

# African Research & Documentation



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The editor would be pleased to receive offers of articles and information on all aspects of library, archive, and bibliographical matters relating to Africa and to African studies.

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*Front cover illustration: Cross of a simple form from Korabiewicz's collection, National Museum in Warsaw, photography by Zbigniew Doliński*

# AFRICAN RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

No. 136

2019

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## CORRECTION AND APOLOGY

The title of Amar Guendouzi's article was given incorrectly in the table of contents of ARD no. 134, 2018. The article on pp. 58-75 is *Bridging the Gap Between Ghanaian Elite and Popular Fictions: Ayi Kwei Armah's The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born and the Episteme of Post-Independence Popular Literature [not Love. Race and Revolution in Ayi Kwei Armah's Why Are We So Blessed]*.

The Editor offers her apologies to Dr Guendouzi and readers for any confusion.

# AFRICAN BOOKS COLLECTIVE: AFRICAN PUBLISHED BOOKS IN THE NORTH

By Justin Cox<sup>1</sup> and Stephanie Kitchen<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

This is a presentation about the African Books Collective that for some 30 years has distributed African published academic, literary and children's books around the world. The aim of the paper is to provide some insights into how books published in Africa are making their way to libraries with collections on Africa, and to discuss current and future trends; it being understood that 'decolonising library collections', the theme of this conference,<sup>3</sup> would by rights involve acquiring and maintaining materials from outside the global North.

## What books and publishers does ABC distribute?

Upon its creation in 1990, ABC represented a large number of university presses on the continent and independent publishers, some of which are large firms still trading today. Today few university presses are trading or publishing new books. This work was largely picked-up by private independent publishers and research institutes such as CODESRIA, OSSREA, the Institute of Southern African Studies and others. Now none of these aside from CODESRIA are still trading. In recent years, alongside the work done by independent publishers, scholars have turned to alternative avenues to get their work distributed, and hybrid models of publishing have become a feature of the book-chain in Africa. Publishers, or content-producers, may take the form of NGOs whose main purpose is not publishing per se but which need an outlet for their work; loose networks of writers and scholars who have formed their own presses or research organisations; publishing outfits which carry out publishing work for organisations or book series, usually with funding; and many small independent literary presses and writers' networks.

Some of the notable publishers distributed by African Books Collective are:

- CODESRIA: The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa [<https://www.codesria.org/>]
- African Minds, South Africa [<http://www.africanminds.co.za/>], an open access, not-for-profit publisher
- Langaa RPCIG, Cameroon [<https://www.langaa-rpcig.net/>]
- The Forum for Social Studies, Ethiopia [<https://www.fssethiopia.org/>], an independent, non-profit institution
- Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, Tanzania [<http://www.mkukinyota.com/>]

- Sub-Saharan Publishers, Ghana [<https://www.subsaharanpublishers.com/>], established in 1992
- Weaver Press, Zimbabwe [<http://weaverpresszimbabwe.com/>], formed in 2019.

Recently growth in the ABC list has come from research institutes and organisations based in South Africa; the first and most long-standing of these is the African Institute of South Africa [<http://www.ai.org.za/>]. The Southern African Migration Program [<http://samponline.org/>] publishes research and reports on migration in Southern Africa. More recently ABC has begun distributing books published by NISC. Originally established to develop academic bibliographic databases, NISC now publishes books, including the African Humanities Series [<https://www.nisc.co.za/ahs>]. There is also the Mapungubwe Institute for Strategic Reflection (MISTRA) [<http://www.mistra.org.za/Pages/Home.aspx>], an independent research organisation.

University presses are beginning to re-emerge. The University of Namibia Press re-energised its programme in 2012; a new university press has been founded as Kwara State University Press in Nigeria; and the University of Mauritius Press re-started publishing in 2018. Whilst these signs are encouraging, we would still note the depressed state of the university press sector in Africa, with the exception of university presses in South Africa at Wits, Cape Town and KwaZulu-Natal. It is notable for example that neither Nigeria nor Ghana has active university presses publishing in West Africa.<sup>4</sup>

The above is just a snapshot of some of the key producers of scholarly content in Africa. Many more titles, some one-offs, some publishing infrequent, but nonetheless critical, works are widely available via ABC's distribution networks.

### **Distribution (print and electronic)**

ABC was founded in 1990 by African publishers so that they could control their own distribution in countries outside of their own. It was founded with the help of funding agencies in Scandinavia, Europe and the US, which continued for its first 17 years of trading. At that time, book distribution was pre-digital and the outlets for scholarly books were not as numerous as they are today. Furthermore books were shipped around the world and stored at great cost. The quantity of titles produced by participating publishers in ABC was half that of today.

Nowadays ABC distributed books are widely available via all major library platforms: Project MUSE, EBSCO, Proquest, Ebrary, CyberLibris and Gardeners. Newly launched this year is books distribution through JSTOR, and there are many more smaller providers. These largely US-based platforms have been

hosting ABC distributed content since 2010, and have been critical to ABC's survival. Project MUSE report that sales in the UK are hard to come by, though it is hoped that JSTOR might provide expanded reach.

Digital access leads to increased discoverability of content and sometimes results in an increased demand for print copies.

Printed books can be ordered from ABC directly, which ensures the maximum financial benefit for sales is passed on to publishers. Books can be ordered from all major wholesalers and library suppliers around the world.

### **Global book sales and geographical distribution**

In the last eight years ABC has sold over £2 million worth of print books on behalf of the African publishers it represents. 62% of those sales were made in the US. The collective also distributes ebooks for publishers and has recorded sales of £470k to both retail and library platforms. We estimate that 80% of digital sales are to libraries in the US.

This follows some 20 years of support from US-based libraries and major African Studies collections. In years gone by, standing orders were also held with libraries in the UK. Currently only the British Library and the University of Cambridge show as direct UK customers of the collective, though some library business may have switched to wholesale channels where the end-user customer is not revealed.

