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HISTORY MATTERS

Neglected Historiography from Africa: The Case for Postindependence Journals

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In December of 1962, at the First International Congress of Africanists, near the end of his speech outlining the new demands and promises of African history learning, teaching, and research in postindependence Africa, Nigerian historian Kenneth O. Dike, also president of the congress, reminded his audience of yet another crucial task that African scholars of various disciplinary backgrounds needed to pursue with urgency, namely the publishing of journals specializing in history.[1] At the time, Dike had several years' experience on the editorial board of the *Journal of the Nigerian Historical Society*. It, along with the *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, were the only journals across West Africa 'specializing exclusively in African history, and associated with university institutions'.[2] Dike lamented the fact that 'material on West African history alone was scattered in well over 100 periodical publications issued in many mutually distinct parts of the world in seven or eight different languages' and that many of these articles had not undergone a thorough peer-review process to filter out 'defective material'.[3] Who better to lead the academy in this endeavor than scholars from Anglophone and Francophone West Africa themselves, he noted.[4] President Kwame Nkrumah, in one of the opening speeches at the Accra congress, which has been described as an intellectual offshoot of the First All-African Peoples' Conference,[5] suggested that while 'Africa has been the question mark of history', the time had come to rewrite and broadly disseminate

[1]While a growing number of scholars are exploring other types of periodicals produced on the African continent, especially newspapers and literary journals, as historical sources, journals associated with universities in Africa have hardly received similar attention outside Africa. Recent contributions to the study of African print cultures and publics include, F. Krautwald, 'The bearer of news: print and power in German East Africa', *The Journal of African History*, 62:1 (2021); D. R. Peterson, E. Hunter, and S. Newell (eds.), *African Print Cultures: Newspapers and Their Publics in the Twentieth Century* (Ann Arbor, 2016); M. Popescu, *At Penpoint: African Literatures, Postcolonial Studies, and the Cold War* (Durham, NC, 2020); R. Kunstmann, 'The politics of portrait photographs in southern Nigerian newspapers, 1945–1954', *Social Dynamics*, 40:3 (2015), 514–37; K. Oke, 'The colonial public sphere in Nigeria, 1920-1943', *Stichproben. Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien*, 25:13 (2013), 29–56.

[2]K. O. Dike, 'The study of African history', in L. Brown and M. Crowder (eds.), *The Proceedings of the First International Congress of Africanists, Accra 11th-18th December 1962* (Evanston, 1964), 66.

[3]*Ibid.*

[4]Bridging language barriers was another conundrum for the producers of academic journals.

[5]L. Nord-Schulte, 'Africanising African history: decolonisation of knowledge in UNESCO's General History of Africa (1964–1998)' (unpublished PhD thesis, Leiden University, 2021), 1. Alternatively, in 1963, Michael Crowder located the origins of the congress in the 25th meeting of the International Congress of Orientalists (1960). M. Crowder, 'The First International Congress of Africanists: Accra, Ghana, 11–18 December 1962', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1:2 (1963), 250–2.

African history 'as an African experience and not as a European adventure'.[6] In the immediate post-independence decades, many nationalist leaders and thinkers across Africa participated in the production and circulation of an Africa-centered African Studies, encompassing the broader human and social sciences, to serve Africa; that is, to foster national and, to a lesser extent, pan-Africanist communities, and to stake out an 'African position' in the global knowledge economy.[7] In the context of this declaration of African cultural independence, 'decolonization' entailed an intensification of the scholarly study of Africa from Africa, as a corrective to the biased and overly subjective, even racist, studies of Africa that had prevailed during the colonial period.[8]

