

WEST AFRICANS & NAVIGATION

CANOES & NAVIGATION: Oliphantes to Ogowe

This is to be seen as a companion piece for “East Africans & Navigation” that in turn is one of a series of papers discussing aspects of whether Africans ever went to sea or were too much in terror of it to do so. Ivan Van Sertima (They Came Before Columbus 1976) wrote against the latter opinion when saying Africans were not the “boatless” people they are frequently described as. As many of the other negatives of voyaging around African shores are listed in “East Africans & Navigation”, there is little point in repeating this here

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

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 These faults are such that Holm’s book has been withdrawn by the publisher.

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

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

Here we plainly have expert opinions relatively few in number but apparently growing when arguing against details of what is called the Bantu Migration Theory (=

BMT) that begins to resemble the Aryan Invasion Theory (= AIT) in India. This all tells us Bantu were in parts of southern Africa millennia before they were supposed to be. This goes against the received wisdom on such matters but does accord with a number of European maps. Some of these maps are cited by Hall & Neal (*The Ancient Ruins of Rhodesia* 1902), Cooke (*Human migration from Rock-art of Rhodesia [Africa 1965]*), “African Floods, Lakes & Random Matters”, etc.

Among the cited European map-makers are messrs. Sanuto/Sanudo (13th/14th c. Italian), Vesconte (13th/14th c. Italian), Mauro (15th c. Italian), Barbosa (15th Portuguese), Santos (16th c. Portuguese), Johnstone (16th c. English). The Santos/Vesconte Maps appear to attest the surprising detail of Robben Island in near-perfect relationship to the Cape Town and Table Bay locations of western South Africa. The most prominent feature of the Cape/Bay region is probably Table Mountain overlooking Cape Town.

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

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

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

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

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

Taylor’s article does at least allow for some iron technology having arrived by sea, a theme further touched on shortly. However, this also brings us to the matter of west African sea-craft. The dominant vessel here is the dominant vessel is the dugout-canoe about which Europeans complained loud and long. This was because the long

narrow canoes were regarded as very unstable. They can achieve stability by a second vessel being attached that became reduced over the years to mere floats called outriggers. The double-canoes and/or those with outriggers appear on both sides of Africa, may originate in India but are known across both the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Another African method of achieving stability was by sheer size. It is known that Polynesian traditions tell of the Proto-Maori getting to New Zealand in such giant canoes. So there is little reason to reject Fijian traditions cited on the Balson Holdings site (online) of east Africans from Tanzania also undergoing transoceanic journeys in such canoes when going across the Indian Ocean to reach the Fiji Islands in the western Pacific. As to unstable canoes in west Africa, opinions cited by John Vlach (*The African American Tradition in the Decorative Arts* 2007) west Africans sitting dexterously in their vessels.

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

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

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

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

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

Moreover, the overland route claimed for Saharan iron resembles the claim of Saharan copper coming via Saharan copper at Tazelik (Niger) to the mouth of the

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

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

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

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

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

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

CANOES & NAVIGATION: Brazzaville to Benin Republic

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

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

Serious doubts exist as to whether East-coast Amerinds ever had sails. Jack Forbes (*The American Discovery of Europe* 2007) refers to the story of a Father Blaseus as told by an Englishman named John Stoneman. Thus to Amerinds of Mesoamerica held not to know anything about sails is added Stoneman recording this Spanish priest as having taught use of sails to the Caribs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So too would those seen to have involved the territory of ancient Nigeria variously called Benin, Edoland or Biafra. Thus those already theorised to have stretched south towards to possibly Angola is added the traditions behind voyages northwards to Gold Coast/Ghana. Yet another writer, Livio Stecchini has invoked The Periplus of Hanno (online) as a relevant connection. Reindorf (ib.) is a major source about Biafran sea-craft on their northward navigations that can assumed to date to the period of Phoenico/Punics in Atlantic-west Africa when Stecchini wrote of the Carthaginian admiral named Hanno trying to contact what he described the great civilisation of Benin.

A major difficulty with anyone neutral trying to make sense of the Nigerian material is the welter of theory and counter-theory. This is hardly helped when writers of the separate ethnia are propagandising and/or point-scoring on behalf of their particular ethnic group. Equally unhelpful are the diverse interpretations about deities with a case in point being Olokun.

Olokun is a Yoruba deity described variously as a goddess and/or a god. Making for further complications is Olokun even more severally seen as the lover, brother, son, brother-self, etc, of Yemoya on the Black Phoenix Arts Lab (= BPAL) by someone writing under the online name of thedragoncharmer. Besides a connection with water, another point in common is the latter showing the vulture as a symbol of Yemoya/Yemoja and the Vulturine Fish Eagle shown as symbolising Olokun in “Olokun Mud Art” by Paula Amos (African Arts 1973)

A Kenyan story has Tumbainot in the Noah role dispatching a vulture to espy land instead of dove plus raven in a version of the worldwide Great Flood myths. This same east African version also marks the cardinal points of the world to north, east, south plus west. These four corners of points of the world are also marked by vultures in Yoruba ritual according to Yuya Assaan Anu (The Sadulu House online). This also relates to the igha-edede (= junction/crossroad) according the “Chalk Iconography of Olokun” by Norma Rosen (African Arts 1987). Also to the equally cross-shaped images of Olori Merin (= Lord of the Four Heads) that as Olori has heads of godlings at the end of the arms of the cross of this god who is again the god of way-finding on land.