Recently the proportion of books sold in the US has declined as there has been growth in other regions, most notably in Germany, Canada, South Africa and China. Increasing interest, as availability of the books becomes wider, is being shown in Australia, where the African population is on the rise in the Pacific region. For example, library platforms owned by the American company Proquest report that 10% of ABC sales made through them were made in Australia, as compared with 6% in the UK. Recently in Germany institutional libraries have been purchasing or enquiring about purchasing ABC's complete digital collection, which now totals 1,200+ books.

In the US, African Studies collections will often spend in the range of £2,500 per annum on new titles in print from African publishers to meet their collection needs and may also at the same time have access to complete or curated digital collections containing ABC distributed books.

### **Sales and distribution in Africa**

In Africa, excluding South Africa, the situation is very bleak. African-produced content is much more widely available outside Africa than it is within. Some



sales are made via the library supplier Mallory, and occasional tender orders appear. Project MUSE had subsidised pricing to African countries and some institutions had access, in cooperation with INASP. But when those countries were deemed by INASP to be, in theory, capable of paying for such resources themselves the subscriptions were not renewed and access was lost. And even when there is access in a few institutions, usage tends to be low. Other specialist library platforms dedicated to providing content to African institutions have struggled to get off the ground though remain hopeful.

### **African published books, epublishing and digital technologies**

Publishers in Africa were on board with digital publishing from its inception. As part of its remodelling as a self-sustaining organisation in 2007 ABC needed to digitise very quickly. In 2018 64% of books released by ABC were made available electronically, and in the scholarly category this figure is much higher. Within the institutions where ABC's digital collections are available, usage is high. Project MUSE report that in the first quarter of 2019, 3,200 African published books were read on their platform and this figure is increasing rapidly year upon year. Some institutions in the UK do have access to these MUSE collections but usage in those institutions remains very low in comparison to other countries which have similar access, with the US, Canada, South Africa, Australia and Japan all reporting very healthy use.

Digital technologies have vastly reduced the costs of making available and supplying scholarly books with small print runs. Collectively African publishers have been able to seize on the advantages of these innovations and reduce the barriers in e.g. selling a book published in Uganda to a customer in China, or several books published by various publishers to be sold in Germany. ebooks have reduced the friction even further and have enabled libraries across the globe to vastly increase their holdings of African produced knowledge from a range of content producers on a wholesale basis. We would nonetheless note that cross-border book trade within Africa is still problematic; such transactions tend to go through ABC rather than via more local channels.

The sale of a title in a digital collection with a multi-user access licence does not result in the same return to a publisher as a full-price sale of a print book. That said, sales made in such collections are often incremental additional sales reaching many more libraries than is possible for just print, or even perpetual purchase of ebooks. Therefore, libraries outside of the major collections which do not have the budgets to spend on such specialist material may find that it is more cost-effective to acquire such content digitally. As usage figures prove a title's value, more full-priced and perpetual sales are encouraged and on the whole the market has grown. The way in which digital collections are priced does provide publishers with some sort of idea about what a minimum income for a scholarly work might earn in the library market and allow for better mod-

elling and planning. However, library cuts and perceptions about price remain a challenge for publishers everywhere. If the cost to libraries of acquiring specialist content is driven down further, and more and more content is expected for less and less, then the scholarly book chain – including in Africa – could find itself in a race to the bottom.

### **Challenges for publishers**

Other challenges remain for African publishers despite a more frictionless international trade. Globally, the costs of publication, in relation to income, remain high in the scholarly sector, particularly when print distribution is accounted for. Though demand for the print format remains high, within the publishers' local markets it can still be uneconomic because of the costs of printing. Even ebooks, discussed above, often do not address the imbalance because publishers cannot, for many reasons, always rely on a local library market for their books and this can restrict the publication of good new content. A lot of the content received by ABC is produced by hybrid publishers who often cannot make their books widely available in their own countries; whereas traditional publishers, who maintain full local distribution networks which form the backbone of their businesses, publish the fewest scholarly books distributed by ABC.

### **Northern libraries and support for African publishers**

There are no barriers to acquiring African-published books from ABC, though it does seem that libraries in the UK could be doing more to ensure their collections contain knowledge produced on the continent; by scholars working within an African context and on an equal footing with such knowledge being produced in their own institutions.

It is important that libraries recognise that by choosing to purchase books published in Africa they can directly support the production and publication of more knowledge on the continent and bolster its growth and ensure its ideas are heard.

### **African-published books and decolonisation**

By considering issues of decolonisation in relation to their acquisitions, organisations like SCOLMA – UK Libraries and Archives Group on Africa [<https://scolma.org/>], also European and US librarian associations, and their members, can provide an increased market for books published in Africa, encouraging dialogue and further balancing academic exchanges. Publishers have new and efficient methods which allow easier access to their books; they have globalised their offerings which no longer, as was the case in previous times, need to be 'hunted down' and ordered 'specially'.

The ball is also in the court of scholars to use and cite content produced on the African continent more; meantime librarians can highlight the availability of such content to their communities, and prioritise its purpose in the same way as they do with knowledge produced in the North.

## Notes

- 1 CEO, African Books Collective.  
Email: [justin.cox@africanbookscollective.com](mailto:justin.cox@africanbookscollective.com)
- 2 Managing Editor, International African Institute.
- 3 This paper was prepared for the SCOLMA annual conference 'Decolonising African Studies: questions and dilemmas for libraries, archives and collections' held at the University of Edinburgh on 10 June 2019.
- 4 For more in-depth analysis of university presses in Africa, see the study published by African Minds in 2016 at <http://www.africanminds.co.za/african-university-presses/>.