The question of how, why, and by what means to restore balance to global knowledge production has resurfaced as part of the current 'decolonization' debate. Olufemi Taiwo writes that the current debate, however, has tended to motivate a rejection of 'any and every cultural, political, intellectual, social and linguistic artefact, idea, process, institution and practice that retains even the slightest whiff of the colonial past'.[9] Not surprisingly, the academy has found itself at the physical and metaphorical center of these discussions.[10] Not only does this overreaction — a stance of preemptive repudiation — presume an inherent incompatibility between 'traditional' knowledge and scientific procedure in Africa,[11] but it also ignores the extent to which the 'African archive' has long cut across the 'Western archive'.[12] Thus, as Francis Nyamnjoh writes, '"decolonization" *should* mean instead to pursue the project of an "African archive" now dispersed on a global scale and in a multitude of moral and aesthetic forms'.[13] With this multiplicity in mind and in search of a broadening of horizons (as opposed to intellectual omission and retreat), what follows identifies postindependence journals birthed on the African continent as indispensable artifacts that belong situated alongside other archives of the African (and human) past. Not only do these underutilized and undertheorized corpuses contain rich historiographies that are still relevant to society and scholarship, they also bear firsthand accounts of the postcolonial era and historical decolonization, which are integral to our contemporary moment. It is undeniable that we have much to learn from them for future historical engagements and future-making in relation to knowledge produced in and about Africa.

[6]K. Nkrumah, 'Address delivered to mark the opening of the First International Congress of Africanists', in Brown and Crowder, *The Proceedings of the First International Congress*, 9.

[7]Diouf writes that African historians, in particular, found themselves caught between the 'contradictory' demands of the inherited independent state, regional communities and clans, and the dominant institutional practices of the discipline of history itself, as they were tasked with streamlining these divergent perspectives into a unifying narrative. M. Diouf, 'Des historiens et des histoires, pourquoi faire? L'historiographie Africaine entre l'etat et les communautés', *Revue Africaine de Sociologie*, 3:2 (1999), 99–128. Related studies on this early history of postcolonial African Studies have focused on the gradual dissolution of relations between African historians and nationalist leaders on the continent. B. Henriet, 'Decolonizing African history: authenticité, cosmopolitanism and knowledge production in Zaire, 1971–1975', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 16:1 (2022), 1–20; M. Mamdani, 'Decolonising universities,' in T. Halvorsen, K. Skare Orgeret, and R. Krøvel (eds.), *Sharing Knowledge Transforming Societies* (Cape Town, 2019), 48–67; J. M. Allman, 'Kwame Nkrumah, African studies, and the politics of knowledge production in the Black Star of Africa', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 46:2 (2013), 181–203.

[8]The term 'scientific' features 91 times in the proceedings of the congress, with 'science' appearing 67 times in total.

[9]O. Taiwo, *Against Decolonisation: Taking African Agency Seriously* (New York, 2022), 3.

[10]S. J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, R. Seesemann, and C. Vogt-William, 'African studies in distress: German scholarship on Africa and the neglected challenge of decoloniality', *Afrika Spectrum*, 57:1 (2022), 83–100; C. Boidin, J. Cohen, and R. Grosfoguel, 'Introduction: from university to pluriversity: a decolonial approach to the present crisis of Western universities', *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge,* 10:1 (2012), 1–6.

[11]P. Hountondji, 'Knowledge as a development issue', in K. Wiredu (ed.), *A Companion to African Philosophy* (London, 2005), 535.

[12]As Mbembe explains it, knowledge production from Africa and its diaspora has long been enmeshed with the 'Western archive'. A. Mbembe. 'Decolonizing knowledge and the question of the archive', Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research, Public Lecture, University of the Witwatersrand, 2015, https://wiser.wits.ac.za/system/files/Achille%20Mbembe%20-%20Decolonizing%20Knowledge%20and%20the%20Question%20of%20the%20Archive.pdf.

[13]F. Nyamnjoh, *#RhodesMustFall: Nibbling at Resilient Colonialism in South Africa* (Bamenda, 2016), *vii*.

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Dike's 1962 lecture made no mention of book publishing. He did not even offer a teaser of his own book *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885*, which had come out in 1956, and which remains a classic in African economic historiography. Instead, against the backdrop of this society-wide moment of intellectual regeneration, he was concerned solely with the prospect of journal publication. Within a matter of years, the number of peer-reviewed African history journals from Africa would mushroom. Male-dominated public institutions for higher learning were the main producers; though historical societies — whose memberships was generally more representative of society, including chiefs, judges, and politicians, and both men and women — occasionally took the lead.

