the fleets of canoes from what is now Guinea-Bissau were greatly feared by the early Europeans. This seems to be because the crews of these vessels were prepared to go great distances to get to the Europeans. It further seems probable that is the possession of these fleets and knowledge of their own waters that enabled the Bissagans to hold the Portuguese at bay for at least 400 years and this makes them near-unique in west Africa. The current Wikipedia article has it that the Bissagan/Bijagos fleet was pivotal in sea-based commerce on the coasts here.

The Cape Verde Islands is another small archipelago in west Africa and has points in common with the Bissagos Islands. They again “prove” that west African canoes were incapable of reaching west African islands. In the case of the Cape Verdes, the nearest mainland is Senegambia (Senegal & the Gambia) c. 350/400 miles away. Reclus (ib.) wrote that an African dugout-canoe getting from Senegal to the Cape Verdes would be little short of miraculous. In this case, the argument is that winds plus currents would sweep the canoes back towards the Senegal coast with this underlined by the “primitive” nature of the dugout-canoe dominant along the shores of Atlantic-west Africa.

The Wikipedia entry on “The History of Cape Verde” cites Pomponius Mela (ca. 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE Greek), Pliny (1<sup>st</sup> c. CE Roman), etc, about islands called the Gorgades, Ptolemy (ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> c. Greek); Solinus (ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> c. Greek), etc, about islands they call “Ton Makaron Nesoi” (= Islands of the Blessed); Arabs (cited by James Cortesao in this article) going to an island they called Aulil/Ulil (= the Cape Verde island of Sal?). The Wikipedia author identifies these islands with the Cape Verdes. The same writer has it the Cape Verdes were 40 days from Madeira and two days from Senegal. Fra Mauro was seen to have compiled a map showing Indians reached the Green Islands (= *Islas de Cabo Verdes?*). Lacroix supports Reclus but goes on to say the coordinates given by Ptolemy for the Canaries are wrong but are right for the Cape Verdes.

Pliny cites King Juba of Mauritania (ca. 100 BCE) sending ships to the Canaries and finding buildings but no population. Al-Idrisi (14<sup>th</sup> c. Moroccan) reported an identical situation where ships from the Moor-ruled Spain of King Yusuf ibn Tashfin reached islands including one having buildings but no people. Such islands are usually identified with the Canaries but this surely cannot be so as the Canary Islands had permanent inhabitants probably long before the reign of King Juba. Also Juba set out to **revive** a dye-industry of the Gaetuli which name is held by some to mean from the south and held by Richmond Palmer (*The Carthaginian Voyage down the West Coast of Africa 1938*) to relate to Keita (the name of the dynasty ruling the Mande-based Malian Empire).

Another European writer discussing what occurred on Atlantic islands relatively near west African shores is Jose Luis Feijo. He was Archbishop of the Cape Verde Islands for part of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> c. and whilst there collected local traditions. They tell of such Senegalese groups as the Wolofs, Serers plus Lebou going to the Cape Verdes to fish. The distance between these islands and Senegal approximates to



the ca. 300 miles on the open sea that Bradley (ib.) cites Pacheco Pereira saying was fished by west African canoes.

Even further afield would be the voyages across the Atlantic recorded by non-Africans named al-Umari (14<sup>th</sup> c. Syrian) plus Columbus (15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> c. Italian). Those recorded by Christopher Columbus tell of sea-going canoes laden with cargo heading west from the Cape Verdes. Which would answer the question whether African canoes could have reached the Cape Verdes, especially as only the open Atlantic plus the Americas was in front of them. Columbus further reported that blacks were trading from canoes on the Caribbean side of the Atlantic.

This does much to suggest that once again a European has seriously underestimated west African maritime abilities. Certainly it seems that messrs. Al-Mari, Columbus plus Bishop Feijo can be set against the Reclus conclusions that west Africans could not have reached the Cape Verde Islands. It also seems the several instances of seasonal fishing-camps seen along west African coasts would include these islands and go some way to explaining buildings seen but no people.

Senegal seems to have been named by a word in the Wolof language of Senegal. That word was sunugal (= dugout-canoe or simply boat). For the Phoenicians, attribution of seafaring is no difficulty and Djahi was the Egyptian name for Phoenicia/Lebanon. The point is fully made when we realise that Djahi seems also to be a name for the Senegal coast in the Wolof language according to Cheikh Anta Diop (*The African Origin Civilisation* 1984).

