

Saharan Studies Association

Newsletter

December 1999 Volume VII Numbers 1-

THE RETURN OF THE SSA NEWSLETTER

After a hiatus of over a year, we are delighted to welcome you to the new Saharan Studies Association Newsletter. As a scholarly association, the SSA has been instrumental in promoting the Sahara Desert as a field of scholarly inquiry, and we plan to see that it continues to fulfill this important mission. Our current strategy is to minimize costs and labor for the present editors (David Gutelius and Kay Moseley), and we have made several important changes. The first is that dues have been abolished--at least for the time being. The second change is that the newsletter will no longer be hand-delivered, but instead emailed to all who subscribe to it. It will also be available for download or purusal any time from our new web site. This brings us to a third change: the SSA now has its own web site space (<http://nuinfo.nwu.edu/african-studies/ssa/home.html>) courtesy of the Program for African Studies at Northwestern University. David Gutelius

(continued next page)

INTRODUCTION

The *Newsletter* is the principal organ of the Saharan Studies Association, a body of scholars with common interests, associated with the African Studies Association of the United States. The *Newsletter* is published twice a year in the Spring and Fall and is designed to be a forum for the exchange of news about publications, projects and scholarly debates in our chosen area.

Broadly speaking, the aim of the Association is to foster collaboration and exchange of information between interested scholars in a variety of disciplines ranging through the arts, the humanities, the social sciences and the natural sciences, as they encounter new research materials, engage with local fieldwork problems and seek avenues for bringing the results of their research to a wider circle of colleagues. Given that French is the *lingua franca* of much of North Africa, the Sahara and West Africa, we shall be happy to publish communications and comments in French as well as English, though we regret that we are not in a position to publish a fully bi-lingual newsletter.

Membership in the Saharan Studies Association is open to all interested persons. Currently membership is free of charge and entitles members

to receive the *Newsletter* and any other occasional e-publications, and to present papers at panels sponsored by the Saharan Studies Association at annual meetings of the African Studies Association and the Canadian Association of African Studies. The annual business meeting is held during the ASA meeting in November/December each year. At last count membership totalled approximately 120, from the USA, Canada, Denmark, Gt Britain, France, Norway, Spain, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Japan, Senegal and Cameroon. We hope existing members will pass on information about the Association and actively recruit new members. **Contributions for the Spring 2000 Newsletter** should be sent to :

David Gutelius, SSA, #107, 7425 N. Mona Lisa Rd., Tucson, AZ, 85741, USA (email: gute@jhu.edu).

It would be most helpful if contributors could submit items in both paper and electronic copy preferably by email or, if on disk, formatted in Microsoft Word, though most other programs can be handled.

Membership data forms (included in this newsletter and available on line) should be sent to David Gutelius at the above address.

(gute@jhu.edu) will initially maintain and update the site, and submissions or other inquiries should be sent directly to him. The site will serve as a clearinghouse not only for SSA newsletters, but also for members' projects and research findings. As the field and interest in it expands, so will the nature and structure of the SSA. This will likely include electing a board, and perhaps searching for a more permanent administrative home for the association. Once the SSA re-establishes itself as a viable entity, we may also begin soliciting funding from not only members, but outside sources as well. As it stands, we hope to convene our next business meeting and sponsor panels at the African Studies Association Meeting next year.

We hope that you will become an active part of these changes. There is a growing interest in the Sahara in both academia and with the public at large, thanks in large part to the dedicated efforts of the members of the SSA. We intend that the association will play an even greater role in the coming years.

David Gutelius
Kay Moseley

PROGRAM OF AFRICAN STUDIES,
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
WORKSHOP ON SLAVERY AND THE AFRICAN
DIASPORA IN THE LANDS OF ISLAM,
30 APRIL - 2 MAY 1999

KEYNOTE ADDRESS:

The Same but Different: Approaches to Slavery
and the African Diaspora in the Lands of Islam
John Hunwick

It is probably true to say that for every gallon of ink that has been spilled on the trans-Atlantic slave trade and its consequences, only one very small drop has been spilled on the study of the forced migration of black Africans into the Mediterranean world of Islam and the broader question of slavery within Muslim society. In the preface to his book *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, Bernard Lewis speaks of "the remarkable dearth of scholarly work on the subject. The bibliography of studies on slavery in the Greek and Roman worlds, or in the Americas [he says] runs to thousands of items. Even for medieval Western Europe, where slavery was of relatively minor importance, European scholars have produced a significant literature of research and exposition. For the central

Islamic lands, despite the subject's importance in virtually every area and period, a list of serious scholarly monographs on slavery—in law, in doctrine, or in practice—could be printed on a single page. The documentation for a study on Islamic slavery is almost endless; its exploration has barely begun".

There are many reasons for this. In the first place, until quite recently Arab scholars were reluctant to probe this aspect of their past. Politically, in terms of Arab relations with sub-Saharan Africa, the less said the better, and it was always more useful to depict the enslavement of black Africans as a uniquely European sin. Those who ventured into the subject were inclined to do so apologetically, emphasising the "mildness" of slavery in the Muslim world. At a 1983 conference on "The Arabs and Africa" the Algerian scholar Abdel Kader Zabadia brought both approaches together in a single comment: "The issue of slavery should be addressed, and emphasis on the Arabs' humane and familial treatment of their slaves compared with other slave-owning people. The contrast, especially regarding transatlantic slavery is so striking, that it should be emphasised in this context."¹ His comment was made in the course of discussion of a paper by the Sudanese scholar Yusuf Fadl Hasan on "The historical roots of Afro-Arab relations" Professor Hasan had been bold enough to state: "Slavery is slavery and cannot be beautified by cosmetics. It left extreme bitterness in the central parts of the [African] continent against the Arab minority which lived on the coast. Because this issue disturbs Afro-Arab relations it should be studied courageously and objectively"²

These two remarks bring into sharp focus the problem which faces us in discussing slavery and the African diaspora in the context of Muslim societies. Yes: slavery is slavery and cannot be beautified by cosmetics. The forceful seizure of human beings and their total subjection to the will of other human beings, and the humiliation and degradation involved in this process, cannot be portrayed in positive terms. Yet the comparison (I would not say, unguardedly, "contrast") with other systems of slavery, and particularly slavery in the New World, is not only inevitable, but is essential for a global understanding of the African diaspora. The question of "the Arabs' humane and familial treatment of their slaves" is another matter—another myth—one which indeed challenges us to explore the social and economic realities of enslaved (and indeed freed) Africans in the greater Islamic world. We must be careful in our studies not to import assumptions based on other systems of slavery, whether transatlantic or

otherwise, just as we must not be led astray by theories about the nature of Islamic societies. Instead, we must explore with great care the realities of different Islamic societies, taking account both of the commonalities among them which proceed from Islamic law and ethics, and of the differences born of underlying cultures—Arab, Berber, Turkish, Persian, etc.—as well as the differences born of economic and political conditions, and often of very local and even individual circumstances.

There are signs that this field of study is at last beginning to receive some of the attention it deserves in the Arab world, especially in North Africa, where historians have started to recognize the need to study slavery and the history of black communities in their midst as a significant element in the understanding of their national cultures and histories. In 1987 the Tunisian historian Abdel Jalil Temimi, in advocating such studies, remarked: “There are far too few studies dealing with the social position of the black minority in Tunisia and the roles allotted to them, to allow us to say that we have a *tradition* of writing in this field, since the history of African minorities in Arab countries has not been given attention, unlike the history of other minorities, Muslim, Christian and Jewish that have been the subject of colloquia, studies and conferences”. More recently a Moroccan scholar, Mohamed Ennaji, published in French a book on “concubines, servants and soldiers” examining the social roles played by slaves in his country. I am happy, too, to have Moroccan colleagues with whom I am working to publish a number of documents and treatises on slavery and Africans in the Mediterranean diaspora. But these are just beginnings, and the entire topic remains a sensitive one which few dare to broach.

A second reason for the lack of studies on Africans in slavery in the Mediterranean Islamic world is the lack of a constituency within such societies that would press for an investigation of its past history and present condition. As a French observer of Algeria (Blin) wrote in 1988 in his ‘Les noirs dans l’Algérie contemporaine’: “No movement capable of giving structure to the black minority has ever arisen in contemporary North Africa. Under such circumstances its neglect and devaluation can only be perpetuated. The African-ness of the Algerian, which is attested by history, is something he is largely unconscious of; thus there can be no question of his admitting to it. He will only take an interest in it when the black world becomes essential for him. Then

Algeria will belong not only geographically or even politically to Africa, but also culturally”.³ This raises the interesting question as to why there is a lack of “black consciousness” in Algeria, and indeed, more widely in the Mediterranean lands of Islam. On the one hand this could mean that former slaves have become so successfully integrated into these Arabo-Berber Muslim societies that they have no cultural need to explore their remote past or to question their present social status, and in one sense this may be true. There is reluctance to acknowledge a past in slavery not only for reasons of personal pride, but because in the Muslim world a past in slavery indubitably points to a past in “unbelief” (*kufur*), i.e. at one’s ancestors having been at some earlier stage “pagans”, which is a particularly heavy burden to bear. Being part of the community of Islam is an important—even the most important—platform of identity.

