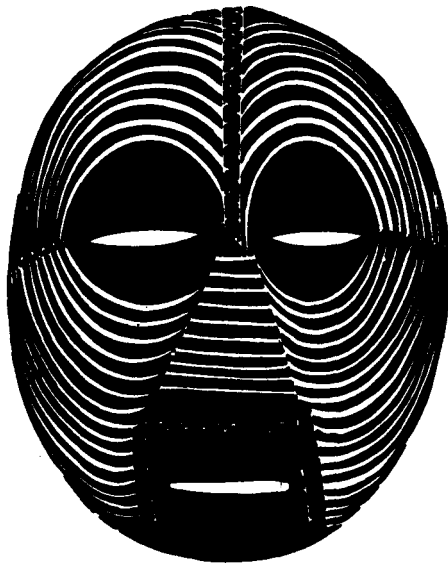


History in Africa

A JOURNAL OF METHOD



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VOL. 24 / 1997

HISTORY IN AFRICA

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David Henige, Editor

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**Credit Union Building
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Luba painted wooden and china-clay mask, Zaïre.

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Perhaps you could present several versions, each from a different source, and not say, "This one is true, that one is false."

No. No way. It's not like that with us. If I present different versions, they will accuse me of sowing discord. They will say, "He just wants to make problems." That's a sure thing. Besides, there is truth; there is lying. How can I treat all sources equally? By God, it would bring disaster!

Exchange between researcher and informant, quoted in Andrew J. Shryock, "Popular Genealogical Nationalism: History Writing and Identity among the Balqa tribes of Jordan," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37 (1995), 334.

...and had I my way...I would write on every church, chapel and cathedral only one line:—Important if true.

A.W. Kinglake, quoted in Richard B. Ince, *Calverley and some Cambridge Wits of the Nineteenth Century* (London, [1929]), 215.

Like it or not, there are a lot of questions that cannot be answered, and even more that cannot be answered exactly. There is nothing shameful in that admission.

R.C. Lewontin, letter to editor, *New York Review of Books*, 25 May 1995, 44

CONTENTS

- Southeastern Nigeria, the Niger-Benue
Confluence, and the Benue in the Precolonial
Period: Some Issues of Historiography
A.E. Afigbo 1-8
- “Fallacious Mirrors:” Colonial Anxiety and
Images of African Labor in Mozambique, *ca.*
1929
Eric E.D. Allina 9-52
- Travel Writing, Experiences, and Silences:
What is Left Out of European Travelers’
Accounts—the Case of Richard Dorsey Mohun
Kathryn Barrett-Gaines 53-70
- A Checklist of Published Versions of the
Sunjata Epic
Stephen P.D. Bulman 71-94
- In Search of One Word’s Meaning: *Zaman* in
Early Twentieth Century Kano
Allan Christelow 95-115
- The Idol, Its Worshippers, and the Crisis of
the Relevance of Historical Scholarship in
Nigeria
J.I. Dibua 117-137
- The Benin Kinglist/s: Some Questions of
Chronology
Stefan Eisenhofer 139-156

Yoruba Writers and the Construction of Heroes <i>Toyin Falola</i>	157-175
“Elephants for Want of Towns:” the Interethnic and International History of Bulama Island, 1456-1870 <i>P.E.H. Hair</i>	177-193
Editing Nineteenth-Century Intelligence Reports on the Sokoto Caliphate and Borno; the Delights of the Collaborative Approach <i>A.S. Kanya-Forstner and Paul E. Lovejoy</i>	195-204
Ethnicity and the Slave Trade: “Lucumi” and “Nago” as Ethnonyms in West Africa <i>Robin Law</i>	205-219
The Vaitupu Company Revisited: Reflections and Second Thoughts on Methodology and Mindset <i>Doug Munro</i>	221-237
The N’ko Alphabet as a Vehicle of Indigenous Historiography <i>Dianne White Oyler</i>	239-256
Colonizing Language? Missionaries and Gikuyu Dictionaries, 1904 and 1914 <i>Derek Peterson</i>	257-272
Violence Variousy Remembered: the Killing of Pieter Oberholzer in July 1964 <i>Terence Ranger</i>	273-286

The Reign of <i>Kabaka</i> Nakibinge of Buganda: Myth or Watershed? <i>Richard Reid</i>	287-297
Biography Writing in Swahili <i>Farouk Topan</i>	299-307
Z.K. Sentongo and the Indian Question in East Africa <i>Michael Twaddle</i>	309-336
The Doom of Early African History? <i>Jan Vansina</i>	337-343
Chronological Problems in C.G. Okojie's Esan Narrative Traditions <i>James B. Webster and Onaiwu W. Ogbomo</i>	345-362
A Dutch Embassy to Asante in 1857: The Journal of David Mill Graves <i>Larry W. Yarak</i>	363-380
The History of the Baga in Early Written Sources <i>P.E.H. Hair</i>	381-391
Slender Evidence, Weighty Consequences: On One Word in the <i>Periplus Maris Erythraei</i> <i>Jan Vansina</i>	393-397
A Note on the São Tomé Archives <i>Stanley B. Alpern</i>	399-400

Descent from Privilege: A Researcher's Memoir of the National Archives of Zimbabwe, 1984-1993 <i>Leslie Bessant</i>	401-408
The Elmina Dagregister of William Butler, 1721 <i>Jan J. Clement</i>	409-412
Archival Research in Antananarivo, Madagascar: The National Archives <i>Jeffrey C. Kaufmann</i>	413-429
The White Father Archives at Mwanza, Tanzania <i>Kathleen Smythe</i>	431-432
New Publication About the C.I.C.M. Archives <i>Jean-Luc Vellut</i>	433-436
Afrika-Archiv <i>Beatrix Heintze</i>	437-439
Editionwatch 1997	441-442
UPLA: a New Series for Short Editions <i>Adam Jones</i>	443
Correspondence	445-446
Contributors	447-448