If Africanists have generally neglected historiography from Africa, there have also been serious imbalances in the forms of scholarship from Africa that are deemed meaningful by audiences in Europe and America.[14] Book monographs published in Africa from the 1950s onwards stood a good chance at reaching scholars in powerful academic circles abroad. This was not the case for journals. As cost-effective publishing vehicles, their producers gave primacy to African audiences — overwhelmingly, but not exclusively, of a university pedigree. Moreover, in an era preceding economic turmoil, structural adjustment, and before the purpose of research and publishing was more closely aligned with well-funded American universities, namely, to serve 'as screening mechanisms for academic jobs and tenure', journals were able to flourish while also furthering community-building.[15] The formats chosen, places of publication, and the channels of circulation all had lasting effects on the perceived value of the knowledge held in such publications. Similar findings hold true for other printed materials from Africa, although it should be acknowledged that, by comparison, the theorization of Africa-based historical production is certainly underway in Africa.[16] In 'African historiography in Africa', Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch testifies to 'devouring' similarly understudied, undertheorized material published in Africa in the 1970s. In her case these were the pioneering doctoral dissertations of Africa-based African historians. While it may be tempting to imagine that African Studies knowledge moves freely through the ether, the political economy of publishing quickly proves us wrong.

One contemporary observer explained that journal publishing had experienced a process of Africanization since the 1960s, in parallel with similar transformations among university faculties and curricula.[17] 'After independence … journals were taken over by African editors and boards, who then saw to it that the quality and type of articles published conformed to what the new Africa wanted'.[18] This is not to ignore those cases, such as Dike's own *Historical Society of Nigeria*, where prominent African history practitioners and professional historians already dominated publishing committees before the 1960s. Moreover, as noted above, the vast majority of these journals were only founded in the 1970s, after countries had gained political independence. Many of these annual or biannual journals became a lynchpin in the branding of a new, less

[14]C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, 'African historiography in Africa', *Revue Tiers Monde*, 216:4 (2013), 111–27.

[15]C. R. Veney and P. T. Zeleza, 'Gender dynamic of writing, publishing, and perishing' in C. R. Veney and P. T. Zeleza (eds.), *Women in African Studies Scholarly Publishing* (Trenton, 2001), 11. Interestingly, in the same volume Rebecca Clarke points to a further expansion of both journal and book publishing in the context of the economic challenges of the 1980s and early 1990s. This trend, however, was hardly indicative of scholarly engagement. Instead, scholars on the continent who could no longer support themselves through academic jobs alone later adopted the 'publish or perish' mantra to attract consultancy work with private firms and non-governmental organisations. R. Clarke, 'Women's scholarly publishing in African studies', in Veney and Zelela, *Women in African Studies*, 31.

[16]Some examples of African scholars grappling with this inheritance include the following: M. Mamdani, 'The African university', *London Book of Reviews*, 40:14 (19 July 2018); E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo, 'From African historiographies to an African philosophy of history', in T. Falola and C. Jennings (eds.), *Africanizing Knowledge: African Studies Across the Disciplines* (London, 2017), 13–64; I. Thioub, 'L'école de Dakar et la production d'une écriture académique de l'histoire', in M. C. Diop (ed.), *Le Sénégal Contemporain* (Paris, 2002), 109–53; B. Zewde, 'African historiography: past, present and future', *Afrika Zamani*, 7–8 (1999–2000), 33–40.

[17]B. I. Obichere, 'The contribution of African scholars and teachers to African studies, 1955-1975', *A Quarterly Journal of Africanist Opinion*, 6:2/3 (1976), 27.