# ACCESSING UK ARCHIVAL HOLDINGS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

By Joanne Davis

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This paper presents my ideals for ensuring that African researchers and those from the Global South achieve direct access to UK archival holdings with the time and consideration required to make substantive interventions in our research projects and fields of study. My observations and recommendations are derived from my experience of archival research gained as I travelled across the United Kingdom unearthing records of the 19th century Xhosa intellectual, the Reverend Tiyo 'Zisani' Soga, for my doctoral studies of Soga's English works. Soga had studied in Glasgow and Edinburgh between 1846 and 1856 and was ordained as a minister in the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland (UPC); in 1857 he returned as a missionary to the AmaXhosa with his newly-wed bride, Janet, née Burnside. I believed there would be significant archival records about Soga and his in-laws in the United Kingdom to which South(ern) African researchers had not had the privilege of access because of the distance and the time required to find them; while I had no funding, I had a spousal visa to the United Kingdom which permitted me to live and work in the UK. With these benefits, I was able to spend weeks in particular archives, investigating clues, returning to archives as the relevance of items dawned on me, and to take temporary work alongside my research. As I progressed, I retrieved almost an entire alphabet of records on Soga, records which directly inform knowledge of Soga's life, the histories of South African theology, the translation of the Bible into Xhosa, literacy in South Africa and South African languages, and debates around the uniqueness of each language. I also noted a wealth of sources about South Africa and the whole African continent located from Oxford to Cambridge, to London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dollar and beyond.

Issues around the ownership of and access to these archival sources and resources were immediately visible and indeed imperative to me. I came to literary analysis as a proponent of Black Consciousness, my eye trained on the redemption of African narratives and histories and black excellence: redemption, and repatriation. As a student I was a representative at the *Transformation in Education Conference* held at the University of Cape Town between 1994 and 1995, where we negotiated for outcomes very similar to those prioritised by the *Fees Must Fall* movement, with some notable successes. I was surprised that archives as sites of university life were not a feature of these recent student-led decolonisation movements, as I believe that archives should be included within these debates because they are frequently located within universities, although some are in independent research libraries and the observations in this paper should be addressed equally to those repositories. Perhaps

however archives have not featured as sites for decolonisation in these student movements because of the remove at which archival research remains from the expected reach of undergraduate scholarship. Public programming and outreach programmes may introduce more students to the wealth of information in archives and in turn inspire decolonisation debate around which resources are located in which archives, which omitted, and to whom they belong, as well as around how to impact on and shape holdings, and increase access and usage for African scholars. Who holds archives and how holdings came to be is of direct relevance to decolonisation. As repositories of records deemed important enough to be retained, archives constitute the DNA of academia, the building blocks from which we build our analysis of how societies functioned, function, and shall function. Those who use these resources impact on how these meanings are construed; ensuring that all researchers can access them is significant for the creation of multiple meanings. Decolonisation theorists have shown that universities are responsible for producing and reproducing discriminatory systems which nurture socio-political and socio-economic inequalities. These activists stress that ontologies from Western-centric universities are simplistic and unscholarly, especially those which refute the equality of critics who challenge Western and Global North scholarship. Archives are also a site for decolonisation because the size and extent of holdings is a key determiner of prestige and power for institutions. This in turn generates revenue as some visiting researchers pay admission fees, many pay for permission to reproduce content and again for the actual reproductions. A university or research library without archives lacks this significance, prestige and revenue stream, and the cycle is perpetuated.

Decolonisation activists in other critical disciplines have insisted on the importance of returning items of which nations have been dispossessed through the colonial encounter, especially land, natural resources and cultural resources, with the objective of reclaiming full ownership for source nations for unfettered access to, and custodianship and use of, and enrichment by, those resources. Of course I would prefer all the materials relevant to South Africa to be available in South Africa – which I achieved by including all the sources which were found in my doctoral thesis, and insisting that they be included as appendices in the book which arose.<sup>1</sup> I strive to overhaul areas of university life which remain exclusive and to find ways to make all avenues accessible to all scholars, especially students excluded financially, and I decry the continued veneration of the overtly racist founders and leaders of these institutions. While I am driven by the urgent need for South and Southern African researchers to access these documents, this paper will present my arguments against moving these sources from their current lodges. Rather, I propose that African researchers particularly and researchers from the Global South be ensured unequivocal and autonomous access to the archival resources of their choice at archives in the United Kingdom, and by extension all countries in which they are found. Underpinning all of this is a notion of the role of education in social

mobility and the nature of the knowledge in that education for social mobility and, again, access: to capital, whether intellectual or financial.

Perhaps archives were omitted from decolonisation activism because it looks as if this work has already been undertaken: for decades, and especially since the late 1980s, Black Consciousness philosophers and post-colonialists have provided a sustained critical interrogation of the legitimacy of knowledges and informations held in archives, predating and almost presaging decolonisation activism which “acknowledg[es] and affirm[s] subjectivities that fall outside the purview of Western modes of thinking and expressions of being” (Hirmer, Istratii and Lim 2018:10-15). Also, archivists at ECARBICA<sup>2</sup> and then ESAR-BICA<sup>3</sup> have for some sixty years repeatedly called for the return of archives in exile and migrated archives, including records of governance, manuscripts and artistic and cultural scripts; these archivists even passed resolutions for pragmatic steps to regain these archives as early as 1969, then again in 1983, and twice in 2003 (Mnjama and Lowry 2018:105-108). More recently in November 2017, the Association of Commonwealth Archivists and Records Managers released a position paper [...] regarding the Migrated Archives and a call for their return to the relevant countries during its annual meeting, though, states Karabinos, “the effects of this paper have yet to be seen” (2018:2). It is worth noting that not one resolution has ever resulted in archival repatriation, which failure may equally explain their omission from contemporary calls for decolonisation. However, archives have become more aware of due diligence when offered manuscripts or sources which should more appropriately be held in the African or Global South context. Perhaps decolonisation critics believe, as certainly I was told, that archives are so superficial as to be beyond democratisation because colonial sources omit holdings for, on or by [Southern] African peoples. Researchers would like archives to provide knowledge which they wish to have, and representations of themselves and their societies which they could validate. Bibi Bakare-Yusuf, co-founder and publishing director of Cassava Press, quoted her FaceBook exchange about “the power, violence and misrepresentation of the archive” with Ainehi Edoro, then of Brittle Paper, in her keynote address at the Abantu Book Festival in South Africa in 2018 entitled “Archive Fever” which focused extensively on archives and their impact on world knowledge:

Edoro: Reading the 19th century archive on Africa always leaves me with a feeling of melancholy. It blows my mind that all this drivel was passed off as incontrovertible truth.

Bakare-Yusuf: This is why we have to start the archive of the future now! For as long as we are not deliberate and purposeful about the project of archive creation, mourning AND melancholia will be the order of the day. [...]