On the other hand, the lack of what may be called a “black voice” in the Mediterranean lands may also be due to the relatively small number of clearly identifiable descendants of slaves and to their depressed social status and lack of education. The only scholarly monograph specifically dealing with a black community in North Africa concerns an isolated agricultural community in southern Tunisia, which has the telling title “Societies to be remembered. Societies to be forgotten”.⁴ In general the greatest concentrations of black North Africans tend to be in interior towns and oases, not in the great cities and centers of political and economic life. This kind of answer of course immediately raises a host of questions, to many of which we do not yet have even the beginnings of answers. How many slaves crossed the Sahara into North Africa? How many, in particular, were brought across in the 19th century? What percentage of these were women who became concubines and whose offspring were thus free and “Arab” or “Arabo-Berber”? What were the mortality rates for black slaves compared with free Arabo-Berber populations? What kinds of occupations did slaves undertake and what skills may they have acquired that prepared them for economic viability as free persons? What role did Islamic law play in ensuring that freedom meant social equality? What role may racism have played in denying social equality? Although we are far from having satisfactory answers to such questions, I hope during the course of this workshop we shall broach some of these issues and think about ways in which we might begin to look for answers.

Finally, one reason for the comparative lack of study of the question of Africans in slavery in Muslim societies has been the lack of interest in the matter in the American and European academy. The principal reason for this seems to be that such studies invite the researcher to cross the established boundary between African Studies and Middle Eastern Studies. The compartmentalization of Africa into zones that are treated as “Middle East” and “Africa” is a legacy of orientalism and colonialism. North Africa including Egypt is usually seen as forming part of the Middle East, though Middle East experts are not generally keen to venture farther west than the confines of Egypt. North-west Africa—what is often called the Maghreb—is generally regarded as peripheral to Middle Eastern studies and extraneous to African studies. Even the Sahara has been generally viewed as something of a no-go area (especially among anglophone scholars), while the Sudan and Mauritania (which are impossible to label as either “sub-Saharan” or “Middle Eastern”) remain ambiguous. North-west Africa (the area between Morocco and Libya), despite its close and enduring relationship with West Africa, has been excluded from the concerns of most Africanists. Although both the *Cambridge History of Africa* and the Unesco *General History of Africa* made valiant attempts to integrate the whole of northern Africa into continental history, the most recent major encyclopaedia of Africa, for example, (that edited by John Middleton) is pointedly an *Encyclopedia of Africa South of the Sahara*. The old construction of the African continent remains in place, and it is a bold graduate student who would attempt to deconstruct it by working on the history of black Africans in the Maghreb, not least because he or she may have a hard time finding an interested (not to say knowledgeable) supervisor, but also because she or he may have a worse time finding a job.

I would argue, on the other hand, that the study of black Africans in the Islamic Mediterranean world (including the northern Ottoman shores of that sea and embracing the Arabian peninsula and both sides of the Gulf) both in slavery and in post-slavery constitutes a field that rightly belongs to *both* the relevant area studies—African studies and Middle Eastern/Islamic studies—and deserves to be embraced by scholars of both areas. Even more importantly it belongs to the field of the global history, of comparative slavery, and African diaspora studies, and in this capacity it is a topic that ought to attract the attention of an even broader range of scholars. Leaders in the field of

slavery studies, such as David Brion Davies in his *Slavery and Human Progress*, have already implicitly acknowledged this, as have Seymour Drescher and John Munro in their one-volume *Encyclopedia of Slavery*, but the effect of such recognition is only just beginning to trickle down and much more needs to be done to integrate slavery in Islamic society into studies of world slavery and the African diaspora. Following this talk Paul Lovejoy will update us on efforts being taken in this direction—a direction in which he has made his own unique contributions, and where many of his most recent efforts lie. One of the factors that has held back many aspiring Africanist scholars from working in this field is their lack of the special knowledge of the culture of Islam and of the language skills necessary to pursue research; but let me assure them that their efforts to acquire such special cultural and linguistic skills will be fully rewarded in terms of the new research domains they will thereby open up.

Let me now return to the main theme of this talk: namely, how we approach the question of slavery in Muslim societies, bearing in mind that in relation to slavery in other societies it is both “the same” yet “different” (or should I say “different but the same”?). I want to start by looking at the history of the institution in the Islamic world and at Islamic theory about slavery. While we must not of course confuse theory with practice, we must acknowledge that as far as literate slave owners were concerned the theory of slavery, and also theories regarding race must have played some role in their actual practice of the institution. Since slave owners were mainly if not entirely from the middle or upper classes economically, it is likely that a high percentage of slave owners were, in fact, literate and had imbibed to a greater or lesser extent Islamic attitudes towards slaves and slavery, and may also have been influenced in their attitudes towards issues of race by what Arab authors had written, as, of course, they were by attitudes to both issues in oral culture—a fruitful area for contemporary inquiry.

It may seem superfluous to say that Islam did not invent slavery, but it is useful to bear in mind that the practice of slavery was a fundamental social assumption of Arab society at the rise of Islam and of the various Mediterranean societies in which Islamic culture developed and assumed its overarching characteristics in the medieval period. Thus until attempts at abolition in the second half of the 19th century largely under pressure from Europe, Muslim societies of the greater Mediterranean Basin consid-

ered slavery as part of the natural order of things—indeed part of the God-given order of things—and not as something to be interrogated or challenged. In pre-Islamic Arab society slaves had in the main been captives of war, and under the Islamic dispensation war was in theory only to be fought against non-Muslims—a *jihād*; hence captives to be enslaved would, by definition, be “unbelievers”. This rapidly became an established rule of law: i.e. that it was legitimate to enslave the unbelievers, and indeed it became common to justify enslavement of such persons as a punishment for their failure to accept the religion of Islam. This was not, of course, the way slaves were acquired in practice, but on the basis of a “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy slaves could be purchased from Muslims in the borderlands of Islam on the assumption that they were originally captives taken in a *jihād*.

Slavery thus became, in effect, a religious issue, and was incorporated into the religious discourse of Islam. In so doing it also became a matter of law, since in Islam law (*sharī‘a*) is an outgrowth of divine word and Prophetic practice. This had both its positive and its negative aspects. On the positive side, the law recognised the slave as something more than a mere chattel. Indeed, inasmuch as the law in many cases allotted to slaves only half the punishment of a free person and provided for only half the privileges (e.g. to marry up to two wives rather than four), it could be argued that a slave was granted partial humanity or was half free. The law also provided for numerous avenues through which a slave could gain his/her freedom. On the negative side, since slavery was written into the *sharī‘a*, it was considered a divinely sanctioned practice that mere human beings could not abrogate or interfere with. In fact, abolishing slavery effectively took away from the believers several paths for redemption. Freeing a slave was requisite for the commission of certain forbidden acts, and when manumission was carried out as an act of piety it was a path to Paradise.

From the historian’s point of view, the fact that slavery was a significant issue in law is extremely useful. It means that issues of slavery, ownership and freedom became the subject of legal records—*qāḍī*’s court proceedings, inheritance documents, purchase and manumission documents, legal opinions (*fatwās*), state registers (as in the 17th century Moroccan slave army, the ‘Abīd al-Bukhārī), of correspondence, and even of polemical tracts. Such documents enable us not only to study the mechanics of slavery, but help us

better to understand the underlying culture of slavery in the Muslim world. A document of manumission drawn up in Timbuktu in 1176/1762-3 provides a neat illustration of some of these issues:

Jāmi‘ son of Shaykh Marzūq who died and went to the mercy of his Lord acknowledged and testified before me [prior to his death] that he had freed his old slave woman called Fama Surku for the sake of God and desiring reward from God in the abode of the Hereafter for [freeing] her—may God accept her [freedom] on his behalf in goodly fashion and make her a proxy for him, [thereby freeing him] limb for limb from the fire of Hell. She becomes one of the free Muslims, men and women. [Shaykh Marzūq’s] children have no access to her except through clientship [pursuant to] manumission

We would draw attention here to the theology of the document. It is clearly implied by the wording that the man freeing the slave did so when he was close to death, hoping, as the document says that this “pious act” would spare him from the torments of Hell, each limb of the freed woman corresponding to a limb of his to be saved from the fire. Thus the woman by being redeemed from slavery unwittingly becomes a redeemer of her master. How powerful was this redemptive factor in freeing slaves? The document also indicates that the person freed was an old woman, leading us perhaps to assume that her days of usefulness as a slave were already over, so perhaps her manumission was no great sacrifice. Is there a moral-legal literature on this, as there is, for example on sacrificial animals which must be sacrificed in their prime without blemish in order to attract divine reward? This is not an isolated document; hundreds more such documents exist in Timbuktu alone. We need to be able to examine hundreds, or rather thousands, of such documents to see how common it was to free slaves for “pious” purposes; what was the ratio of men to women freed; how many were released in their prime as opposed to old age; or how many years did men or women serve in slavery (some sources hint that a slave would be freed after seven years by which time s/he had repaid their purchase price; others would argue that the economic benefit of slavery only begins at such a point and that purchasing a slave represents a long-term investment in labor).