[18]*Ibid.*

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prejudiced, Africa-centered genre of historical scholarship. Although the very notion of Africa was being actively reimagined at the time, optimistic Africa-based scholars, together with their foreign colleagues, set themselves the task of outlining a unique African and African diaspora perspective, endeavoring to make a decisive contribution to the larger system of global knowledge production.[19]

If the first step was for a large number of African editors and publishers to take charge, the next step entailed the challenging task of reconfiguring the production and dissemination of knowledge according to the immediate needs of the continent (for better or for worse).[20] As the Nigerian historian Boniface Obichere reported, 'the journals of Africa, once they came under the control and management of African scholars, had to respond to what politicians and the masses of Africans demanded'.[21] Apparently, this brandishing of publications from the continent was such a watershed moment that 'some Africans have argued that the establishment of new journals in the early 1960s, such as *The Journal of African History* and *Journal of Modern African Studies* in England, was a direct result of the loss of control over the journals that were established in colonial Africa'.[22] Understanding the place of journals at the nexus of emancipation, nation-building, and pan-Africanism, and the creation of Africa-centered knowledge is a key starting point for reconstructing their production, reach, and reception.

However, this collective view of these journals as a shared intellectual project should not leave the reader with the impression that they reflected a single voice on the African past. African historians negotiated political, public, and academic pressures in different ways, with greater or lesser emphasis on emancipation or empiricism or universality or nationalism or autochthony, and with some occupying positions in between these discursive formations.[23] In addition, individual producers, such as the Historical Society of Ghana, were known to publish several journals aimed at different audiences: while *Transactions* was intended to circulate horizontally between historians and scholars of other disciplines across the continent and around the world, *Ghana Notes and Queries* (similar to the Nigeria-based *Tarikh* journal) privileged vertical communication between professional and non-professional historians and, eventually, teachers. Its first editor, G. W. Irwin, initially focused on encouraging 'homespun historians' to submit short-form articles on topics of their choosing — from family histories to interesting archaeological sites and other unknown primary sources — thereby casting a wide net for historical narratives and inquiries that were not dictated by the discipline.[24]

The issues and queries laid out on the pages of these journals were not divorced from larger debates in the global academy either. It is, of course, difficult to reflect all the ideas, themes, and debates that appear in these diverse publications. One useful way to approach such a program is to consider particular concepts, methods, scholars and history practitioners, and schools of thought with the help of distance learning methods. Today digital tools such as AntConc and Voyant can help us to explore patterns and interrelationships in new ways. For instance, through digital analysis we can learn that during the 1970s the *Transafrican Journal of History* (TJH) — a product of the collaborative efforts of historians at the University of Nairobi, the University of Zambia, the University of Dar es Salaam, and Makerere University — published 152 research articles. We can

[19]Allman, 'Kwame Nkrumah', 46, 183.

[20]Thioub, for one, illustrates the possible negative effects of an overemphasis on the present on the Africa-based African historiography, through his study of the Dakar school of history, as he explores how nationalism and the development question in Africa took attention away from other crucial and timely inquiries surrounding Africa in the deep human past. Thioub, 'L'école de Dakar'.

[21]Obichere, 'The contribution', 30.

[22]*Ibid.*

[23] For example, despite the importance of research on Africa's precolonial history, the extent to which it necessarily had to stand in for the opposite of the colonial period remained up for debate. Also, recently, Benoît Henriet argued for the case of Zaire that, 'regime officials indeed endeavoured to align UNAZA scholars' work with "Authenticité", a protean nationalist policy partially based on a politically tinged reading of Zaire's precolonial past'. Henriet, 'Decolonizing African history', 2.

[24]D. R. Peterson and G. Macola, 'Introduction: homespun historiography and the academic profession', in D. R. Peterson and G. Macola (eds.), *Recasting the Past: History Writing and Political Work in Modern Africa* (Athens, OH, 2009), 1–28.