The names of these lesser gods are also the names of winds from north, east south and west according to “The Religion of the Yorubas” by Joseph Olumide Lucas (1948). Godling-names as those of winds attach too to the Horologion (= Tower of Winds) designed by Andronikos of Cyrrhus [= Kyrrhos]). If the Horologion (1st c. BCE) marks the 8-point form of early compass called a wind-rose, the writer of the Eden Saga site attaches the 16-pointer to the 16 nuts of Yoruba divination type Ifa type.

Olokun was seen as the Yoruba equivalent of the Greek god of the sea called Poseidon by Frobenius (ib.). He also looked at the extent of the lagoons first recorded in the 19th c. as stretching from south Nigeria to modern Ghana and felt they were the origin of the canals of Plato’s account of the Atlantis form of Great Flood myths. Frobenius further cited stories of golden cities under the sea at some distance from

Yorubaland that again convinced him Yorubaland was the original Atlantis. With the riches of Atlantis in mind, he might also have mentioned that Olokun was not just a sea-god but also the Yoruba god of wealth, so recognises wealth coming from the sea (including fishing?).

Somewhat smaller than the surmised size of the island-empire called Atlantis was Lagos Island identified with the so-called Great Island described in the report of west African adventures of Hanno of Carthage by Hanno. This episode has been variously interpreted. One of them is that this represents a warding off of a perceived invasion by the Carthaginian fleet of Hanno. If the latter, this may not have been the only example of the inhabitants of Lagos Island doing so, as standard histories of Lagos Island tell of the seeing off of an attempted conquest the Benin Empire at its Height. However, it is to be noticed the island did come under Bini/Benin rule.

Aromire is a Yoruba term meaning Lovers of the Water and that Beni-Otu is an Ijo term meaning People of the Water according to Ijo-Gen. The same source has it that not only did some of the mix making up the Proto-Ijo came from as far south as western South Africa but also that some of the same group(s) went even further to affect the speakers of languages of the Krio/Kru family of Ghana, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone but mainly Liberia.

CANOES & NAVIGATION: Benin to Bissagos

This Benin Republic to the Bissagos Islands portion sees us leaving northern ports of the Gulf of Guinea for the island section of Guinea-Bissau. The Benin Republic (= ex-Dahomey) to Ghana (= ex-Gold Coast) section of this region again shows evidence of long-distance voyagers, extensive sea-fishing, gods of the sea, etc. The god of the sea of the Ewe people centring on Ghana is seen under various spellings of Wu/H-nu/Hwu given by Knappert (ib.). According to Knappert (ib.), the Ewe distinguish between Wu as the god of the sea and Avaiki as the god of fishing and that sea-fishing was seen as stealing from Avaiki. This strongly suggests not just fishing at sea but also deep-sea fishing at some distance from the nearest shore.

There is some evidence of continuation of pre-existing traditions passing to proto-tribal stages. Ouaouadagou/Wagadu/Wakar is the first recognised imperial state in west Africa having a ruler called a Ghana that was to become that of the state and Ghana was adopted by as the name of the Gold Coast on gaining independence. The proto-tribal of the Soninke branch of the Mande/Mandinka grouping(s) was probably the major founding element of the Wagadu/Wakar Empire and Mandinka Danso names passed to the Akan-speakers dominant in modern Ghana. Wakar and Ghana also practical matrilinear succession, spoke to subjects via intermediaries, had whisks symbolising power, etc. Scripts of Saharo/Maurusian type may appear to be echoed by the shape of some Akan gold-weights.

Messrs. Henderson-Quartey (The Ga of Ghana 2000) and Meyerowitz (The Sacred State of the Akan 1951) also mention groups absorbed into others and passing on canoe-building, sea-fishing, star-names tied to this, etc. The Guan god of the sea called Nai became that of the Ga people researched by David Henderson (ib.). This but one of numerous instances of a conquered people passing on maritime traits to their conquerors and this was seen as far south as Gabon and according to Eva Meyerowitz (ib.), another Ghanaian example would be the Etsi overrun by the Akan-speaking Akans.

Meyerowitz (ib.) says that from the Etsi-turned-Fanti came boat-building, sea-fishing, linked star-names, etc. In the online article titled "The Akan, Other Africans

& the Sirius Star Systems”, mention is made of west African ethnica associate themselves to Sirius in various ways. A good example is Sirius as the Yoruba Irawa-oko (= Canoe-star) that might almost be pictorially glossed by “Proto-Polynesian Art: The cliff-paintings of Vatuele, Fiji” by Rod Ewins (Journal of the Polynesian Society 1995). Here a canoe seems to be being steered towards a star that Ewins (ib.) wrote may have been Sirius. With Fiji being part of Melanesia (= the Black Islands) plus having legends of Africans reaching Fiji in large canoes, it may be that this belongs here too.

Sirius also seems part of what passed from the Etsi to the Fanti. The Etsi name for Sirius and nearby stars was Etsi and soon after the appearance of Sirius, Orion, etc, fish were abundant. Whether the name of the people being the same as that of the star-systems reflects the importance of the fishing to the Etsi is left unsaid by Meyerowitz but she does call attention to Akan gold-weights some of were already said to bear elements of ancient Saharo/Libyan scripts. Another theme is that of bunched hawk’s feathers seen by the Akans as triangles combining with cross-shapes marking north, east, west and south. In short, birds once again attest the cardinal points of the compass.

Side by side in Cote d’Ivoire (= Ivory Coast) are more Akans plus speakers of languages of the Grebo type. Not all voyages of west Africans along Atlantic-west coasts of west Africa were long-distance. Examples of shorter distances include ones from Benin (Nigeria) Lagos Island (Yorubaland, Nig.); from Yorubaland to Ghana; those of the Sea Grebos when joining the Land/Bush Grebos in Liberia where the Grebos are a dominant element. These would seemingly attest passages of approximately five days on the basis of what is written by Carl Christian Reindorf (History of the Gold Coast & Asante 1895).