If manumission was a tacit assumption of Islamic slavery, it was (whether for pietistic or other reasons) a two-edged sword. Since there were—with rare exceptions—no consciously self-reproducing

slave communities in the Mediterranean world, the removal of persons from the existing pool of slaves meant others had to be brought into it. Thus the need for an ongoing process of slave capture at source in sub-Saharan Africa was increased. Of course there were other factors playing into this vicious circle of slave replacement, including, in particular, death from unfamiliar diseases, and the absorption of women slaves into the dominant community through concubinage with resulting freedom for their offspring. But the whole question of supply and demand needs to be addressed carefully, especially since, unlike the New World, there were no huge new demands for slave labor (much of such labor being broadly domestic) that might necessitate a continuing trade. This in turn raises the question of why there was a trade in the first place.

Whatever the answers to this question might be, we know that the Mediterranean Muslim world over time drew its supply of slaves from many sources. “Unbelievers”, and hence slaves, could, of course, be of any color or ethnicity. The law was color-blind. Thus, not only were Africans taken into slavery, but Europeans—“Slavs” in the early period and Europeans at large in the age of corsairs—Turkic peoples from Central Asia, Indians, Georgians and Armenians from Caucasia, Greeks, etc. [In the early literature there is a certain stereotyping of slaves from different origins. Central Asian Turkic peoples were considered very amenable to military duties; males from the Indian sub-continent were thought trustworthy and good with money, though their women pined away in captivity; women of the Caucasus were highly prized as concubines and often eventually wives; Ethiopian women were likewise prized, especially in Arabia, and Nubian women in Egypt; East African men (Zanj) were considered good laborers and their womenfolk good for menial household tasks or as wet-nurses.] Black Africa, however, was the earliest source for slaves and the last great reservoir to dry up; already in the 640s slaves were part of the “non-aggression pact” between Arab conquerors and Nubian rulers, while as late as 1910 slave caravans were still arriving in Benghazi from Wadai (in Chad).⁵ Although the Ottoman Empire remained a source of demand for slaves of Caucasian or south-east European origin into the nineteenth century, these were mainly men destined for military service and often high rank, and women destined for the harems of beys and pashas (as either concubines or wives), and hence slavery was a nominal condition;

they were termed *mamlūk* (possessed one). Not so for slaves of African origin. By the seventeenth century blackness of skin/African origin was virtually synonymous in the Arab world with both the notion and the word “slave”; they were ‘*abīd*. Even to this day the word for Africans in many dialects of Arabic remains just that— ‘*abīd* —“slaves”.

While we may not be able to identify any ideology of racism or any institutionalization of discrimination against black Africans, can we say that Muslim Mediterranean society was devoid of racism? The question is a complex one. Certainly we can find within Arabic scholarly and creative literature passages that we would now define as being racist in sentiment, though it must be said that some of the most offensive passages in the geographical/ethnographic literature merely echo material that originated in ancient Greek writing. The geographical construction of the world that the Arabs inherited from the Greeks saw the middle region of the world, embracing the lands of the Mediterranean as being the most “moderate” in all respects. The farther away one lived from this region the more savage was the life style. Extreme cold in the north and extreme heat in the south produced individuals who were distorted mentally and physically. [Norwegians and Nigerians would have been thought of as equally savage!] But it was only with those human beings from the south—from black Africa—that the inhabitants of the Mediterranean had much contact, and most of that was with Africans as slaves, predisposing them to look at such persons as inferior and less civilized than themselves. Why otherwise would they be slaves? The circular argument holds: the enslaved person is an inferior person; if people are inferior, they are ripe for slavery.

On the other hand, there is another literature that speaks of the virtues of black Africans: books with titles like “The Boast of the Blacks over the Whites,” [al-Jāhīz] or “The Superiority of Blacks over Whites” [al-Nāshī] or “Blacks and their superiority over Whites” [al-Marzubānī] as well as a separate literature on the virtues of Ethiopians—a people who were considered to have some superiority by virtue of their having sheltered early migrant Muslims in the Prophet’s day, and whose ruler at the time was believed to have embraced Islam. One can, of course, argue that the very existence of books in defense of blacks is a reflection of prejudice against them. True enough, but on the other hand there is lack of a consistent literature that theorizes the inferiority of black people. Islam did

not have its Gobineau. The so-called “Hamitic myth” in which Ham is cursed by his father Noah and hence his descendants are made black does appear in a number of early Arabic writings, but by the fourteenth century it is firmly refuted [by Ibn Khaldūn], in favor of a theory of the effect of climate on skin color. It is also noteworthy that even if on one level black Africans were considered inferior human beings, their womenfolk were often thought fit to be concubines (and sometimes wives) and to be the mothers of “Arab” children, even of Arab rulers.

Nevertheless the question of whether black Africans were (and deserved to be) “natural slaves” was an ongoing matter of debate in north-west Africa. At the end of the 19th century a Moroccan scholar [al-Nāṣirī] could still rail against:

... the indiscriminate enslaving of the people of the Sūdān,⁶ and the importation of droves of them every year to be sold in the market places in town and country where men trade in them as one would trade in beasts—nay worse than that. [And comment that] People have become so inured to that, generation after generation, that many common folk believe that the reason for being enslaved according to the Holy Law is merely that a man should be black in color and come from those regions.

Of course, in the end (during the French protectorate) all such persons eventually became free, but one must ask to what extent the association of blackness with slavery died out with emancipation. It is worth recalling that in the western Saharan and along the Saharan borders of North Africa there is a continuing issue of the inferior status of *ḥaratīn*, dark-skinned persons—probably “aboriginal” populations joined by ex-slaves—who live in a state of clientship with members of the dominant “white” population.

Perhaps one of the most notable distinguishing features of slavery in the Mediterranean Muslim world was that slaves were rarely used as a means of production, in sharp contrast to the New World. While slaves were used to cultivate oasis gardens, dig wells, tend date palms, mine salt, and dive for pearls, there were no large tracts of uncultivated land awaiting the hand of a large labor force. There were no frontiers to be opened up; the division and ownership of land in the southern Mediterranean, the Levant and the Arabian peninsula had been established in antiquity, and the pattern of land-use was one of agricultural smallholding, nomadism or semi-nomadism. Slaves were therefore required mainly as domestic servants—pre-modern “labor-saving devices”, child-minders, and gentlemen’s gentle-

men ; or as concubines and keepers of the harems of the rich. They were also valued as manifestations of social status in societies where high status was deemed to find its reflection in large numbers of dependents. Wealth in people was often deemed more important than wealth in property.

Another distinguishing feature of slavery in the Mediterranean Muslim world was the use of slaves as soldiers, initially as bodyguards whose loyalty was guaranteed by their lack of local kinship ties, but also in some cases as internal security forces who could be trusted to put down rebellions for similar reasons, and who may even have felt good about being able to take their revenge on a segment of the society that had held them as slaves. Such soldiers acquired their own sense of communal solidarity and pride and to a large extent thereby escaped the stigma of slavery—the case of the Sudanese slave soldiers who fought on behalf of the French in Mexico in the 1860s being a particularly clear one. While slaves fighting for their masters is not unique to the Muslim world, the scale and persistence of the custom does single it out. One has to ask why, apparently, the armed slaves never seem to have taken advantage of their privilege to turn against their masters and fight for their freedom. Indeed, the theme of slave revolts, runaways and maroon communities is not a significant one in the history of Islamic slavery (give or take the famous Zanj revolt of 9th century Iraq, which is a more complex issue). Or is it that the state of our research is such that we have not yet researched this issue, or perhaps even posed the question?