As a counter-balance, Bakare-Yusuf stressed her interest in

how we create what I am calling the African archival future which will then form part of a global archive. Publishing for me is therefore essentially the work of archival creation and a potential tool of power and control, a tool that helps to shape how we view ourselves and make sense of the world.

I too have encountered extremely racist depictions of black and African peoples, of Third Nation and peoples from the Global South in the archives. I too am excited to consider “the archive of the future now,” and later in this paper I hope to contribute to this pivotal and intriguing avenue of exploration by envisioning characteristics of archives which would enable researchers in their scholarship. However, my experience is also that archives are not limited to such representations of African peoples, and I still consider archives sites of relevance to the study of African history and historiography. As the information I found on Soga shows, information researchers seek might well be held in archives; the problem is that as a point of order, few have had access to it. And those who have, do, with huge reward: in 2017 South African professor Jeff Opland received a national award, “the Order of Ikhamanga: Silver for his outstanding contribution to the field of history and an impressive body of works in literature”. Opland had retrieved a trove of Xhosa literature from newspapers and journals held in a South African archive which he published within *The Opland Collection of Xhosa Literature* series, with to date six full books, and more in the pipeline. The award read: “Your work exhumes stories of the dead and brings them to life so that the living can continue to learn and benefit.” The political importance of these documents in redoing history, recovering respect, cannot be overstated.<sup>4</sup> I agree with Helen Bradford, who in a 2008 paper on Rev Soga’s contemporary William Wellington Gqoba demanded to know, “Why, then, have we been presented with a desert so far as black authored sources are concerned?”.

However, despite my avowed insistence on ensuring access for African researchers to these pivotal information sources, I would like to present my arguments against “repatriating” or “returning” documents.

Firstly, and briefly, as I have mentioned, for sixty years the formal calls to return stolen documents have fallen on deaf ears; we must acknowledge that this tactic has failed and as a point of order we need to find alternative routes to ensure that researchers achieve access to these holdings.

Secondly, many of the sources I used were not migrated or stolen, nor were they South African or concerned particularly with South African issues, but they were nonetheless directly relevant to Soga. For example, Soga’s Baptism Certificate and his marriage certificate were held in the Scottish National

Archives because he was baptised in the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Glasgow in May 1847; this document gives Soga's stated date of birth. Correspondence about the translation of the Bible into Xhosa is in the archives of the British and Foreign Bible Society, as is correspondence for hundreds of languages; the archives of Scottish and English mission societies in South Africa were generated under their own auspices as part of their daily functions and routinely sent to the UK head-offices.<sup>5</sup> The repatriation of migrated documents would exclude documents such as these despite their importance to African scholarship; my concern is that once archival holdings have been pared researchers may find we can access merely part of the sources we require. This would stop what I call "lateral surprises" — unpredictable discoveries of unanticipated extant records — which spark new avenues of exploration and insights. It would also stop a second more sinister surprise, which is that of the "shadow" archive identified by Karabinos: "records that we have no knowledge of, and unlike known destroyed records, there is no physical trace of their existence" (2018:5). These are stolen sources which are stealthily hidden from users, and which become apparent through a deep knowledge of sources which enables the detection of a trace, or omission. If researchers are continents and time-zones away from the original files of primary sources, we shall find it very difficult to identify and trace those "shadow archives".

Thirdly, pragmatic logistical decisions need to be considered. Merely choosing decision-makers and methods for identifying documentation as particularly African would take years, let alone taking the actual decisions over what should be sent to Africa, for we should consider that folders featuring African peoples and history are intertwined with documents pertinent beyond Africa to peoples from China, India, the South Pacific, the Americas, the West Indies, and several European countries. Further, each page in each folder of each box must be assessed for each stakeholder, including scholars, nations, governments, religious organisations, business corporations and private researchers. Next, we would have to locate the rightful owner/s of each source to request permission to remove or copy documents, and clarify issues around copyright, negotiating terms upon which the reproductions may themselves be reproduced by, or even shown to, further researchers; these may change from copyright holder to copyright holder and Mnjama and Lowry have noted this work as being extraneous (2018: 109). The logistics would involve commitments over generations, especially given that we do not know the location of all documents, nor volume or content — before any of this work occurs, we would need to audit the entire UK archival holdings for every bit of information, including significant resources for auditing the "shadow archive". Then, researchers would need to study holdings across Europe to achieve a fully representative collection of stolen items, and all over the world for a fully representative collection of pertinent items; the United Kingdom is just one zone with records on Africa. Of the utmost importance is that researchers still require access to the documents and primary sources at stake for the entire



duration of this work and it should not be under embargo or our scholarship will be severely adversely affected.

Fourthly, if documents were moved, rehomed and catalogued, existing scholarship on and of those sources would become untraceable and unverifiable, possibly defunct. This would create an ironic disjuncture – ironic because it defies the stated objective to promote access and transparency. I am wary of any move which in any way exacerbates a lack of access to African archives. Although my archivist interviewees acknowledge that documents are sometimes moved and that cross-referencing is possible in this situation, it is not ideal and certainly would not work for vast swathes of information. Furthermore, Karabinos recounts that when Kenya successfully sued the British government for the release of hidden stolen documents which he termed “shadow archives” (2018:19) it took two years (2018: 7) to move the documents a mere 60 miles from Hanslope Park, outside of London, to the National Archives in Kew, London, during which time, crucially, the documents were all inaccessible. Two years can exceed the research component for doctoral studies. The irony is compounded by the glaring fact that African researchers on African scholarship stand to be affected adversely through interruptions to research on these sources and related scholarship, even as African scholars are progressing with their research.