Further is that Djahi in both Old-Egyptian plus Wolof means Place of Navigation. A well-known and very ancient means of navigation was observation of the behaviour of birds. In Africa, the instances known include Egypt via an episode in the Tale of Wen-Amon plus the ba-bird as the guide of the soul into the Otherworld; in east Africa there was the story of large seabirds marking a safe haven in a storm recorded Cosmas Indicopleustes; more of the large seabirds seen by Cosmas were also seen by Barbot but off west Africa, John Dyson (*Columbus: Gold, God & Glory* 1991) adds more birds that he says mark the approach to the Cape Verdes, more of the large seabirds seen by Cosmas were shown by Barbot but off west Africa facing the Atlantic Ocean.

This ocean was seen to once have had a name based on an ancient name for Africans. That term was based on the Greek words of aithios/aethios (= burnt) plus opes/ops (= face) giving Aithiopes (= Burnt-faces = Blacks) for Africans. Aithiopia/Aethiopia in turn led to the modern state-name of Ethiopia. Nor is this the only example of famous ancient names taken up by modern states. Thus Benin was originally a region of what is now Nigeria but the name has now become that of ex-Dahomey on the far side of Nigeria; the ancient name of Ghana was adopted by the ex-Gold Coast some 400 miles to the south; Mauritania in more or less the position of modern Morocco taken up by Mauretania ca. 150 miles south (& observe the slight difference in spelling).

The coast of Mauritania is approximately that of the western fringe of the Sahara Desert and is neatly bracketed between the southern Dara/Draa (= River Senegal) and the northern Draa/Dra (= Oued/River Draa = the ancient River Lixos). This extent of coast was also once ruled by the Wolofs of Senegal who abandoned it presumably because of the increasing aridity of western parts of the Sahara. The Periplus of Hanno tells it took 3/4 days to sail past. Hanno is also thought to have established six cities but there is some testimony that they were likely to have re-founded rather than original foundations.

It has already been seen that the earliest west African urbanisation is probably owed more to handling large amounts of agricultural produce than any outside agency. The name of this same stretch when Wolof-ruled was apparently the variously spelt Ganar/Gannar or Canar/Cannar (& umpteen other variants) and related by several authorities to the Gana/Ghana Empire and to the ancient city of Jenne (Mali) proven by excavation to be approximately of the relevant age. The name of the same coast would appear to be confirmed by Ptolemy calling a part as Gannaria extremis (= point/peninsula of Ganar? = ex-Cap Blanc = Ras Nouidhiba). Lunde (ib.) relates the term of Canary/Ganary to that of Kanuri who have migrated widely and now mainly settled in part of Nigeria.

Another such indication comes with Hecataeus of Abdera (c. 2600 B.P. Greek) saying the city of Lixos on the river of the same name was Pre-Hanno. In any case, Hanno himself tells us the Lixitae were already there when stating he made friends with them. The Draa name of the river anciently seen as the Lixos was an African word and Michael Skupin (The Carthaginian Columbus online) and many others wrote that that the Lixos was a river of Aithiopia (= Sub-Saharan/Black Africa) not of "Libya" (= Magreb & anciently meaning north Africa west of Egypt). This means that it can be assumed the Lixitae also named by the river were Aithiopian (= African) too.

Having seen one name for the region was Ganar/Gannar and that it probably was the coast of the Ghana Empire, another ancient name for roughly the same region was Gaetulia. Richard Smith (What Happened to the Ancient Libyans? Chasing sources across the Sahara from Herodotus to Ibn Khaldun online) says Gaituli/Gaetuli merely means "From the South" with a parallel on the other side of Africa in the form of nsw (= later n y swt = Man of the South) occurring in Old-Egyptian. Even today, being "From the South" in African terms still tends to mean someone African. This would be reinforced by Richmond Palmer (The Carthaginian Voyage down the Coast of West Africa 1931) relating Gaituli to Keita (= the royal dynasty of the Mali Empire) ruled by Africans of the Mande Empire. To the African links of Kanuri and Canary already seen is added Palmer (ib.) tying the Mande Mansa (= King) with Guancho (= Canarian) Mencey (= Ruler, Noble).