This leads me to a further and final issue: the qualitative nature of the African slave experience in the lands of Islam. To what extent were slaves in North Africa and the Middle East allowed to “settle down”, to form communities, to enjoy at least some of the benefits of citizenship? To what extent did the general ethic of Islam and the incorporation of slaves within the community of Islam facilitate such settlement and discourage revolt? Is such a suggestion merely a refurbishing of the patriarchal “happy slave” myth we are familiar with from transatlantic pro-slavery discourse? The evidence so far marshaled is, not surprisingly, contradictory. But let us, at least look at the role which religion may have played in the process. Earlier in this talk I mentioned that the theoretical cause for enslavement was being an “unbeliever”. The good slave owner, however, was expected to indoctrinate his slaves in the beliefs and

practices of Islam. In fact, by the time black African slaves came on the market in North Africa, Egypt or the Arabian peninsula, they had usually been “seasoned”, a process which included a technical conversion to Islam (and for men circumcision) and learning of the rudiments of Arabic. A “pagan”, speaking no Arabic, would be unsaleable.

In North Africa, and apparently also in Turkey, however, slaves, at least in the first generation, retained many of their ancestral beliefs and were able to perform religious practices associated with them. As in Brazil, Cuba, Haiti, and elsewhere in the western hemisphere, so in the Mediterranean diaspora African religious practices provided mechanisms through which enslaved Africans could cope with the psychological crisis brought about by enslavement, transportation, and transplantation into an alien cultural environment. These practices brought from the homelands were transformed in many ways as slaves accommodated themselves to their new cultural milieu, displaying differing degrees of Islamization and naturalization.

The most widespread religious practice among African slaves (and freed persons) in the Mediterranean was the spirit possession and healing cult generally known by the Hausa term *bori*. Similar cults exist in other Sahelian cultures, including *zār* and *tumbura* in the Nile valley, *holey* among the Songhay, and similar cults among the Fulbe and Bambara. In these cults a wide (and changing) pantheon of spirits is invoked through the performance of differing melodies and rhythms and the burning of incense; chickens, sheep or goats are sacrificed so that the spirit may drink the blood. The spirits both cause illness and cure it. If a person is diagnosed as having a disease caused by one of the spirits, he/she is initiated into the bori cult and the spirit is summoned to “mount” the sick person. Sacrifices are then performed to satisfy the spirit and henceforth the newly initiated person should make at least annual sacrifices for that spirit. Under the influence of Islam these spirits were often identified with the benevolent/ malevolent class of spirits known as *jinn*. In North Africa and the Sudan a further Islamic refinement of the process might involve calling upon the Prophet and the great saint ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilani, as in the Stambali cult of Tunis, or the tumbura cult of the Sudan.⁷ In North Africa these spirit cults were sometimes fused with ancient Berber spirit cults to produce new syntheses, such as the “Seven Springs” cult in Algiers.

Such possession cults not only provided slaves and their descendants with avenues for expressing themselves religiously, but also constituted the building blocks of social organization, and their very existence indicates that slaves were able in certain times and places to enjoy a measure of autonomy both as individuals and as communities. In Algeria at the beginning of this century communities of former slaves still organized themselves around religious cult houses that were based on areas of origin: Bornu, Katsina, Zazzau, Bambara, Songhai and Tombo (Dogon).⁸ Elements of many of these cults have continued to survive among descendants of slaves who tend to be endogamous and lead communal lives isolated from the dominant communities.

To close, let me (at the risk of repeating myself) return to the title of this paper: “the same but different”. The implication is two-fold, and is designed to alert us to two possible pitfalls. The first implication is that although slavery is slavery and the Mediterranean diaspora has many parallels with the transatlantic diaspora, it also has many quite different features and is embedded in a wholly different cultural nexus. While we may benefit from the borrowing of methodologies and learn from questions that have been asked, we must at the same time remain alert to the differences and avoid culturally loaded assumptions and facile comparisons. The second implication is that although slavery is slavery in the Islamic world and we should expect to find parallels between region and region, we should also be alert to very considerable differences in the culture of slavery and race consciousness within the different societies that have been permeated by Islamic culture and by slavery, both synchronically and diachronically. Although in the end we may indeed be able to talk of certain features of “Islamic” slavery, we may be sure that in-depth studies will provide us with a rich diversity of histories of slavery and experiences of freedom.

¹See Khair El-Din Haseeb (ed.), *The Arabs and Africa*, (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p. 55.

² See Y.F. Hasan, “The historical roots of Afro-Arab relations”, in Haseeb, *op. cit.*, 33.

³L. Blin, ‘Les noirs dans l’Algérie contemporaine’, *Politique africain*, 30 (juin 1988), 22-31.

⁴Muḥammad al-Hādī al-Juwaylī, *Mujtama‘āt li’l-dhākira, mujtama‘āt li’l-nisyān* [Societies to be remembered. Societies to be forgotten. A monograph on

the black minority in southern Tunisia], Tunis, 1994.

⁵ Hans Vischer, *Across the Sahara*, London 1910, 148; A. A. Boahen, *Britain, the Sahara and the Western Sudan, 1788-1860*, London, 1964, 158.

⁶ ‘Sūdān’ is shorthand for *bilād al-sūdān*—the land of the blacks. J.B. Andrews, *La Fontaine des Génies*, Algiers, 1903.

⁷ G. Makris & Ahmad al-Safi, “The Tumbura spirit possession cult of the Sudan past and present”, in I.M. Lewis et al. (ed.) *Women’s Medicine: the Zar-Bori Cult in Africa and beyond*, Edinburgh, 1991, 118-36;

Sophie Ferchiou, “The possession cults of Tunisia: a religious system functioning as a system of reference and a social field for performing actions”, in *ibid*, 209-18.

⁸ Andrews, *La fontaine des Génies*, 1903.

precipitation decreased. The hydro-cycle between the Earth and atmosphere--via evaporation, cloud formation and precipitation--increased the tendency towards aridity, and then an abrupt change in climate and vegetation took place some 5,500 years ago.

PIK scientists concluded that desertification in Northern Africa had essentially a natural origin. “In the inner parts of today’s desert people were only able to react to climate changes,” says Hans-Joachim Pachur, Professor of Geography at the Free University, “whereas they have contributed to a large areal changes in vegetation both in the northern and southern edges of the desert.”

The results were published in *Geophysical Research Letters* in the beginning of July and are available at http://www.agu.org/pubs/toc/gl/gl_26_14.html.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN COMPUTER-BASED DESERTIFICATION ANALYSIS

A research team from PIK [Potsdam Climate Institute] has, for the first time, succeeded in simulating the global interplay between atmosphere, ocean and vegetation that led to desertification in North Africa some 5,000 to 6,000 years ago.

From analyses of fossil pollen and bones as well as from rock drawings, it is known that until approximately 6,000 years ago, subtropical steppe prevailed in the region of today’s Sahara. A year ago, the research team was able to reconstruct the climate conditions of this subtropical landscape by applying the CLIMBER (CLIMate and BiosphERE) computer model. Potsdam scientists have now succeeded in modelling in detail desertification in the Sahara.

“Our simulations show how interactions between vegetation, atmosphere and ocean current can lead to relatively abrupt climate changes - a process that might influence climate in future, too,” elaborates Martin Claussen, leader of the research team from PIK and Professor of Theoretical Climatology at the Free University in Berlin. An astonishing finding was that abrupt changes in climate and vegetation can evidently set off by gradually changing external factors, such as changes in the regional distribution of solar radiation due to slight periodic deviations in the earth’s orbit and in the inclination of the earth’s axis.

Over some thousand years, these deviations have often led to cooler summers in the northern hemisphere. The summer monsoon gradually became weaker, and



Theses

Boukary Savadogo, "Confréries et pouvoirs. La Tijaniyya Hamawiyya en Afrique occidentale (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger) : 1909-1965." Thèse de doctorat, Université de Provence, mars 1998, 2 tomes, 695 pages. Sous la direction de Jean-Louis Triaud. Autres membres du jury : Hélène d'Almeida-Topor (Université Paris I), Marc Michel (Université de Provence), Constant Hamès (CNRS). Rapporteurs extérieurs : Louis Brenner (Université de Londres, SOAS), Jacques Frémeaux (Université Paris IV). Mention Très honorable, avec les félicitations du jury à l'unanimité. Résumé par Jean-Louis Triaud.

Boukary Savadogor fut, en 1990, l'auteur d'une maîtrise remarquée, à l'université de Ouagadougou, sur "L'implantation et la diffusion du hamallisme à Ouagadougou depuis 1936". Il offre dans cette thèse 457 pages de texte ainsi qu'un volume d'annexes, sources et index de 237 pages.