The most famous of Grebo seafarers has surely to be those of the Krao/Krio/Kru sub-group. Lacroix (ib.) argued the interpreters cum navigators that came south with Hanno stopped being useful to him about the vicinity of Liberia and that they were replaced by these Krio-speakers. If so, this would not be the only example of non-Africans appreciating Krio/Kru maritime skills. Far to the south of Liberia is the corner of Africa now called Namibia. As seen above, it was once under German rule. Having stolen Herrero land, Germans were sought to farm it but a major difficulty in getting passengers ashore in pre-jetty days meant going through Atlantic so fierce that part of the Namibian shore was named the Skeleton Coast because of just how many European ships came to grief on these shores. Given the Germans clearly had little love for Africans, so it is a surprise as to who the Germans chose to beat this problem.

Africans were chosen and those Africans were Krio/Kru-speakers and they did the ferrying of what the Germans regarded as the valuable cargo of would-be settlers from ship to shore. They did so in canoes typical of their Liberian homeland. Yet these are the same canoes that early Europeans complained were unstable and liable to capsize To this can be added such as the remarks of James Hornell (Man 1941) that Negroes were too feeble-minded to have evolved their own canoe-forms. However, John Vlach (The African American Tradition in the Decorative Arts 1990) cited American opinion saying Negroes sat comfortably in canoes that they handled “dexterously”.

Even if he is sparing in praise of African canoe-forms, Hornell (MM 1928) does compare the paddles of Krio boatmen for length, design plus elegance with those used in the Pacific by Polynesians from the Marquesas Islands. Another Africo/Pacific linkage comes with legends of giant canoes from east Africa getting

across the Indian Ocean to yet more Pacific islands but this time of the Fiji group according to Fijian tradition. Another indication of African canoes as a trans-oceanic vehicle comes with that called Liberia II successively taken across the Atlantic by Hanes Lindemann (Alone at Sea 1958).

Not only were there these constant complaints by Europeans about unstable African canoes but also to be noted are the comparisons of the smaller and lighter canoes of the Grain and the Gold Coasts contained in "The Description & Historical Account of the Gold Kingdom of Guinea" by Pieter de Marees (1602). This was translated for the British Academy by Albert Van Dantzig and Albert Jones (1987). Those of the severally labelled Malaguetta/Pepper/Grain Coast (mainly Liberia) from exports of grains of Malaguetta pepper were lighter and smaller than those of the Gold Coast (mostly Ghana) and yet there are other interesting comparisons for these Grain Coast/Liberian canoes of the Kru.

One was seen to have been the addition of the Krio/Kru-type that have been seen as trans-oceanic is that on the successful voyage undertaken by Lindemann (ib.). His vessel was typical of the Krio; was of the size normal for the Krio/Kru; his mainly fish-based diet was that leading to the ancient Greek term of Ichthyophagi (= Fish-eaters) for many African coastal groups. Hornell (Mariner's Mirror 1928; Water Transport 1946) described the occupant of a Kru vessel bringing home two monstrous fish of a type today involving sportsmen catching them using elaborate tackle in large boats. Yet this Krio/Kru vessel was of the 1/2-man size and light construction normal for Kru fishermen and this event recorded by Hornell was treated as nothing special and as an everyday happening. Elizabeth Tonkin (in Africa & the Sea ed. Jeffrey Stone 1985) says some Krio/Kru are known as the Fishmen.

It was also the Stone (ib.) book that cited Frenchmen saying west Africans did not go to sea because of fear. It will be said that French opinion seems largely responsible for something very similar about the more specific case of west Africans not being able to access the Bissagos Islands off Guinea-Bissau plus the Cape Verde Islands west of Senegal.

Coming past that remote part of the Liberian coast now called Cape Palmas held brought Europeans almost on to the Gulf of Guinea where they thought the seas could not be navigated on. Yet Krios/Krus not only went hundreds of miles east towards Cameroon but also traded westwards to the Senegal coast. If the above is correct, the Krios/Krus were impressing non-Africans from the 1st millennium BCE onwards. To what was said already about them impressing Germans can be added that they also impressed the 18th c. British sufficiently for them to continue inducting Krios/Krus into the Royal Navy throughout the 19th into the 20th cs. according to Wikipedia on "Siddees & Kroomen" which was to take them on to the Indian Ocean Region (= IOR).

Where the reports of west African non-access to certain small island-groups of west Africa came from seems noted by Pamela White et al (Exploration in the World of the Middle Ages 2005) and George Brooks (Eurafricans in Western Africa 2003) respectively. They may originate in problems of a Portuguese ship in the narrow channels between the mainland and the islands and the islands themselves. The captain of the French ship employed an expert Bissagan to aid piloting these channels. That he apparently could not do so seems to have led the notion of these channels were too treacherous to navigate.

When the Portuguese first got to the islands they found west Africans there. If the Africans could not access the Bissagos Islands, we might wonder where the inhabitants of the islands that the Portuguese met came from. Their arrival on the

islands clearly long antedated the Portuguese getting there. Also an all-male population will last only as long those males live, so the continuation needed females to be present. The Wilson article (*Journal of West African Languages* 2003 & online) on “Vowel Harmony in Biyago” makes obvious the Biyago language of the islands had so diverged that some dialects were unintelligible to their fellow islanders and had almost emerged as a separate language. This is further good testimony for Africans there as **very** settled for a considerable antiquity.