Other names for this same general region are Dyrus and Atlas. It seems Dyrus relates to Greek douros and Atlas to Greek atlaos. Both apparently mean something like hard to bear, to suffer, to endure, etc. Of ancient writers, Herodotus applies this to the Atarantes, whereas Pliny and Pomponius Mela apply this to the Atlantes according to Livio Stecchini (Sahara online), as they regularly cursed the sun for burning their skins plus faces. Aithiopes came from the Greek words of aithios plus opes, so we would expect Herodotus to use this of the Atarantes but he does not. Another oddity from Herodotus is his separation of the Atarantes/Atrantes and the Atalantes/Atlantes. Skupin, Richard Smith, Stecchini, etc, regard them as one and the same. This is significant as this probably means the Dyrus-folk were Aithiopians.

If the main grouping of the Dyrus/Atlas area in those days were the Atlantes, easily the most famous inhabitant there has to have been someone called Atlas. What is overlooked are tales of giants turned to stone the length of Atlantic-west Africa. Thus in deep southwest Africa is Umlindi already seen as such a giant turned to rock and the Bantu name for Table overlooking Cape Town (Sth. Af.). What may be more of the same is shown by such as heads at Zuma (near Abuja, Nigeria), Blo Degbo at Paynesville, near Monrovia, Liberia), Atlas (Morocco), etc.

Jens Fink (extract from "Chasing the Lizard's Tail" online) is one of seeing the original of Atlas to have been an astronomer in the mountains bearing this name. Another seems to have been the original of Hesperus who is one of the innumerable

would-be astronomers or pilgrims climbing to great heights to observe the stars and/or be near the gods. Another figure of the High Atlas was Sidi Moussa (= Lord Moses) apparently widely venerated and famous enough to warrant his tomb being on the tourist trail to Ait Bougmez (= Happy Valley) but who was Jewish according to the Jewish Morocco (online) site. An even better known resident of the High Atlas was Yahya ibn Tumart (11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> c. Moroccan) who retreated to a murabit (= a monastery) in the High Atlas at Tinmal and gathered around it the body of supporters who became the al-Muwahiddun (= the Faithful = Almohades) of wide reknown.

From this we get the impression that the Atlas Mountains was home to men of intellectual rigour over a very long period. Atlas is today best known as what in British English is called as thick as two planks and this impression of simple-mindedness has been greatly aided by Hollywood films over some years. In the High Atlas seeming to reach the sky, lay the origin of the myth of the these mountains as the pillar on which the Sky or Heavens rested that in turn became identified with the person of Atlas.

The early reputation of Atlas is very clearly shown by Hesiod plus Homer that on the dating of Martin Bernal (in Vol. II 1992), would be ca. 1000/900 BCE Greeks. This was originally as he who taught the world the astronomy so essential for the purposes of navigation at sea and seen by Homer as a master-sailor who knew the depths of the sea. Having seen that as an inhabitant of the mountains he named, Atlas was probably black and we further have confirmation of this when to as late as Strabo (ca. 100 BCE), Greek geographers could describe Dyris/Atlas as **still** held by the Aithiopes who are otherwise to be known as **Africans**.

Later on, we see the same thing still at work in Atlantic-west Africa when to as late as the Malian Empire; we see the story of what has been called The Returned Captain in this series of papers. He too shows “knowledge of the deep” plus masterly navigational skills when returning with news of “the river under the sea” (= the Gulf Stream?) plus coming home to his home port from a considerable distance out to sea that of course can only mean the Atlantic Ocean.

The “daughters” of Atlas were seen as of the sky/heavens but as wingless too, so means they were regarded as stars. Otherwise this takes us to the start. Here we have seen a number of what are perceived as very simple craft-forms deemed as capable as rounding southern Africa when passing from ocean to ocean and none of which are in any whit superior to the dugout-canoe dominant in Atlantic-facing Africa. This will be immediately apparent when according to Pliny but not many others, Hanno did the same and we know from Hanno himself that he needed west Africans to do so. Yosef Ben-Jochanann (Black Man of the Nile 1989) shows much the same when noting the much later Portuguese also going round Cape Agulhas recorded in their logbooks that west Africans as guides/pilots on the same coasts.

Harry Bourne (mainly rewritten 2010)