Ce travail élargit et approfondit notablement le travail pionnier d'Alioune Traoré, soutenu à Dakar en 1975 et publié en 1983. La thèse d'Alioune Traoré avait, à partir des archives du Sénégal notamment, ouvert le dossier du hamallisme, traitant ce sujet difficile avec empathie, mais elle avait ensuite figé les problématiques comme si, par une sorte de tabou, on ne pouvait plus parler du Hamallisme après l'ouvrage de ce dernier. Boukary Savadogo apporte là de nombreux éléments nouveaux. Il a combiné à cet effet sources écrites et sources orales. S'agissant des premières, il a eu accès à un dépôt unique pour la question hamalliste au coeur du dispositif administratif de l'époque : les archives du cercle de Nioro, restées depuis lors sur place, qui sont plus complètes sur ce sujet qu'aucun autre fonds. Il a, d'autre part, interviewé, en jula, hassaniyya et français, 108 personnes en France et dans les quatre pays concernés, parmi lesquels Théodore Monod et plusieurs administrateurs ou officiers directement concernés (dont Joseph Rocaboy). Il a enfin prolongé l'enquête sur la confrérie après la disparition de shaikh Hamallah jusqu'en 1965.

La Tijaniyya hamawiyya - on dit en français le hamallisme - est une branche nouvelle de la confrérie Tijâniyya surgie autour de 1906 dans la ville de Nioro, ancienne capitale umarienne. Elle est découverte par Paul Marty en 1918, amalgamée avec le mahdisme par André en 1923-1924, réprimée par l'administration

française à partir de 1925. Le sommet de la confrontation est atteint en 1940 avec l'affaire dite de Nioro-Assaba, affrontement entre nomades interprété en termes de complot hamalliste, suivi d'une répression impitoyable et de la mort en déportation du fondateur, shaikh Hamallah, en janvier 1943. Sur toute cette chronologie, les mises au point argumentées de l'auteur font autorité. Il reconstitue minutieusement la genèse de l'affrontement entre Français et Hamallistes, en soulignant le rôle initial des rapports André sur un supposé mahdisme se diffusant à partir du Nigeria et en montrant comment la Hamawiyya est placée "accidentellement dans une perspective d'opposition à l'autorité coloniale française". L'auteur suit ainsi pas à pas la mise en place des représentations hostiles de certains administrateurs (pas de tous) et procède à une "déconstruction" du discours anti-hamalliste.

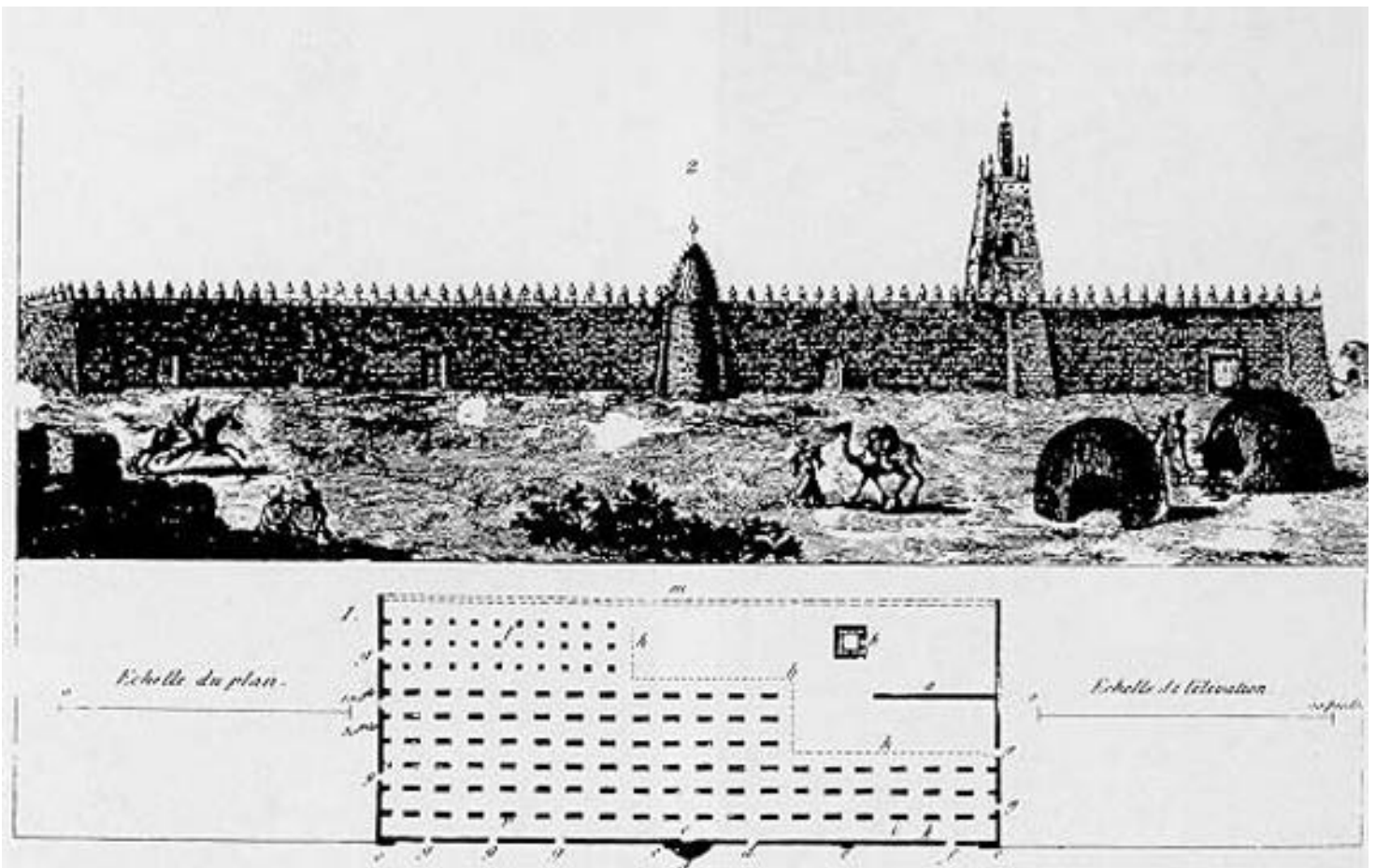
Ce travail se compose en fait de deux grands ensembles. Le premier est consacré à l'étude du rapport entre les Français et les Hamallistes, ou selon la formule heureuse de l'auteur, à "regarder l'administration coloniale regarder le hamallisme". Le second est consacré à l'histoire des Hamallistes eux-mêmes, notamment après la mort de shaikh Hamallah. Ce sont deux registres très différents : dans le premier, il s'est agi de repérer les stéréotypes et les effets de la légende noire; dans le second, c'est toute la mouvance hamalliste contemporaine qui est mise en



perspective depuis les indépendances, en analysant notamment les modes de passage au politique.

L'auteur porte attention à la terminologie. Il montre comment les Hamallistes se désignent eux-mêmes, et bien souvent par de tout autres termes que celui-ci. Il établit aussi une typologie essentielle des trois niveaux d'appartenance à la confrérie, depuis les simples serviteurs jusqu'aux initiés. S'agissant du passage au politique, il montre de façon décisive le caractère adaptatif et très local des engagements politiques de certains leaders hamallistes, et cela à l'encontre d'une vulgate qui les voyait tous dans le giron du RDA.

Il remet, en particulier, en cause le concept trompeur d'une confrérie "centralisée", source de nombre d'erreurs dans l'analyse du hamallisme. Il attire l'attention sur la circulation du charisme vers des périphéries qui deviennent à leur tour de nouveaux centres. Ce passage du centre initial (Nioro) aux périphéries, qui marque si profondément l'histoire du hamallisme, est un des points forts de ce travail. L'auteur déjoue aussi les contre-sens sur un hamallisme "anti-colonialiste". Il ne cède pas davantage à l'hagiographie et il montre, grâce aux archives de Nioro, un shaikh Hamallah hésitant, pusillanime, débordé par ses disciples. L'auteur apporte donc à la compréhension du phénomène hamalliste des outils nouveaux essentiels. On espère et on attend une publication rapide.



Djingeriberer Mosque c. 1828, according to Jacques Caillé

On the Web

Rahal BOUBRIK. "Sources d'histoire sociale et religieuse de l'ouest saharien: Le cas de la confrérie Fâdiliyya (Mauritanie)." *Clio en Afrique* 4 (printemps 1998).

[Http://newsup.univ-mrs.fr/~wclio-af/numero/4/sources/sommaire.html](http://newsup.univ-mrs.fr/~wclio-af/numero/4/sources/sommaire.html).