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further revisit this scholarship through high-frequency language or discourse, or by identifying and tracking the use of particular terms over time. To this point, Fig. 1 (below) shows a visualization of the 46 most used words, after Constellate, a project of JSTOR Lab, excluded a list of stop words (such as 'the', 'and', 'it', and so on). In addition, it is possible to test the probability of a randomly selected word or theme (as represented in a set of words) appearing in the corpus. For instance, since postindependence African historiography has been seen as overly determined by the nation-state,[25] we can explore this trend from a distance and across time via related terms such as 'regional', 'national', 'continental', and 'global'. Fig. 2 suggests the extent to which a political imaginary of the present dominated East African historiography in the 1970s. In a final example, in testing for the imprint of the Dar es Salaam school of history on this publication during that decade, we can track and visualize references to and mentions of some of its most prominent members, as shown in Table 1. Nevertheless, the revelation that the collection contains no references to Ali Mazrui should not be the endpoint of any serious study. It should certainly not be misinterpreted as evidence of his lack of impact or influence. Rather, this finding should raise questions, for example, in relation to academic genealogies and rivalries as they are reflected in publishing practices.

In the context of ongoing efforts to construct a more equitable African Studies, including by paying more careful attention to the 'African archive', early postindependence journals from Africa — covering a range of historical periods, published in different languages, drawing on different disciplines and ways of knowing as well as on the histories of the African diaspora and of former colonies located in other parts of the globe — offer a potential treasure trove of information. Either from the purview of particular academic centers or when viewed as a collection of disparate but related case studies, these journals allow for a historicization of the quest for epistemic freedom in the field of African Studies globally, as well as of contemporary trends and ruptures in Africa-based knowledge production encompassing different philosophical outlooks. In short, journal publications, which are not usually considered primary source evidentiary records in their own right, can help historians of Africa to learn about historical trajectories of publishing, thought, and relations in global and African society, as well as in the academy. On this last point, and in the backdrop of current debates about inequalities in global knowledge production, they can contribute to more informed reflections on current issues: the imprint of white Euro-American hegemony on African studies;[26] the neglect of African intellectual thought in the academy and in African development;[27] collaborations between scholars in the Global South and those in Global North;[28] and much more.

The gist of the narrative surrounding early postindependence journals from Africa is characterized by short lifespans, poor academic writing, and general failure. Scholars have emphasized their low 'success rate', meaning, among other things, that they only rarely enjoyed lengthy publishing cycles. As one prominent scholar from the continent noted in the 1990s, 'they [African scholars] and their expatriate counterparts … initiated and sustained a number of periodicals most of

[25]Both Diouf and Cooper have written extensively about the largely negative impact of nationalism on African academic historiography and historical narration in Africa more broadly. M. Diouf, 'Des historiens'; F. Cooper, 'Africa's pasts and Africa's historians', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 34:2 (2000), 297–336.

[26]J. Allman, '#HerskovitsMustFall? A meditation on whiteness, African studies, and the unfinished business of 1968', *African Studies Review*, 62:3 (2019), 6–39; C. Coetzee, 'The myth of Oxford and Black counter-narratives', *African Studies Review*, 65:2 (2022), 288–307.

[27]S. J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'The cognitive empire, politics of knowledge and African intellectual productions: reflections on struggles for epistemic freedom and resurgence of decolonisation in the twenty-first century', *Third World Quarterly*, 42:5 (2021), 882–901; M. Grosz-Ngaté, 'Knowledge and power: perspectives on the production and decolonization of African/ist knowledges', *African Studies Review*, 63:4 (2020), 689–718; S. O. Oloruntoba, A. Afolayan, and O. Yacob-Haliso (eds.), *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Development in Africa* (Cham, 2020); T. Falola and C. Jennings (eds.), *Africanizing Knowledge: African Studies across the Disciplines* (London, 2002).

[28]Following discussions at the biennial conference of the African Studies Association of the UK (ASAUK) at the University of Birmingham in Sep. 2018, a special issue of the *Journal of African Cultural Studies* explicitly addressed this issue of Global North-Global South collaborations in the academy. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 31:3 (2019).