Moreover, once again we will find west Africans involved in a widespread canoe-based commerce, this time it is the Bissagan dugout-canoe. Nor were the Bissagans shy of raiding European ships out at sea, this despite the dangers that European cannons represented (so offer an early parallel for the modern Somali pirates?). The Bissagan fleet was also the mainstay of a resistance to attempted conquest of the islands by the Portuguese that was stayed between the 1530s and the 1930s, so was probably the most effective resistance to would-be European conquerors in west Africa.

CANOES & NAVIGATION: Dar to Dra

Indian sea-craft came past those of Africans on the strength of what several African plus other scholars cited in “Ancient India, West Africa & the Sea” say. Instances of monsoons linked to Indians range from the “The Story of the Half-drowned Sailor in Egypt” to the musum-baza (= monsoon-boats) possibly part-naming Mozambique. This brackets most of IOR-facing east Africa and for such as messrs. Senghor, Sergent, Sawandi, etc, Indian contacts occurred in west Africa as far north as Senegal/Mali in contexts that Sergent wrote were proof positive of having come by sea. India seems to have been important in the evolution of such as the dhow, jangada, kattu-maran, etc, any one of which could have been what brought early Indian sailors to west Africa. Later ones are shown on the Mauro Map (14th c. Italian).

The severally named Austronesians, (= ANs), Indo-Malays, “Indonesians”, Nusantarans, etc, were mainly from Island Southeast Asia (ISEA). Going eastwards, they were the main ancestors of the Polynesians of the Pacific islands and going westwards, they were the main ancestors of the Malagasy of Madagascar. A raft-first/canoe next the early stages in the west Pacific was argued for by messrs. Haddon & Hornell (*The Canoes of Oceania* 1936-8). Interpretations of the IOR vessels called rati (= rafts) by Pliny (*Natural History* 1st c. CE) may lead to conclusions of the same for the AN forebears of the Malagasy. If gaps in our knowledge of early AN types in Africa is filled by claimed AN affinities of the mtepe, we note they were of coasts, shallow seas and leaked badly, yet brought ANs to west Africa.

Also known on African coasts were Phoenicians from Phoenicia (= Lebanon), Carthage (Tunisia), Gdr/Gadir (= Gades = Cadiz, Spain), Lixos (sth. Mor.), etc. At about the same time (?) it seems Phoenicians left Egypt en route round Africa; Carthage sent Himilco to west Europe; Carthage sent Hanno to west Africa; Gadir sent craft to fish off west Africa that may end up as wrecks in east Africa. The latter were of the hippoi among the forms crossing fierce Biscay tides; were depicted on an Aliseda (Port.) jewel; took days to reach west Africa; fished there for days in Atlantic seas, reached east Africa. George Rawlinson (*History of Phoenicia* 1889) saw Phoenician ships as “tiny & frail” and Strabo saw hippoi as very poor.

The two most famous of Celtic sea-craft are the ponti of the Celts of Gaul (= mainly France) called the Veneti plus the skin-boats of the Irish Celts called currachs. If Garrett Olmstead (*The Gundestrup Cauldron ...&... the Tain Bo Cualgne* 1979) is

correct Venetic ponti were also plying the ferocious Bay of Biscay tides laden with cargoes as much as the Phoenico/Punic vessels referred to by Alan Villiers (*The Western Ocean* 1957). Skin-boats plying Atlantic seas include the Inuit umiak and kaiak/kayak plus the Celto/Irish currach. The Inuit boats did so making the relatively short hop between east Canada and Greenland. The most famous single skin-boat called is the Brendan successfully crossing the Atlantic in 1978.

Probably the ancient Greeks are well known to western readers as seafarers. Mycenaean Greece had the vessels described as the “Black” ships in the much-cited “Catalogue of ships” contained in Homer’s “Iliad”. They were compared with vessels from the Bismark Islands by Bjorn Landstrom (*Ships of the Pharaohs* 1970). Hesiod wanted his brother not to become a Greek sailor (as Diana Topham-Meekings in *The Hollow Ships* 1976). Homer is cited by Lionel Casson (*The Ancient Mariners* 1991) shows Nestor praying to Zeus for having survived the 50 miles between the islands of Lesbos and Euboea. This pattern repeated among the later Classical Greeks is shown by Peter Green (*A Concise History of Ancient History* 1991).

Viking ships were better constructed than Greek ones according to Casson (ib.). He concludes this is because the Viking ships were built for ocean travel. The island-hopping of Greeks in the Mediterranean Sea is matched to some degree by that of Vikings on the Atlantic Ocean coming via the Shetlands, the Faroes, Iceland, Greenland, the Americas, etc. Once more we have analogies pointed out between European ship-forms and canoe-based sea-craft of the west Pacific but this time by James Hornell (*Water Transport* 1946). Vikings called Rus (& named Russia) were called Varangians by the Byzantine Greeks. The Rus/Varangians used log-canoes when raiding Byzantine coasts across the Black Sea.

Also in the Americas were the pre-existing population called American Indians (= Amerinds/Native Americans). Dominique Gorlitz (*Abora* articles on Migration & Diffusion online) felt use of guaras/guares is shown by Egyptian rock-art. Thor Heyerdahl (*Ra Voyages* 1971) took an Egyptian reed-boat across the Atlantic. En route the steering-oar broke. It was replaced by an oar thrust through the reeds to act as a proto-guare of the type that in fully developed form was the major steering apparatus used by West-coast Amerinds when sailing on the long distances between Peru/Ecuador in northwestern South America and west Mexico. When doing so, these Amerind voyagers went against prevailing currents and winds.