Sommaire

Le fondateur de la confrérie Fâdiliyya, Muhammad Fâdil b. Mâmîn, né en 1797 dans le Hawd (région du Sud-est mauritanien), a mis en place, au cours du XIX^{ème} siècle, une stratégie qui lui a permis de s'imposer comme une figure religieuse, en fondant sa propre branche à l'intérieur de la tarîqa mère, la Qâdiriyya. Grâce à son charisme religieux Muhammad Fâdil entama une action sociale et politique à l'intérieur de sa tribu les Ahl at-Tâlib Mukhtâr. En même temps que le saint instaurait son pouvoir religieux et social au Hawd, ses fils entamaient de leur côté la conquête d'autres espaces du pays. Une conquête qui s'acheva par le succès des deux figures : Sa'd Bûh et Mâ' al-'Aynayn. Après la mort de Muhammad Fâdil, ses successeurs poursuivent son oeuvre. La Fâdiliyya prend alors plus en plus de l'importance et la tribu des Ahl at-Tâlib Mukhtâr se taille une place dans son environnement social. Pour étudier l'histoire du pays bidân, en général, et celle de la Fâdiliyya, en particulier, nous disposons de sources qu'on peut classer en trois catégories principales : les documents arabes, la tradition orale et les documents européens. La première catégorie de documents exprime la vision d'une élite intellectuelle religieuse restreinte, la deuxième catégorie se compose de sources orales et la troisième de récits de voyageurs ainsi que d'archives militaires. On constate donc que la diversité des sources exige des niveaux de lecture s'inscrivant dans des champs épistémologiques variés : islamologie, histoire et anthropologie. Nous allons illustrer cette question des sources à partir du cas de la confrérie Fâdiliyya dans sa dimension religieuse et sociale.

PROFILS GÉO-DOCUMENTAIRES DES ÉTATS ET GOUVERNEMENTS

MEMBRES DES SOMMETS FRANCOPHONES

[Http://www.acctbief.org/](http://www.acctbief.org/)

INTRODUCTION

Les Profils géo-documentaires des États francophones du Sud font place à la présente édition des Profils géo-documentaires des États et Gouvernements membres des Sommets francophones. Cette nouvelle appellation permettra d'intégrer les profils de tous les États et Gouvernements qui forment cette grande famille des Sommets. Au fur et à mesure, de nouveaux profils et des mises à jour viendront augmenter et compléter ce répertoire qui se veut un outil en constante évolution.

Par profil géo-documentaire, il faut entendre la représentation synthétique de l'image documentaire d'un pays et de ses ressources informationnelles. C'est un état des lieux aussi fidèle que possible qui tend à dessiner l'environnement documentaire de chacun des États, en faisant le point sur l'évolution des institutions et sur les politiques en matière d'information. L'objectif est de dresser une carte qui, sur la base d'une description actualisée, prépare les stratégies à venir de la Francophonie dans ce domaine.

Quinze (15) profils ont été revus, corrigés et augmentés en 1994, soit ceux du Bénin, du Cameroun, des Comores, du Congo, de la Côte-d'Ivoire, du Gabon, de Madagascar, du Mali, de la Mauritanie, du Rwanda, du Sénégal, des Seychelles, du Togo, de la Tunisie et du Zaïre.

Les informations ont été regroupées et distribuées dans des grandes rubriques soit : profil institutionnel, dépôt légal, bibliographie nationale, réseaux, politique nationale, formation, associations professionnelles, profil télématique. La rubrique la plus enrichie est sans conteste celle concernant le profil institutionnel où sont regroupées les informations générales.

LISTE DES PAYS:

Belgique
 Belgique-Communauté française de Belgique
 Bénin
 Bulgarie
 Burkina Faso
 Burundi
 Cameroun
 Canada
 Canada-Nouveau Brunswick
 Canada-Québec
 Cap-Vert
 Comores
 Congo
 Côte-d'Ivoire
 Djibouti
 Dominique
 Égypte
 France
 Gabon
 Guinée
 Guinée-Bissau
 Guinée équatoriale
 Haïti
 Laos
 Liban
 Luxembourg
 Madagascar
 Mali
 Maroc
 Maurice
 Mauritanie
 Monaco
 Niger
 République centrafricaine
 Roumanie
 Rwanda
 Sainte-Lucie
 Sénégal
 Seychelles
 Suisse
 Tchad
 Togo
 Tunisie
 Vanuatu
 Viêt-nam
 Zaïre

WORKING WITH SATELLITE DATA

<http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/faoinfo/economic/giews/english/windisp/windisp.htm>

WinDisp is a public domain, easy to use software package for the display and analysis of satellite images, maps and associated databases, with an emphasis on early warning for food security. WinDisp was originally developed for the FAO Global Information and Early Warning System. It allows users to:

- √ Display and analyse satellite images
- √ Compare two images and analyse trends in a time-series of images
- √ Extract and graph trends from a number of satellite images such as during the growing season for comparison with other years
- √ Compute new images from a series of images
- √ Display tabular data in map format
- √ Build custom products combining images, maps and specialised legends
- √ Write and execute batch files to automate routine and tedious tasks
- √ Build a customized project interface for providing users with detailed menus of available data for a country or a specific area

Version 4.0 is now ready for testing.

New features:

- √ Fully multi-lingual version (English, French and Spanish).
- √ ESRI Shape files are fully supported in addition to .bna.
- √ On-screen digitizing
- √ Improved legend creation for thematic mapping (various scaling methods available, new color table editor, user defined or automatic legend generation, possibility to save custom legend parameters and to associate a user defined legend to a map)
- √ Median calculation processing for satellite images.

See <http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/faoinfo/economic/giews/english/windisp/windisp.htm> for dataset links, manuals, and more information.

Journals

al-Maghrib al-Ifriqi

I have the honour to inform you that the Moroccan Institute of African Studies is laying the foundation for the inauguration of a journal by the name "al-Maghrib al-Ifriqi" in replacement for the newsletter by the same name. This publication hopes to promote research in the common Moroccan-African heritage and all other issues relative of African studies.

The success of this new academic journal depends on the mobilization and active participation of African and Africanists scholars from all horizons. We dare count on your collaboration in disseminating the content of this letter to the faculty in your institution and look forward to the pleasure of reading their positive response soon.

KHALID BAALOU
INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES

Règles de publication:

1. La revue AL-MAGHRIB AL IFRIQI est une publication annuelle de l'Institut des Etudes Africaines de Rabat.
2. La Revue publie des articles, des documents et des comptes-rendus bibliographiques qui n'ont pas fait l'objet d'une publication antérieure.
3. Les textes doivent être envoyés en double exemplaire dactylographiés recto en double interligne (de préférence sur disquette) et ne doivent pas dépasser vingt (20) pages.
4. Les textes doivent être accompagnés d'un résumé de dix lignes environ.
5. Les textes non retenus ne sont pas retournés à leur auteurs.
6. L'ordre de présentation des articles dans la revue obéit à des considérations strictement techniques.
7. Les idées et les opinions exprimées dans les articles n'engagent que leurs auteurs.
8. Chaque collaborateur a droit à deux exemplaires de la revue et vingt tirés-à-part.

Toute correspondance doit être envoyée à l'adresse suivante:

INSTITUT DES ETUDES AFRICAINES

3 BIS, RUE INNAOUEN, B.P. 8968

RABAT - AGDAL - MAROC.

TEL: 212 (7) 77 65 79

FAX: 212 (7) 77 84 25

E-MAIL: revue.iea@enssup.gov.ma or baaloukhalid@hotmail.com

Sécheresse [Http://www.aupelf-uref.org/revues/sech/sommfm.htm](http://www.aupelf-uref.org/revues/sech/sommfm.htm)

La revue *Science et Changements Planétaires/Sécheresse* est destinée à toutes les personnes qui doivent oeuvrer dans la lutte contre la sécheresse et ses conséquences physiques, humaines, économiques et sociales. Les sujets incluent agroforesterie, climatologie, désertification, écoulement, eau, énergie, foresterie, gestion de l'eau, homme et climat, hydrologie, hydrogéologie, hydraulique, irrigation, météorologie, végétale de la production, et télédétection. Elle a la vocation de publier les informations des nombreux secteurs d'activités concernés et d'en favoriser la diffusion auprès des agents et décideurs, quelle que soit leur localisation géographique.