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46 most frequently mentioned terms in the *Transafrican History Journal*, 1970–9.

african, africa, history, government, british, people, political, colonial, east, time, new, war, kenya, land, london, european, country, central, century, years, bantu, trade, period, south, economic, work, area, early, society, book, later, africans, native, chiefs, important, west, development, general, mission, men, education, missionaries, chief, fact, state, evidence.

Fig. 1. Source: Dataset ID 19495cae-3a78-436f-57e1-9e29dba07d19 from JSTOR, published in the *Transafrican Journal of History* from 1970–9.
Note: Author excluded 'pp', 'al', 'journal', and 'ibid' from search.

Visualisation of the percentage frequency of the terms 'regional', 'national', 'continental', and 'global' in the *Transafrican History Journal*, 1970–9.

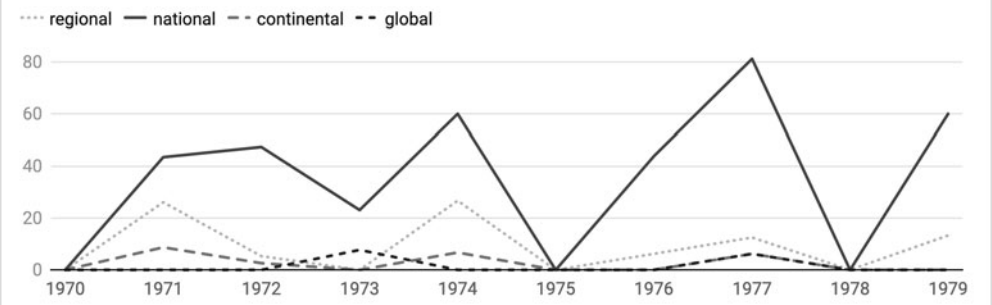

Fig. 2. Source: Dataset ID a565bdae-a335-36a0-1083-cac76915fef3 from JSTOR, published in the *Transafrican Journal of History* from 1970–80.
Note: No issues of the journal were published in 1975 and 1978.

Table 1. Points of Reference

Point of reference	Search term	Number of articles appearing in.	Percentage of articles appearing in during most prominent publication year
Terence Ranger	Ranger*	16	30.4 in 1971
Walter Rodney	Rodney*	2	5.3 in 1972
Edward Alpers	Alpers*	4	8.7 in 1971
Isaria Kimambo	Kimambo*	9	17.4 in 1971
Ali Mazrui	Mazrui*	0	-

Source: Dataset ID 19495cae-3a78-436f-57e1-9e29dba07d19 from JSTOR, published in the *Transafrican Journal of History* from 1970–9.

which have folded or, as in the case of the Makerere-born *Transitions*, simply left the African shores for better climes'.[29] Yet, without claiming to have a comprehensive overview of the history journals published in postcolonial Africa, it is safe to say that a significant number have been in print for at least two decades and also a smaller number for three decades or more.[30] Additionally, there are a

[29]T. Mkandawire, 'Three generations of African academics: a note', *Transformation*, 28 (1995), 76.

[30]See, for example, *Afrika Zamani* (1973–87, 2001–present); *Historical Society of Nigeria* (1956–84, 2005–19); *Transactions: Journal of the Historical Society of Ghana* (1957–75, 1995–2018); *Bulletin de l'Institut fondamental d'Afrique Noire* (1966–97); *The Society of Malawi Journal* (1965–2020); *Journal of the Historical Association of South Africa* (1956–2022); *South African Historical Journal* (1969–2022); *Tarikh* (Historical Society of Nigeria) (1965–87); *Transafrican Journal of History* (1971–95).

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number of shorter-lived and, from today's perspective, incomplete collections that also exhibit experimental publishing practices and that provide ample knowledge to review.