Neither do I support copying these documents and records, chiefly because of my fears that use of copied documents would adversely impact on the quality and critical reception of scholarship based on them. Questions may arise about the authenticity of a source dislocated from its original context. Reproductions are often infelicitous. How to handle an oddly-sized page so that the paralinguistic meaning in the page-size is legible? A scrap of paper? How to perceive palimpsestic information, or pages that have been written on in strange ways, sideways? Many of the documents I read looked like this — maps were never A3, 4 or 5. Once the documents have been copied, it is virtually impossible to verify perceptions of their contents. I laboured over water stains, inkblots and age spots, which went to the quality and experience of the documents. Researchers would be asking of a copied map: is that a river or a crinkle? How did a mark come to be on a page? Crucially, could researchers or institutions who can afford high-resolution reprographic images access different information than those who pay for low-resolution images? This impacts on the sustainability of the research and its conclusions. We should consider whether scholarship which relies on copied sources would be equally worthy of publication as scholarship based on original sources, and query the further possible impact on career advancement and access of researchers to top academic posts. Furthermore, the question of what would be ‘curated’ and what omitted would always concern the thorough scholar, as would the knowledge that others use the original and are more empowered than ze, she or he, in knowing this history and this culture. The existence of records of British involvement

in torture of Mau Mau peoples further to those in the public domain was officially denied at least twice (Karabinos 2018:7) when in fact “200 feet of boxes” (Karabinos 2018:7) were involved. Mnjama quotes an archivist:

They give you what they want to give you and those that they feel you should not view are kept from you. We purchased practically all our colonial reports from the Commonwealth Office. The records from the National Archives were microfilmed at a price and we have them in our repositories. We know for a fact that they did not give us everything pertaining to our country.  
(Mnjama 2015: 50)

The cost of copying is itself an issue which affects access. Ghana requested archives from the Dutch Royal Archives in 1976 and microfilmed them; and Kenya set up a cultural office at the High Commission in London, with dedicated staff working with Kenyan scholars, to copy archives and repatriate them after initial surveys of Kenyan records in UK archives in 1978 and '79 (Mnjama and Lowry 2018: 106). Botswana microfilmed documents from the UK National Archives in 1980; similarly, Tunisia microfilmed ‘some 2,483 35mm reels’ (Mnjama and Lowry 2018:106) in Paris between 1981-3. These were unsustainably expensive undertakings with the overhanging questions of who should pay for them versus who will pay, as Mnjama and Lowry (2019:110) report, citing Musembi (1982:13). Some people favour digitisation of archival holdings, however I do not, and my reticence is rooted in the persistence of the question of access, mainly because digitised documents are not eye-legible, we need both machines to read them and the power necessary to run them. African/Global South countries have different access to these machines than Europe. Purchasing computers with internet connectivity may also lock African archives into indentured expenditure as machines are expensive to purchase and maintain and the relevant software must be kept up to date, and another aspect of the North-South divide is perpetuated unless African archivists are trained in digital copying themselves. Sometimes the medium might be frustrated by incompatible software and hardware. Even in Europe this is an issue: I recently watched two films digitally copied from Irish archives at a university film studio in London. The first lost its sound and then hung because of incompatible software. The nerves of the audience and the facilitator were palpable as we considered that our intellectual investment was in vain, but luckily the studio had a second type of software which worked. The second film was an infelicitous reproduction of variable quality, which inconsistency impacted adversely on both the meaning which we drew from the film and in turn on our discussion of the content. Furthermore, there is an uneven pace of digitisation across different countries; Sigauke and Nengomasha of the National Archives of Zimbabwe comment, “digitization as a programme for the improvement of access and preservation of historical records lags behind and falls in the shadow of progress being made by regional neigh-

bours [to Zimbabwe]" (2011:6). Laptops are now produced in Europe without CD drives because Northerners prefer to stream data rather than own materials, but broadband is not equally accessible to ordinary people in the African context. Internet storage in digital format is subject to fees; whether the original country or the target country will pay this will need to be decided. And if sites go down then notwithstanding payment for fees, the information is inaccessible. Power-outages may curb digital access; in South Africa access to electric or other kinds of power is not guaranteed as power-outages called 'load-shedding' regularly interrupt my colleagues' work, during which access to digital sources is not possible. And what of a state simply switching off access and thereby censoring the archives? Would archives become even less available in a dystopian framework which insists all have access while only granting partial representation? Again, there are trust issues in the decisions around who will be in charge of how the digitisation is undertaken and whether they would have my own attention to detail and my politics for making sure each and every word of each and every document is truly and clearly represented. Finally, the language of computers may also be a barrier, if the computer gives options in a foreign language with no human interaction and no non-verbal communication, then it would be impossible to work.

Let me assure you that I am not afraid of Herculean tasks; I do not shirk the possibility of hard work. I come back to issues surrounding ensuring that researchers have access to the sources. Whilst answers to these questions are sought, researchers from Africa and the Global South continue to require access to UK and also world holdings of documents relevant to our continued scholarship, with the time and consideration required to make successful interventions and inroads into this scholarship. My aim is to enable and ensure that access, and to consider how an accessible archive might look. Archivists insist proudly that all researchers are treated equally at their institutions within their remit – archivists provide help with research pathways and catalogue navigation for the myriad motivations for research. This is an honourable option but belies distinguishing factors related to two invaluable resources differentiated between local and foreign researchers: time and money. I suggest that an intersectional assessment of different abilities to access documents will allow us to see not only equality but also structural discrimination and inequality, and seek different ways to overcome these in the shorter term.

Firstly, I will consider the resource of time. Researchers require enough time in the country to undertake successful research. However, African researchers are denied access for spurious reasons, so I suggest the creation of a UNESCO-sponsored visa for a year. It should run for eight months minimum, from March to November, over the exam and summer season, omitting the coldest months of the year. This visa should come with a scholarship for subsistence and should be renewable for valid scholarship and research.

To save time registering at each institution to which a scholar needs access, I propose we use a Foreign Scholar Access Pass, so that once one archive has granted a researcher accreditation and access, the researcher can access any institution with holdings relevant to that scholarship. Access itself is not difficult to attain, most archives will admit anyone with photo ID, for which researchers present passports, and proof of address or bespoke form completed by their institution. Applying for a new access card at each institution can shrink a research day to seven or even six out of eight hours: if a researcher uses six institutions, that is a full day of research regained. Accreditation is speedier if institutions provide an online form, wherein researchers complete half the application before presenting corroborating evidence for final sign-off, which would remain useful even if for the issue of one pass card. A Foreign Scholar Access Pass would also obviate refusals such as I experienced at the British Library when I was refused access because by fluke, none of the important documents for my house were in my name. Although my bona fide credentials were evident from my accreditation from both SOAS and Oxford University, following bespoke documentation from my supervisor, the British Library would still not grant me access. I was really aware of my unprotected vulnerability in this situation. Once I had taken temporary admin work, and received a payslip with proof of address, I was permitted entry; there, I had a vital breakthrough. However this opportunity is not open to the majority of foreign researchers.