Indian types argued by several expert opinions to have been capable of getting from the IOR to west Africa are presumably strengthened by the jangada on the far side of the Atlantic. Likewise, those bringing such as Indo-Malay/AN varieties of banana, the disease called elephantiasis, certain forms of primitive instrument to the coast of Atlantic-west Africa. Phoenicians and their Punic colonists were seen on both sides of Africa on both sides in sea-craft shown to have been described as tiny, frail and in the case of the hippos, very poor. Yet not one of these vessels can said to be superior to sea-going west African canoes.

If they are superior what is usually dismissed as the dugout-canoe, they are not markedly so. Indeed two very expert maritime historians were seen to inform us that the famous Black ships of Homeric Greeks and the Viking drakarr have rather more in common with the dugout-canoe than might be realised at first glance. The circumstance of Odysseus (= Ulysses) given by Homer as a shipbuilder but knowing how to construct a raft might easily be compared by groups of Vikings knowing how to build the superb looking drakarr (= dragon-ship = longship) but also knowing the value of the dugout-canoe.

Moreover, from Michael Bradley's (ib.) research, the west African dugout-canoe was superior to the Viking drakarr of like length in respect of being generally of single-piece construction rather than the several planks put together in the case of the Viking craft. The seamanship of the West-coast Amerinds on their balsa-log rafts is rightly much admired and as part of this, it was seen they went against prevailing currents when doing so. Phoenico/Punic vessels going north/south on west African coasts did the same, as did the west African canoes described in "The Canoe in West African History" by Roger Smith (Journal of African History 1970)

The Villiers (ib.) reference to laden Phoenico/Punic vessels coming across the Bay of Biscay was in connection with their possibly coming round the southern tip of Africa. He thought both were probable and we have seen this thought to have included hippoi shown quite close to Biscay at Aliseda (Portugal) and others from Gades that we saw took days to get to Atlantic seas, fished in those same waters for days was also deemed able to turn the southern tip of Africa.

On such a basis, there is no reason why west Africans did not do so as well. The guesstimated carrying capacity of the wrecked ship Canaanite/Proto-Punic type excavated at Uluburun was 10/12 tons. This stands close to that estimated for sea-going west African canoes from as far back as Richard Burton (Three Months in Gorilla Land & the Congo Cataracts 1876). Sea-craft of that part of ancient Gaul/modern France that was Armorica (=Land by the Sea)/is now Brittany were those of Celts called Veneti. A re-creation of them by Craig Weatherill (Cornish Archaeology 1985) is no less theoretical than those of Michael Bradley (Dawn Voyage 1991).

Yet once again the non-African vessels are labelled ships but Bradley's tank-tests demonstrate west African sea-going were every bit as seaworthy as most of those shown so far in this section. In these contexts, we return to whether west African canoes could have ever reached the Cape Verde Islands as per the comments by Reclus (ib.) supported by Lacroix (ib.).

This non-access of islands from west Africa has already been touched. In the case of the Cape Verdes, this is said by Reclus to be because of currents sweeping west African canoes back to the Senegalese coast. The matter of whether west African canoes has been touched on and was seen to even include possible turnings of the most southerly point of Africa at Cape Agulhas (Sth. Af.). In any case, this ignores what is said by Luis Feijo (19th c. Bishop of the Cape Verde Islands) who is cited by Reclus as saying such Senegalese ethnica as the Serers, Wolofs, Lebous, etc, seasonally fished in the Cape Verdes.

Even more to the point is that none other than Columbus also cites Portuguese sources saying that laden west African canoes were seen leaving the Cape Verde Islands for points west with only the open Atlantic and the Americas in front of them. On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, again according to sources noted by Christopher Columbus there were blacks in canoes trading in islands of Caribbean.

So to re-pose the question of whether west Africans from Senegal could have navigated to the Cape Verde Islands? West Africans were recorded as fishing "100 leagues" (= ca. 300 miles) out to sea by Pacheco Pereira (cited by Bradley ib.) and this approximates to the 350/400 miles of the Cape Verdes from Senegal

So the answer seems yes and we should probably extend this to a lot further afield than the Atlantic-facing coasts of Africa. If it is correct that relatively little reached the non-African world about Atlantis-west Africa between Hanno and the Portuguese, what is written by Dennis Rawlings (online) summarising his research on the Geographia by Ptolemy becomes very interesting.

Coordinates are given by Ptolemy for what is usually seen as the Canary Islands. An account of an expedition passing from Juba II of Mauritania to Pliny (1st c. CE Roman) the Makaron Nesoi (in Greek), Insulae Fortunata (in Latin), Jaza'ir al-Kualidat (in Arabic) or Blessed/Fortunate Isles in English are usually identified as the Canaries.

There are several reasons why this is unlikely. Simplest is that the coordinates are wrong for the Canaries according to Lacroix (ib.), Rawlings (ib.) plus many others but do fit those of the Cape Verdes. If it is correct that such as Juba (via Pliny) plus the Mugharrirun (= Adventurers [via Edrissi]) found islands with buildings but no people, it is worth noting the islands cited by Pliny has become one island by the time of Edrissi (11th c. Magrebi). That island was Laqa for Edrissi and it was vaguely set somewhere in the Atlantic (& anyone wanting to observe mobile islands & wrong locations in the Atlantic could do worse than look at the story of the wanderings of St. Brendan's Isle still occurring on maps into the 19th c.).