Directeur de la publication : Gilles Cahn

Rédacteur en chef : André Kergreis

Conseiller scientifique : Jean-François Lacronique

Upcoming Conferences

LIBERTY, IDENTITY, INTEGRATION, AND SLAVERY IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

A forthcoming conference, "Liberty, Identity, Integration and Slavery in the Muslim World," will be held at the Universite al-Akhwayn, Ifrane, Morocco, 29-30 June 2000. The conference will focus on slavery in the world of Islam and the implications for the formation of modern Muslim society. It is being organized in collaboration with the Nigerian Hinterland Project, York University, affiliated with the UNESCO Slave Route Project, and is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Fondation Alizes.

Please submit proposals for papers, including title and an abstract of 2-3 paragraphs, to either Professor Paul E. Lovejoy, York University (plovejoy@yorku.ca), Professor Muhammad Ennaji, Universite Mohammed V de Rabat (naji@fusion.net.ma), or Professor Ahmad Alawad Sikainga, Ohio State University (sikaing.1@osu.edu).



CROSSING BOUNDARIES: THE AFRICAN DIASPORA IN THE NEW MILLENIUM

You are invited to participate in a conference on the African Diaspora entitled, **CROSSING BOUNDARIES: THE AFRICAN DIASPORA IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM**. The conference is scheduled for September 20-23, 2000 and will be hosted by the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and by New York University. Specifics regarding hotel accommodations and venues are forthcoming.

The conference will be research driven and will feature panels organized to stimulate discourse across geographic, disciplinary, cultural, and theoretical boundaries. The concept of the Diaspora is global; hence, all geographic areas will be represented, including the Middle East, Europe and Asia. Papers and panel proposals that incorporate gender and women as categories of analysis are encouraged.

Examples of projected panels include: Ethnicity and Slave Resistance; Carnival; Conjuring; Communities; Therapeutic Strategies; Individual and Self-Expression; Cross-Regional Slave Labor; Religion as Resistance/Religion as Community Builder; Comparative Slavery and Anti-slavery Movements; Gender and Cultural Continuity; Slave Labor and Capitalism; Shifting Definitions of African Liberation; Past and Present in the Expressive Imagination; Interpretations of the Past through Music/Art/Dance/Literary-Oral Traditions; Cultural Transmissions; Africans as Workers; Burial Grounds as Sites of Testimony; and African Perspectives on the Diaspora.

The conference will also launch a new, multi-disciplinary association, tentatively called "The Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora," or ASWAD. Proposals and inquiries can be directed to: Michael Gomez, Dept. of History, 53 Washington Square South, New York, NY 10012-1098, Michael.Gomez@nyu.edu. Fax: 212-995-4017, Office: 212-998-8624.

In Recent Journals

SUDANIC AFRICA: A JOURNAL OF HISTORICAL SOURCES VOLUME 9, 1998

“Tales which Persist on the Tongue: Arabic Literacy and the Definition of Communal Boundaries in sharif 'Aydarus's Bughyat al-amal,” Scott S. Reese (1-17)

“Two Sudanese Midwives,” Heather J. Sharkey (19-38)

“The Takfir Debate: Sources for the Study of a Contemporary Dispute among African Sufis. Part I: The Nigerian Arena,” Rudiger Seesemann (39-70)

“Modibbo al-hajj Usmanu (1884-1970): The Life of a Muslim Teacher and Judge in Bogo (North Cameroon),” Aboubakary Modibo Amadou and Hamadou Adama (71-89)

“Your Humble Servant: The Memoirs of 'Abd Allah al-Ghadamisi of Kano, 1903-1908. Part II: Serving Colonial Masters,” Muhammad Sani Umar and John O. Hunwick (91-134)

“Arabic Papers from the Olubadan Chancery II: Toying with the Caliphate,” Isaac A. Ogunbiyi and Stefan Reichmuth (135-61)

Bibliographies

Arabic Writings on zar, Richard Johan Natvig (163-78)

Book Reviews

T. Eide, T. Hägg, R.H. Pierce and L. Török (eds.), *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum I-III* (Herman Bell), (179-86)

Sidi 'Umar b. 'Ali, *Fihris makhtutat Markaz Ahmad Baba li'l-tawthiq wa'l-buhuth al-ta'rikhiyya* (John O. Hunwick), (187-91)

Ousmane Kane, *Fihris makhtutat maktabat al-shaykh Mur Mbay Sisi ...* (John O. Hunwick), (192-4)

Ulrich Rebstock, *Fihris makhtutat Shinqit wa-Wadan* (John O. Hunwick), (195-6)

ISLAM ET SOCIÉTÉS AU SUD DU SAHARA NOMBRE 11, NOVEMBRE 1997

Etudes

“Autour de la genèse du Mouridisme,” Cheikh Anta Mbacké Babou

“Des titans et des mosquées: les *alhadji* transporteurs de Parakou, héritiers des *wangara*?” Denise Brégrand

“Defining the Community: The National Islamic Front, Its Opponents and the Sharia Issue,” Rex Sean O’Fahey

“Les nouveaux prénoms des Peuls du Nord-Cameroun, Historique et essai d’interprétation,” Hamadou Adama

“Mémorisation et audition: l’enseignement coranique chez les Maures de Mauritanie,” Corinne Fortier

Biographies

“B. Būziyān, le saint patron des caravanes,” Abderrahmane Moussaoui

“Sa’d Buh and the Fadiliyya and the French Colonial Authorities,” David Robinson

“Succession and Inheritance in a Sufi Order: The Case of Ibrāhīm al-Rashīd,” Mark Sedgwick

“Al-Ḥājj Abbās Sall (1909-1990),” Cheikh Tidiane Fall

“Al-Majmū‘ al-Nafīs: Perspectives on the Origins of the Muslim Torodbe of Senegal from the Writings of Shaykh Musa Kamara,” Constance Hilliard

Références et Comptes Rendues

ISLAM ET SOCIÉTÉS AU SUD DU SAHARA
NOMBRE 12, 1998

Dossier "Wahhabisme"

"Le wahhabisme à Abidjan: dynamisme urbain d'un islam réformiste en Côte-d'Ivoire contemporaine (1960-1996)," Marie Miran

"Hypothèses sur les origines d'un mouvement fondamentaliste en pays soninke," Maëlle Rialland

Etudes

"Islamic Literature and Religious Revival in Ethiopia (1991-1994)," Hussein Ahmed

"Divination et pouvoir local: variations sénégalaises, le *siltigi* peul," Maguerite Dupire

"Islamic Culture and Muslim Identity in Zinder, Niger: A Historical Perspective," Robert S. Glew

Matériaux et Documents

"Le minoritaire sud-africain Ahmed Deedat, une figure originale de la *da'wa*," Samadia Sadouni

Catalogues et Inventaires

"Les manuscrits arabico-malgaches *sorabe* du pays antemoro," Philippe Beaujard

Comptes Rendues



Recent Books

Knut S. Vikør, *The Oasis of Salt: The History of Kavar, a Saharan Centre of Salt Production* [Bergen: University of Bergen Press, 1999; xii, 342 pp.; £ 27]. ISBN 1-85065-308-9. (The following is adapted from the introduction)

Right in the middle of the Sahara, near Niger's borders with Libya and Chad, lies a small string of oases called Kavar. Their position is about as isolated as can be imagined, surrounded by long waterless stretches on every side. And yet the economy of Kavar and its main town, Bilma, is completely based on external trade, the oasis being one of West Africa's major producers of salt. This study first describes the economic foundation of the oasis and its salt trade. Following this is a survey of its place in central Saharan history, from the first Greek and Roman travellers, through Fazzani, Bornu and Tuareg rule, to its incorporation into the French colonial empire in 1906.

While the Sahara may be an ocean, Kavar is thus not isolated island, but rather a cross-roads in the desert. This is the place where Berber traders from the north settled to exchange goods with Kanem people from the south, where the Tuareg from the west struggled with the Teda from the east, and where caravans of thousands of camels came every year for a cargo they distributed all over the Central Sudan. It was because of this integration into a regional and inter-regional structure that the Kavar people could survive. Without it, the oasis could never have supported a population even of its small size, a fact they felt bitterly when war or droughts made those structures falter. It was an oasis built on trade, and what happened in Bornu, in Agades or even in distant Kano or Tripoli directly affected life in the oasis. Thus, the history of Kavar can only be seen through the history of the Central Sahara.

This history is dominated by a number of bipolarities, changes of focus and of emphasis, that drew the oasis into different contexts. One is its location: Kavar is almost precisely midway between the northern and southern shores of the Sahara. The map does not tell us whether we should consider it an outpost of the Maghreb in the south, or the tip of Sudanic civilization in the north.