I would also like to propose that we stretch the current archive research week from 40 to 63 hours, an increase of more than fifty percent. This would truly bolster a foreign researcher's results. Archives could extend their hours to 8pm on weekdays simply by redistributing staff within the library. The archives are the only part of a library in which researchers are truly dependent on a librarian for help but they are the earliest to close, whilst librarians are present for longer in the rest of the library. Simply swapping these staff and extending opening hours by three hours permits 55 hours of work instead of 40, a bonus of two working days in each week. Foreign researchers do not need to get home by 6pm and prefer the productive environment of archival research for an extra three hours. Opening archives on Saturdays, even from 9am to 5pm, would mean a further day of work extra to the current research week, representing a true bonus to the productivity of a foreign scholar on a tight budget.

I also suggest that all archives or libraries produce maps and catalogues of their spaces and holdings in all languages represented in their archive, as for Braille floor-maps shown at the British Library *Writing: Making Your Mark* exhibition. Translations of the maps of the library and catalogues would overcome a language barrier with severe time-wasting implications. This may seem an inordinate expense but once done, and only once, the benefit for any user who speaks a language represented in the archives would be immense: being able to find his or her way around the library without getting terribly

lost several times over, and to read the catalogue in his or her language. This would save each person many hours, including librarians whose time is also taken up with this.

The second resource I would like to consider here is money. It is a huge investment to undertake foreign research. After flights and accommodation, organising sabbaticals or unpaid leave, a person's life savings can be on the line, as indeed were mine. There are a few ways in which we make it cheaper. Firstly, I propose that the international bursaries and training for digitisation and digital archiving currently made available from UNESCO, ICADLA (International Conference on African Digital Libraries and Archives) and ESABNICA (Sigauke and Nengomasha, 2011, p. 12) and ESARBICA (*ibid.*) (Sigauke and Nengomasha, 12) be redeployed for scholarships and top-up funds for archive research, instead of paying for repatriation of the documents. Anyone wishing to use those archives should be eligible for this funding irrespective of whether they have institutional backing, because researchers sometimes undertake studies which are unpopular with their institutions or governments.

Then, the actual archive environment can be modified to enable better value. I propose a toilet and tearoom within the archive itself, attached to or beside the staff kitchen. Cold, hunger and exhaustion are the single-most significant barriers to research once in the UK; having a warm beverage and a quiet place to eat a packed lunch should be easier than leaving your desk and the library with your belongings (your prized laptop, charger, all of which take time to pack up and unpack) to find a canteen, get lost, and found, and wander all about the place. The Glasgow University Student Records Archive (GUSR) offers such a tea room immediately beside the reading room stocked with water, cordial, tea, coffee and hot chocolate, milk and sugar, glasses and mugs: all for free (you are requested to wash your own mug). A vending machine with biscuits and crisps at cost price would save at least fifteen minutes – and a fruit bowl (the GUSR offered chocolate cake on the day I was there). Archivists usually know in advance how many researchers have reserved seats on a day and can plan accordingly. The relative value of pound sterling against other currencies means that academic visitors from South Africa do not purchase proper food, irrespective of their level of seniority. I furthermore propose meals for researchers from Africa with this UNESCO scholarship. A £15 meal is around R300; three such meals per day costs R1000/day, and four days R4000: this is a full month's rent to many researchers. But research is hungry work best done on a full stomach. I would like this for conferences too. I have deliberately given away my meals at conferences to colleagues because they are hungry but paying for conference food with their currencies is prohibitively expensive.

I also propose a subsidy for clothing which would enable researchers in the UK to access the archives. This would include a proper jacket, purchased in the UK; boots, gloves, scarves and hats. We may uselessly purchase these

items in our home countries with no clue of how cold it is going to be. It is virtually impossible to work with frozen toes, or fingers. I also propose subsidised accommodation, which should be as cheap as possible, with facilities for self-catering so that people can prepare cheaper and more nutritious meals. Of course, such structural support is subject to abuse. But I firmly believe that after all the prior research people have done and the lengths to which they have gone to get to the UK to do this research, it seems unlikely. We would put in place mechanisms to track the authenticity of the expenditures. The alternative is that researchers are insular, isolated and research is not good. These documents are all over the world — we should promote access and allow researchers to travel, research and flourish. Promoting access would bring rewards, not the least of which is good scholarship, close networks and links, deep gratitude, and legacy enrichment and maybe even endowments if we ever become rich and famous... endowments — of boxes of tea and shortbread biscuits...

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## Notes

- 1 Davis, Joanne. (2018). *Tiyo Soga: A Literary History* Pretoria: Unisa Press. This book was based on my thesis, completed in 2012: "Tiyo Soga: Man of Four Names" submitted for the Degree of Doctorate of Literature and Philosophy, Department of English Language and Literature, University of South Africa (UNISA), South Africa.
- 2 Eastern and Central African Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives.
- 3 The Eastern and Southern African Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives.
- 4 For example, at the Bodleian Library, I discovered that Dingaan's name was not Dingaan but Ti'Qaan – original sources refer to this Zulu warrior chief as 'Ti'Qaan' with a 'Q' – truly.
- 5 I was reading the Minutes of the Foreign Committee of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Glasgow, and its *Missionary Record*; the British and Foreign Bible Society has archives at the University of Cambridge; the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society and London Missionary Society archives are at SOAS in London, and the British Library held newspapers from nineteenth century South Africa.