If it is correct that there are Egyptian and Phoenico/Punic affinities for much of Canarian prehistory, this indicates a long-standing population long antedating Juba's expedition. The islands having buildings but no people thus make no sense if they are to be the Canary Islands but do fit the location of the Cape Verde Islands. Also the buildings but no people do accord with the Cape Verde Islands as having been seasonally fished by the west African ethnicae described by Feijo (& possibly paralleling the apparent defence of asset on Lagos Island by the Awori [see above]).

Rawlings (ib.) compared the discoverer(s) of the Cape Verdes with Leif Eriksen or Christopher Columbus for daring. As to who was responsible for the non-African knowledge of these islands, something of an analogy may lie with Robben Island. It occurs in near-perfect relationship with the Bay/Cape region of South Africa on the Sanudo/Vesconte Map(s) of the 13th c. The possible sources of this information could be anyone of the above-seen suggestions with Indian plus Indo-Malay crews reinforced by later evidence of Indians (as the Mauro Map) and Indo-Malays (as Diego Couto cited by Hornell [JRAI 1938]; The Beal-led Burobudur voyage in west Africa.

More locally, Africans are the most likely source. With canoes being to the fore here, it is noteworthy that the word of sunugal (= canoe/boat) from the Wolof language of Senegal seems to give us the name of Senegal. This is well shown by Cheikh Anta Diop (The African Origins of Civilisation 1984) saying that Djahi was one of the Egyptian names for Phoenicia/Lebanon and one of the Wolof names for Senegal. Diop (ib.) underlines this when further writing that Djahi means Place of Navigation in both Old-Egyptian and Wolof.

More than one means of protecting assets has been shown above and to them can be added misinformation. The kind that would lead on to the here-be-monsters variety was still around till the 18th c. We can further observe Sultan Mohammed Bello of Sokoto (Nig.) telling Hugh Clapperton (19th c. Brit.) the Niger flowed west into the Atlantic but gave him a map showing this river as flowing east as part of age-old concept of the Niger/Nile. A much-seen tale has a Phoenico/Punic captain wrecking his ship so as a following Roman ship did not find the trade-route to Britain. A Bissagan pilot suddenly losing his expertise when guiding a French ship through his native waters sounds very suspicious, so may prompt us to wonder if there is another case of attempted deliberate wrecking to keep secrets secret.

For Egypt, an enhancement of commerce came with the Red Sea/Nile Canal while a prime example of protection is provided by the Egyptian victory in the Battle Nile Delta. It will be immediately no Islamic or European stimulus was needed for

such as the war-fleet of the Kushite/Nubian Africans so feared by and so dangerous to Egypt. Axumite Ethiopia placed the people called the Solates in overall charge of Axumite anti-piracy policy with the overall charge under an admiral-type called the Barnagash (= Lord of the Sea). Another admiral-type seems to have the original officer of the severally named Swahili, Zanj, Shirazi, etc, was the Mkuu wa Pwani (= Master of the Shore).

Zanj slaves were taken to parts of the Umma (= Islamic world) as part of Trans-Islamic slavery. Some were taken to the Persian Gulf according to Iraj Bashiri (Muslims or Shamans online) but others were taken to south Iraq. Here they often rebelled against their slave-masters culminating in the Great Zanj Revolt. The 3rd Slave War (73-1 BCE) led by Spartacus stopped all-conquering Roman armies for ca. 18 months and the Great Zanj Revolt (868-883 CE) led by Sahib al-Zanj stopped all-conquering Arab armies for ca. 15 years.

Messrs. Burns & Collins (A History of Sub-Saharan Africa 2007) show just how low the status of slaves was in the Islamic world when showing dead slaves were thrown into pits alongside dead dogs. It thus can be readily understand why an east African with an African title of Sahib al-Zanj (= Man of the Zanj) would introduce a decidedly non-African Islamic background/parentage. The particular point about the enslaved east Africans is that absolutely key for the Zanj successes in the south Iraqi marshes was the expertise as boatmen, sailors and fishermen that made them so attractive as slaves to their Arabic masters and which was to boomerang on them when the Zanj seized control of the south Iraq waterways.

There are recent efforts dismiss the trans-Islamic and trans-Atlantic slave-trades. They would dismiss the former entirely and minimise the latter as no more than an extension of that within Africa. However there are several points in common between both. The atrocious conditions of Zanj slaves in the Iraqi marshes appear matched by those of enslaved west Africans building 19th c. Mississippi levees; Bashiri (ib.) cites Zanj slaves thought their masters captured them for the purpose of eating them and when Cadamosto met the Niominka at the mouth of the Gambia they were hostile because they too held they were being captured for White cannibals.

A little on the positive side emerges from something written by Peter and Ginger Neimann (The Voyage of Marcy: Madagascan Canoes online). They refer to the construction of Malagasy/Madagascan canoes has affinities with Chesapeake Bay (U.S.) canoes. This brings us to a comment made by John Vlach in superb "The African American Tradition in the Decorative Arts" (1990). This is that a west African origin for most of what went into the building of Chesapeake Bay canoes. Whether this means a now-lost African tradition is identified remains moot.

To the resistance of the east Africans outlined above is added that of the Niominka seen just above against the Portuguese fleet led by Alvise Cadamosto (15th c. Italian in Port. employ). This driving off of perceived threats was seen to have possibly happened in Yorubaland (Nig.), more directly in the Bissagos Islands and now in Senegal where the Niominka were possibly in a Solates-type role but this time for the Malian Empire that ruled over Senegal at this time. Equally to the point, what were apparently originally also were admiral-type figures in west Africa include the Aromire (= Friend of the Waters) of the Yorubas, Hari-forma of Mali, etc.