In fact, it seems to have been both at various times in its history. While the majority of the population has

probably always been Sudanic, Kavar was in the medieval period, at least from the ninth to the thirteenth or fourteenth century, marked more by the expanding Islamic civilization of the Maghreb than by the kingdoms to the south. That is at least what the Arabic sources passed down to us indicate, but the existence on the ground of Arabic place-names (stemming from a time when even Kanem had not yet turned to Islam) indicates that the description of Kavar as an early Islamic centre is based in reality. After the medieval period, however, the political and cultural links to the north were broken, and Kavar came under the domination of various players of the south; and moved from being a Maghrebi to a Sudanic outpost, remaining such until today. This change from a northern to a southern orientation neatly divides its historical time-line in two.

This north-south dimension links to another basic bipolarity, between the regional and inter-regional (or 'international') trading networks of the Sahara. Kavar was involved in both types of trade, but its role was quite different in each. The inter-regional, trans-Saharan, network was one between Kanem-Bornu (and other states and peoples around Lake Chad) in the south and the Fezzan--and beyond it Tripoli and the Mediterranean--in the north. In this network of trade in slaves, gold, ivory, ostrich feathers and other luxury items, Kavar was a stop-over where traders and their animals could regain energy and draw on what provisions the oasis could provide, in particular water. It was important, but Kavarians were for the most part only marginally involved in this sort of trade.

The regional and Saharan networks on the other hand, had Kavar as their north-eastern endpoint. They focused on what Kavar produced and the south sorely needed: salt, with dates as an auxiliary export item. This regional network was quite distinct from the trans-Saharan one. It went along different routes, had different actors and was differently structured than the trans-Saharan trade. Given the northern bias of our early written sources, we know less about the beginnings of this trade network than we do of the trans-Saharan one, but for Kavar itself it was of far greater importance economically, and some times also politically. Thus, each kind of trade network inserted Kavar into a different structure, each partly 'invisible' to the other, but still related in the sense that both depended on, and helped

to sustain, Kawar as a populated region.

Politically, the main bipolarity of the 'southern' period after about 1400 was between the Kanem-Bornu kingdom in the south-east and the increasingly dominant Tuareg of Air in the west. These two poles were far from 'invisible' to each other; they were rivals in their own right, and some of the battles between them took place in Kawar itself. But given the difference between, on the one hand, a Sudanic kingdom of great longevity and wide interests to the south as well as north and, on the other, a basically stateless Saharan power with only a nominal sultan at its head, the nature of Kawar's insertion into each political entity must have been different. However, Kawar's great distance from either political centre mitigated this contrast. Most important for Kawar, no doubt, was the effect any shift of power had on the trading structures of the region.

Even inside Kawar, we find numerous bipolarities that dominate the oasis. The most basic one was the ethnic and linguistic divide between the Teda and Kanuri populations. This division was reflected both in the political and economic structures of the oasis: of its two main export goods, the production and trade of salt was wholly in the hands of the Kanuri, while the other, in dates, was mostly carried out by Teda. These groups also took part in the trans-Saharan trade. The bipolarity was also geographic, in that Kawar had two 'capitals' or dominant villages, Bilma and Anay. The former (and larger) is the centre of the Kanuri, of the salt trade, and of the links to the west. It was also the location of the French garrison after colonization, and thus gave its name to the *cercle*. Anay is the dominant town of the Teda, although the mai, the symbolic or real ruler of Kawar, lives in other villages. More dependent on the date trade, its economic links are rather to the north-east, to the Teda territories of Tibesti.

This internal dichotomy is also written into the other bipolarities; the Kanuri are mostly involved in the regional trade, while the Teda drew more influence from the trans-saharan exchange. Politically, while the Teda of Kawar are considered to be distinguishable from and sometimes not as 'pure' Teda as those of Tibesti - being sedentary for one thing - they are still part of the world to Kawar's east, while the Kanuris' insertion into the salt trade make them turned more to the west and the Tuareg world.

This study, a revised and expanded version of a thesis first written in 1979, starts with an analysis of the Kawar salt trade as it was observed around the time of the colonial occupation. It then presents the political history of the oasis in the context of wider central Saharan developments, from the first references to trans-

Saharan contacts in the Graeco-Roman period, through the various phases down to the arrival of the French in around 1906. A new postscript brings the developments up to 1999.

Touaregs et autres sahariens entre plusieurs mondes. Définitions et redéfinitions de soi et des autres. Sous la direction d'Hélène Claudot-Hawad, n° 7/8 des Cahiers de l'IREMAM, collection éditée par l'IREMAM, Aix-en-Provence, 1996, paru en 1997, 280 p. ISSN 1159-4926. Distribution : Edisud, La Calade, 13090 Aix-en-Provence. 110 FF.

Comment les Touaregs et autres Sahariens se définissent-ils eux-mêmes et comment sont-ils définis par les autres ? Les diverses contributions de cet ouvrage collectif s'intéressent aux "cadastres" mouvants des identités et des espaces sociaux, politiques, économiques et culturels, où s'inscrivent les lignes de continuité et de changement de cette vaste aire saharienne. Les "figures" d'identité présentées ici s'expriment dans des registres variés, relevant de la langue, de la technique, des relations de "genre", de la construction de la mémoire, des rapports socio-politiques, de la gestion de l'invisible, de la catégorisation de l'inconnu par rapport au connu. Ainsi, sont dessinées quelques-unes des configurations changeantes de la palette identitaire, dans une approche qui s'est voulue interdisciplinaire et comparative, cherchant à croiser les perspectives et les regards.



Annuaire des institutions documentaires nationales de la Francophonie

Un annuaire des coordonnées des archives nationales, des bibliothèques nationales, des bibliothèques parlementaires et des centres nationaux d'IST de la Francophonie.

Actes du Colloque international sur la gestion des archives courantes et intermédiaires : politiques et pratiques

La gestion des archives courantes et intermédiaires: politiques et pratiques. Actes du colloque international, Dakar, 15-19 juin 1998. Association internationale des archives francophones et Direction des Archives du Sénégal. [Ottawa, Banque internationale d'information sur les États francophones, 1999] vii, 236 p. ISBN 2-921420-49-X

POUR COMMANDER :

BIEF

25, rue Eddy, pièce 13G4

Hull (Québec)

K1A 0M5 Canada

téléphone : (819) 997-3857

télécopieur : (819) 953-4839

courrier électronique : acctbief@fox.nstn.ca

[Http://www.acctbief.org/](http://www.acctbief.org/)

John O. Hunwick. *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire: Al-Sadi's Tarikh Al-sudan down to 1613 and other Contemporary Documents* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999), cloth with dustjacket; lxviii, 412 pp., 2 illus., 4 maps; ISBN 90 04 11207 3.

The principal text translated in this volume is the *Tarikh Al-sudan* of the seventeenth-century Timbuktu scholar Abd al-Rahman al-Sadi. Thirty chapters are included, dealing with the history of Timbuktu and Jenne, their scholars, and the political history of the Songhay empire from the reign of Sunni Ali (1464-1492) through the Moroccan conquest of Songhay in 1591 and down to the year 1613 when the Pashalik of Timbuktu became an autonomous ruling institution in the Middle Niger region. The year 1613 also marked the effective end of Songhay resistance. The other contemporary documents included are a new English translation of Leo Africanus's description of West Africa, some letters relating to Sadian diplomacy and

conquests in the Sahara and Sahel, al-Ifrani's account of Sadian conquest of Songhay, and an account of this expedition by an anonymous Spaniard. Readership: All those interested in centralised states in pre-colonial Africa, Islamic scholarship, the history of Timbuktu, and the history of the Western *bilad al-sudan* in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.



Remco Ensel. *Saints and Servants in Southern Morocco*. Leiden: Brill, 1999. Cloth 300 pp. ISBN 90 04 11429 7

This anthropological monograph, dealing with a persistent form of social and racial inequality in the Maghrib, examines the affinities between ancient hierarchical categories and new forms of social ranking in the modern nation-state. The point of departure is a detailed account of the ambivalent relations between *shurfa* and a group of humble descent, the *Haratin*, in a sanctuary located on the northern fringe of the Sahara. In sections on the division of labor, fictive kinship and supernatural mediation, the book shows how hierarchical ideas are transmitted and instilled in everyday life. The author demonstrates a sensitive ear for conflicting opinions on the meaning of ethnicity and descent-based distinctions. Richly situated in the anthropological literature, this monograph is a timely contribution to the study of ideologies of social inequality.



Saharan Studies Association Membership Data Form

Name:

Address:

New Member?

Would you like to receive the Newsletter via email (.pdf)?

Email Address:

Institutional Affiliation:

Fields of Interest:

Other Colleagues/Institutions who
might be interested in the SSA:



Mail to:
David Gutelius
SRI International
Menlo Park, CA 94025
USA