# THE ARCHIVIST, THE SCHOLAR AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF DECOLONISING ARCHIVES IN ZIMBABWE<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

*The well-worn routes of colonial history leading to London, Paris, Lisbon, and elsewhere may remain fruitful for historians of the post-colonial period. Since former colonial powers remained involved, or at least interested, in what was going on in their former colonies, intelligence reports and diplomatic materials from the last fifty years may be of value to social scientists of the present. Historians also have turned to records from the United States, the former USSR, and other states with extensive involvement in African politics. The archives of humanitarian groups, non-governmental organizations, newspapers, and other institutions also contain materials produced by African governments. Some intentionally gathered materials, while others accreted them indirectly over the course of their work. (Samuel Fury Childs Daly 2017).*

Although Daly's quotation was focused on the post-independence period in Biafra, the sentiments resonate precisely with circumstances elsewhere in understanding African history through the archives. Decolonisation is a complex term and process as well as an emotive one. Narratives on decolonisation started in the second half of the 20th century referring to efforts by African states to attain independence. The term has evolved to refer to efforts to undo colonial legacies. That way, it has covered broad aspects in former colonies, including the need to decolonise the archival fraternity. The discourses that emerged from these engagements are both sources of pride angst in perspective.

This paper emerged out of two different but related circumstances. Firstly, it has its origins in the repatriation efforts by the Zimbabwean Government through the National Archives of Zimbabwe to bring back expatriated archives from outside Zimbabwe which to this day remain a largely unfinished process. Secondly, in 2015 at the ESARBICA General Conference in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, a co-authored paper was presented which focused on the role of archivist and the scholar in determining historical value of archives. In both instances there remained many unanswered questions regarding the access, value and ownership of expatriated archives.

This paper is inspired by the rich collections of Zimbabwe's documented colonial history, scattered across the globe. How can such a collection be repatriated, accessed, and assessed centrally by the public? Researchers of genealogy



and traditional leadership have on many occasions questioned the truthfulness or impartiality of colonial archives.<sup>3</sup> The archivist is faced with a hard task in administering collections which should speak to the needs of the users. For instance, in 1951, 26 chiefs were downgraded to headmen.<sup>4</sup> Of the 323 chiefs, who had registered their chieftainships in 1914, 89 were abolished, 11 were pensioned off, and 37 lost rank altogether. (Weinrich, 1971) According to Ranger, when the British entered Makoni district in 1890 they found Chingaira holding the paramount chieftainship of Makoni but after the rebellion of 1896, Chingaira was deposed and a loyalist Ndafunya put in place. (Ranger, 1982) Afterwards, the Native Commissioner made sure that the chieftainship remained in Ndafunya's house. These are examples of how questionable colonial archives become whenever they are engaged with a critical mind.

Decolonisation efforts in the universities started as attempts to avoid transplanting university systems and curricula from Europe to Africa. University students and scholars have been the most consistent users of the archives. The ultimate objective of decolonising the university and the archive is to try and develop African-centered epistemologies. Decolonisation in both academic and archival communities attempts to close the gap between the subject (people) and their society. What also remains a common obstacle to the closure of this gap is language. As history aptly recounts, language has been used by those in power as a weapon of oppression against languages, cultures and traditions.<sup>5</sup> Documenting people's culture in a foreign language marks the beginning of the colonial process. The process of documenting people's history becomes somewhat incomplete once a foreign language is used. Diana Jeater's work examines the influence of the state, power and language on knowledge production. She illustrates how colonial administrators or early writers struggled to learn 'native' languages when establishing colonial rule (Jeater, 2001).

The archival fraternity has for a long time now been haunted by the dilemma of how best to facilitate access and bring back archives from Europe. These archival documents have been termed displaced archives, migrated archives, archives in exile, fugitive archival material or missing documents, but the common factor is that they are not where they are supposed to be (Garaba, 2011). Most efforts to address this disparity have been through repatriation efforts and sharing digitised copies. Scholarships have also accorded Zimbabwean academics an opportunity not only to study in Europe but also to engage in research using such material.

### **Distorted memory, gaps and new emotions**

The Southern Rhodesia Report of the Land Commission 1925 which was chaired by Morris Carter observed that:

*From the statement of Mr. A.S Cripps in his pamphlet entitled The Sabi Reserve in which he says, 'I remember that in a conversation with our late Director of Land Settlement, he impressed on me that he was ready to fix up with land a member of any nationality, provided he were a whiteman'. That reservation seems significant and from the fact that no land appears to have been sold to natives by the Chartered Company or by the Government...*

From 1890 to 1923 the British South Africa Company (BSACo) governed Southern Rhodesia as mandated by Royal Charter. Although in 1923, Responsible Government was introduced, it remained a common goal to alienate land from the indigenous people as observed in the Report of the Land Commission. Colonial practices were not institutionalised in government structures only; private players, individuals and companies were complicit.

Cecil John Rhodes` BSACo spearheaded the formal colonisation of Southern Rhodesia as per the recommendations of the Berlin Conference in terms of the doctrine of effective occupation. Soon after official recognition from the imperial capital that Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) was a formal colony of Britain, many multinational companies enjoyed the privileges of business monopoly and siphoning out raw materials.

The United Nations observed in 2002 that Western mining companies dealing in rare metals, gems and other resources have been deeply involved in the large-scale and systematic robbery of the Democratic Republic of Congo's mineral wealth.<sup>6</sup> This has been the general perception of multinational companies (MNCs) in Africa. They have played a big role in shaping the economic disparities between the global north and the south. There are theories that subscribe to the role of MNCs in the context of colonisation as agents of economic exploitation. They do not only exploit resources but communities as well. There is so much people`s history to the activities of these companies. The directors of these companies remained strongly connected to London. What is pertinent to this paper is that reports and finances remained controlled in London. Documentation of such activities remains to this day in Europe. The interaction of MNCs with locals and their economic activities as documented are of paramount significance in understanding colonialism not only in Zimbabwe but many other African countries. As I have explained elsewhere, the documentation process has always been a political process that often leads to deliberate emphasis and omissions of some historical facts (Muchefa, 2012).