The Red Sea/Nile was seen as an enhancement for the navigation of Egyptian waterways. The lagoons seen by Reclus (ib.) as stretching from Nigeria to Ghana were seen as aiding navigation in much the manner of the Egyptian canal and their being seen as the equivalent of canals was part of what convinced Frobenius (ib.) that Yorubaland was Atlantis.

Unfortunately for Frobenius and all believers, Atlantis has been placed almost everywhere. Africa has had several suggested locations. One of them centres on the Agadez (in what today is Niger) region once on the eastern edge of the Malian Empire, as Senegal was on its western edge. However, the Great Flood myth attached to Senegal by Florence Mahoney (*Stories of Senegambia* 1982; 1995) is not that of Atlantis but that of Noah in Genesis when linking it to the stone circles of the Gambia plus Senegal (= Senegambia).

Senegal as a place of navigation and once part of the various mighty west African empires links with what lies behind the claimed vast store of astronomical knowledge of the Dogon at one end and the Senegambian stone rings at the other. These circles would decidedly antedate the rise of the great empires in west Africa of Wakor/Ghana, Mali, Songhai, etc. Especially on land-use arguments of Andis Kaulins (*Ancient Europe & Africa Land Survey* prior to 3000 B.C. online) that he dates between 3500 and 3000 BCE. If so, ring-building in Senegambia went on for millennia on the basis of attached C14-dates. Of all the Kaulins (ib.) conclusions, his most convincing is his comparison of the ground-plan of the Wassu (Gambia) stonering complex and the Virgo star-system. This puts on a par with the comparisons of the Pyramids on the Giza Plateau (Eg.) and the Orion star-system.

Important in French-ruled Senegal was what the French called St. Louis but still bears its pre-French name of N'Dar for the Wolofs. The Dar syllable also occurs as a Wolof name for the River Senegal. Dar/dra-names stretch up to the Wadi/Oued (= river) Draa (Morocco). This extent of coast is not just part of the western fringe of the Sahara, it is also most of the coast of modern Mauretania (not anc. Mauritania [more or less mod. Morocco] & note the slight difference of spelling). It is also more or less what was called the Ganar/Gannar/Canar Coast stretching roughly between southern Dar/Dra (= Senegal) and the northern Dar/Dra (= Oued Draa).

The northern Dra/Oued Draa is generally but not universally accepted as the Lixos/Lixus of the *Periplus* (= Voyage). According to Michael Skupin (*The Carthaginian Columbus* online), the Lixus is a river of Aithiopia/Aethiopia not of Libya. By "Aithiopia" is more or less what is what we term Sub-Saharan/Black Africa, whereas by "Libya" is actually is now called north Africa, Sahara, Magreb, etc. Aithiopia is an interesting compound of the Greek words of aithios (= burnt) and ops/opes (= face) giving Aithiopes (= Burnt-faces = Africans). If this river is of Aithiopia, probably so too are the Lixitae people living on its banks and this has significance. This was because Hanno chose the Lixitae as his first pilots-cum-interpreters to at least as far south as Liberia according to Lacroix.

That oddities abound in the Hanno text has long been recognised. One that does not appear to be discussed very often is the presence of the penteconter. The penteconter would probably have been an inappropriate vessel to have carried passengers. Even if they did, the number of 30,000 would-be colonists make this even more unlikely. A fleet of 60 penteconters seems more like a war-fleet as a fast warship; the penteconter implies a need to be faster than something else.

Elsewhere on these same coasts there have been the suggested driving off of threats that in the case of the Bissagans was in tandem with piracy. It is tempting to also connect this with Pieter de Marees saying that in calm seas, west African canoes could outspeed European sailing-ships. It is worth further saying that as with the Bissagan raids on European ships, European cannons would be dangerous for the faster west African sea-craft. To this can be added that that the Liberia II dugout-canoe of Lindemann (ib.) was faster across the Atlantic than the ship in full European rig of Amerigo de Vespucci.

Whether this can be attached to yet more Aithiopes called the Bafours on these same shores is at best uncertain. However, their label of Imraguen (= Fishermen/Fishmen) mirrors that of the former importance of the Krio/Kru also now just called Fishmen. Belonging here too are probably Ganar/Canar and its possible variants of Gana/Ghana, Gannarium, Kanuri, Canari, etc.

Groups absorbing outsiders when en route to becoming proto-ethnia have already been touched on. Another would appear to be the Kanuri. They would appear to have absorbed Afrasians, Nilo/Saharans and evidently are seen as neighbours of the vast Mande-speaking linguistic grouping itself apparently relating to the Niger/Congo languages of even greater extent.

The Gana/Ghana variant occurs as the title of the ruler of the Wakor Empire but over the course of time came to be that of the state itself. The name connected to that the Ganar Coast seemingly give the Wakor/Ghana Empire a coastline not usually discussed but emphasised by the Gannaria extremis (= Cape Gannaria? = ex-Cape Blanc = Ras Nouidibh) of Ptolemy. If the latter is connected to the Wakor Empire, this is yet another hint that west African empire-building antedated the conventional dates given for the proto stages of the Wakor Empire founded by the Mande-speaking people called the Soninke.

Both the names of the Canari people and the Canary Islands have long been accepted as having been linked to Latin canes (dogs). However, this is nothing like as certain as oft-said. Other meanings identify the islands with seals or dog-headed folk. The latter may signify masks of a variety for which Africans have long been famous. Of further note is an Irish story of the Leinster/Fenian Cycle having the Fianna fighting “Dog-heads” in Ireland. In common between Ireland and the Canaries is that they are islands on the far-west of Europe and Africa respectively from the Classical world.