Allergic reactions to the colonial archive have had far-reaching consequences for African history, as they have lured many scholars to oral and performative approaches.[31] The decolonization debate has further discouraged critical engagement with scholarship and print, even when produced on the continent and by non-elites. While there undoubtedly remains much work to be done on Africa's historical cultures outside of this realm, does the study of orality and intangible knowledge justify excluding documentary records that also lend themselves to rich historical interpretations of Africa's past? At what cost to scholarship in Africa today? Digitization and digital methods are gradually expanding the documentary base and practices with which the continent's history can be reconstructed. History journals from Africa, that rich and broad intellectual inheritance of African and Africa-based scholars, lie scattered across libraries in Europe and America, with only a few issues typically found at university libraries, even in the countries where they were first produced. Indeed, a recent visit to the Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library at the University of Nairobi evinced only two issues of the *Transafrican Journal of History*. In contrast, the journal's entire publication record lies behind a paywall on the JSTOR database. Databases that provide full-text versions of journal articles reaching back to the 1950s, as in the case of the South African-owned Sabinet *African Journals* for instance, require licenses that not all universities, especially those in weak states, can afford. But there are also free options, including the *African e-Journals Project*, a partnership between Michigan State University's African Studies Center, its libraries, and its Center for Digital Humanities & Social Sciences (MATRIX), and the South Africa-based *African Journals Online* (AJOL).[32] But, as has become all too clear, digitization processes often raise new questions in the process of finding solutions. They also create new inequalities while redressing old ones.[33] Researchers, furthermore, need to be mindful of what information gets lost in the process of digitization: covers and front and back pages may not be scanned despite containing key information about publishing costs, subscriptions, advertising, and overall messaging. While some losses can be avoided through the creation of improved metadata capture or scanning processes, other possible insights, including the materiality of the journal, its haptic experience, the sound of its pages turning — in short, how it is encountered with the senses — are difficult to reconstruct digitally.[34]

In sum, if a historical analysis of postindependence journals from Africa drives awareness of anything, it should be that Africa's ignored and underused archives (or bodies of knowledge) are neither mythical nor necessarily mystical. A good number are relatively accessible and cry for greater theorization and amplification. In light of current debates about the unevenness of global knowledge production and the marginalization of African knowledges, historians of Africa have an obligation to engage more meaningfully with Africa's global, multimodal, and complex intellectual inheritance. Documentary records such as historical journal publications may not seem the most obvious artifacts with which to address calls for fairness in African Studies today. However, by

[31]J. Allman, 'Phantoms of the archive: Kwame Nkrumah, a Nazi pilot named Hanna, and the contingencies of postcolonial history-writing', *American Historical Review*, 118:1 (2013), 106.

[32]Selected issues of journals from Africa can also be found on the homepages of historical societies and at Journals Archive (journalarchives.jisc.ac.uk), among other databases. When it comes to locating physical copies of journals from Africa, the African Studies Library (http://africanstudieslibrary.org/), a project of the Goethe University Library in Frankfurt, is a good starting point. It continuously expands its Global North-Global South integrated library catalogue for African Studies.

[33]Despite the inequalities that accompany processes of digitalization in the African context, some scholars insist that its beneficial potential is simply too great to be ignored. For an overview of these debates, see, for example, F. Chamelot, V. Hiribarren, and M. Rodet, 'Archives, the digital turn, and governance in Africa', *History in Africa,* 47 (2020), 101–18; P. Lalu, 'The virtual stampede for Africa: digitisation, postcoloniality and archives of the liberation struggles in Southern Africa', *Innovation*, 34 (2007), 28–44; K. Breckenridge, 'The politics of the parallel archive: digital imperialism and the future of record-keeping in the age of digital reproduction', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 40:3 (2014), 499–519.

[34]I would like to thank Melanie Boehi for this important reflection.

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revisiting them we gain a better sense of the ambitions, achievements, and constraints of the sub-discipline between multiple locations and at different times. The struggles of Africa-based historians of Africa, their acts of refusal and pushback against academic purity, political repression, and particular traditions of historiography, have certainly not been monolithic. And speeches like Dike's at the First International Congress of Africanists tell us that there are many powerful and illuminating stories about contemporary future-making left to be told, to be critically discussed, and, ultimately, to learn from.

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