Thus it can be assumed that the name of the Canary Islands owes more to African sources than Classical ones. The more so given that there were also the Canari of the relatively nearby Dyris/Atlas region where the inhabitants are regarded as Aethiopes by Strabo. Moreover, there is Richmond Palmer (The Carthaginian Voyage to the West Coast of West America 1931) has the word of Mansa (= Ruler) from the Aithiopian/African language of Mande occurs as the Canarian word of Mencey (King, Lord).

Dyris evidently relates to Greek douros and Atlas to Greek atlaos. Both have a general meaning of enduring, hard to bear, etc, so fits the pattern of Dyris folk as constantly moaning about the sun and as Aithiopes. The people from Dyris/Atlas that Herodotus especially says complained about the sun burning skin plus face were the Atarantes yet so far as is known to this writer they are never called Aithiopes by Herodotus. Livio Stecchini (re. the “Sahara” online) wrote that it is the Atlantes who are described as having so complained according to Pliny and Pomponius Mela. Moreover, Stecchini (ib.), Richard Smith (ib.), Skupin (ib.) are but a few of the modern writers wondering why Herodotus separated the Atarantes/Atrantes and the Atalantes/Atlantes. One suggestion is that pronunciation misheard may be at work. Further is that even if Herodotus does not use Aithiopes of Dyris-folk, Strabo does.

Atlantes relates to Atlas, Atlantes, Atlantic, Atlantis, Atlantides, etc. The Atlantides (= Atlantic islands), Pleiades (= islands to sail to?), Hesperides (Western islands), etc, are all “daughters” of Atlas but really refer to islands of the Atlantic to the west of Africa. As to Atlas himself, it is worth saying straightaway that the earliest tradition(s) we have about him do not portray him as the moronic giant so loved by makers of Hollywood films. Sources cited in “West Africa & the Sea in Antiquity”

attest the original as probably one of several famous ascetics climbing into the High Atlas for the purpose of meditative contemplation.

Diodorus Siculus has Atlas as the father of astronomy and who taught the Greeks about the sphericity of the world. Among the descriptions of him by Homer was he was a master-pilot who knew the depths of the sea. Van Sertima (1976) shows the sphericity of the globe was known in Mali, as is shown by the world represented as a gourd/calabash (as it was to the Polynesians & for whom seafaring was essential).

The Pre-Wakor to Wakor/Ghana imperial sequence was followed in time by that of the Malian Empire. The ruler of Mali sent fleets on to the Atlantic and for some writers, there is evidence for them having reached South America but al-Omari/Umari says only the captain of one was known to have returned to Mali. That he too knew the depths of the sea appears shown by his report of the stream under the sea. This seems to indicate somewhere near where the Canary Current becomes that called the North Equatorial hundreds of miles west of the Cape Verde Islands. His being able to return home from so far out into the Atlantic seems to indicate he too was a master-mariner.

This gives us a basis for regarding a considerable continuation of maritime lore over much of west Africa. This familiarity with sea-routes did not prevent mishaps is nicely exemplified by the frequent Egypt-to-Punt voyages that did not stop such as the wrecks detailed in the like of "The Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor". Among other journeys that were probably more numerous ancient texts and/or now allow us to accept are of west Africa to the Americas; passing ocean to ocean; those across the Sahara. Felix Chami (*The Unity of African Ancient Africa* 2005) is an African scholar among those strongly arguing for the vessels taken ocean to ocean.

Pre-Columbian voyages across the Atlantic as a sea of salt compare with the more ancient travels across the Sahara as a sea of sand. That methods of way-finding across the Atlantic and the Sahara are very much the same is nicely exemplified by an account from a prisoner in the hands of the Berbers recorded by Gomes Zurara (15th c. Portuguese). It tells us stars plus birds were used by Berbers to navigate across the Sahara Desert.

That this too was both widespread and long-lived in Atlantic-west Africa seems shown from Homer to Omari. The chariot-trails across the desert attest earlier crossings of the Sahara. There are also contrasts of Persians and Greeks in the desert to the oracular shrine at Siwa (Egypt). The Persians were going to destroy Siwa and Herodotus says all of them were lost and destroyed. A party led by Alexander the Great were also lost but were rescued by black "birds" according to Diodorus Siculus.

Animal-like attributes have been applied to Africans for millennia. The masks of west Africa have been noted and Richard Smith (*What Happened to the Ancient Libyans?* online) alludes to more of the same in the Magreb. Herodotus adds to this when saying that both Siwa (Egypt) plus Dodona (Greece) were founded by black birds that he explains as Africans with what was deemed to be bird/bat-like speech. He also attributed such a mode of speech to the Aithiopian Troglodytes (= Cave-dwellers) and this continues down to the Tibu (= Rock-dwellers?) of the Tibesti Mountains (Chad/Libya), so there seems to be no problem in tracing this among even the remnants of the once extensive populations of Saharan Africans. Animal-like attributes have been applied to Africans.

Back with the "black" birds of the Magreb/Sahara, we can now identify those succeeding guiding the group led by Alexander the Great to Siwa as Saharan Africans. The more so given that Charles Meek (*Journal of West African History* 1960) is one of those holding that Siwa was in the territory of a people called the

Nasamones seemingly to incorporating a version of the Egyptian Nahasy/Nehasy (& umpteen other spellings). It is as well to remind ourselves that Herodotus also tells us that Nasamones crossed the Sahara. This means they too were Saharan Blacks knowing how to traverse the desert. As were those that Ivan Van Sertima (1976) says were way-finding for the great camel-trains across the Saharan sands according to the Arabic text of Toffut al-Alab (11th c. CE).

Harry Bourne (mainly 2011)