Luna in 2014 described the archives of Spanish repression as *Archives of terror and mourning* (Luna, 2014). The common standard is records generated in circumstances related to human rights violations bring about emotions or reparation issues. Many countries previously oppressed have taken the route of reparation for transitional justice. Reparations often form part of the corrective recommendations made by commissions (most notable in South Africa, Mexico, Canada, New Zealand and Australia) (Robinson-Sweet, 2018). The

International Center for Transitional Justice defines reparations as “measures to satisfy victims, such as revealing the truth, holding perpetrators accountable, and ceasing ongoing violations . . . ” in cases of massive, systemic rights violations. Archival materials are crucial in providing objective evidence. Archives are used in a search for revenge.

Zimbabwe’s oldest archival records generated within the country date back to 1890. There are other older records that were acquired from outside Zimbabwe, such as Portuguese documents dating back to the 15th century. Archival institutions can produce decolonised collections that emanate from improved scholarly works, new primary documents through programmes such as Oral Histories, documentation of Indigenous Knowledge Systems as well as collaborative works with other international bodies.

Archives that were produced to serve colonial purposes have naturally attracted justified criticism. Elisabeth Kaplan once stated that “We are what we collect” (Kaplan, 2000). All records are created by individuals and organisations to support their values and missions. To keep interpreting archives with the same perceptions as the creator or the purpose for which they were created is largely problematic. The processes under which those archives were generated were obviously not politically or culturally neutral. This paper will give some brief highlights on the circumstances under which archives were generated and why it is important to have new approaches. Namhila (2016) in a Namibian case study on the use of colonial archives gave a broad and deep analysis of the challenges emanating from information gaps in inherited archival institutions across Africa. That article provided a fine analysis of the use and accessibility of personal records. In Namibia all personal records of non-whites (under colonial and apartheid rules) are not easily accessible. The result is that many local people have rights affected and lose cases that require archival evidential information. The National Archives of Namibia, like many other African archival institutions failed to address requests by local people because the collection was shaped to address minority interests (colonisers). Marriage registers, census reports and returns, records of service, title deeds and genealogical records remained largely the preserve of the white minority. Requests from the white community are usually successful without much hustle, the case is different for non-whites.

Conflicts between settlers and Africans took many forms. Of particular interest to this paper is the spiritual one. The Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1899 (amended 1957 and repealed in 2006) in Southern Rhodesia gave the colonisers powers, through the British South African Police (BSAP) to suppress African culture by confiscating all objects from Africans associated with sorcery/witchcraft or supernatural powers. The law largely criminalised African tradition which was the backbone of resistance to colonialism as well as a health delivery system. This Act together with the work of missionaries is

largely responsible for derogatory views of African spirituality. Similar perceptions and condemnation are perpetuated by researchers whose only primary sources for research on African culture are colonial archives. Should the archivist remain a spectator of skewed historical and anthropological research work? As pointed out by Freeman (1984) archivists must understand what users of archives make use of, the information they assemble.

Archives and libraries are public institutions subjected to government policies. The archivist's job has been viewed as one centred around the selection of what to remember and what to forget. Is there anything like collective memory? How can people access a common past by reading through the archives? People in their distinct groups choose what to remember and celebrate. It is noted by Mnjama and Lowry that as many African states progressed towards independence (mostly British colonies) the Colonial Secretary advised all colonies to remove essential records for purposes of preservation away from imminent administrative change. Some records were destroyed others stealthily expatriated. The result was a significant gap in the records that remained in African archives as well as crucial material being placed in the manuscript collections of Africana in Rhodes House Library, Oxford. African scholars have often been referred to these libraries/archives for research on the African past. Why should research in Africa about Africa be incomplete without visiting the Rhodes House Library, Kew Gardens Library, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London Library, the British Library, Commonwealth Secretariat: Library & Archives, among many other European institutes? It is imperative that migrated archives should be brought back to Africa.

The reasons for removal of these records from Africa are varied but of particular interest is what Director of Botswana National Archives said, "the colonial powers took away some records because they were too sensitive and might cause unrest if left in Africa".<sup>7</sup> The removal occasioned major gaps in archival holdings thereby denying African scholars access to critical information. Vilks says, "We know how many times in the history of civilization documents explaining long gone events are found or rediscovered, making us look at these events from another point of view" (Vilks, 2014). This documentary heritage is of great importance to people's past and future; researchers have always been desperate to find new facts. Every time new details emerge, academic and political minds have an opportunity to reinvigorate agendas.

The #Rhodesmustfall in South Africa which started at University of Cape Town is one such battle for memory space. To the protesters, the pulling down of Rhodes' statue was erasing imperial nostalgia. Beyond pulling down the statue, university curricula need to be decolonised. Iconography has been one major battlefield in the politics of decolonisation ranging from change of street names, removal of statues, naming of key public places etc. The Birch Bark letters are an example of the emotive power associated with discovered records.

The Birch Bark letters of Siberia were written by prisoners from their cells, and also from forced labour camps or settlements. They were sent to relatives between 1941 and 1956 by people who had been deported from Latvia and Lithuania for having anti-Soviet views. When these letters reached museums no one could hide emotion on reading these letters which were also supplemented with drawings and poems. These letters were inscribed to the Memory of the World Register. In such cases museums/archives/libraries become institutions that house emotionally charged collections. Such discoveries may boost the identity of a community or fuel anger as communities seek redressing of past wrongs.

The Timbuktu manuscripts are also an interesting case study. The historical pride of Timbuktu was restored upon its rediscovery as a spiritual, intellectual and commercial centre. The Timbuktu manuscripts helped dismiss the infamous Trevor Roper's sentiments that Africa had no history to talk about before the coming of Europeans. According to Abdoulahi, Timbuktu was an intellectual and religious metropolis as well as a commercial centre attracting scholars and merchants (Abdoulahi, 2014). To this day, the Timbuktu Manuscripts are a source of African pride beyond Mali, Morocco and Ghana.

The Mau Mau archives are another example. Professor Elkins states:

There is no record of how many people died as a result of torture, hard labour, sexual abuse, malnutrition, and starvation. We can make an informed evaluation of the official statistic of eleven thousand Mau Mau killed by reviewing the historical evidence we know...The impact of the detention camps and villages goes well beyond statistics. Hundreds of thousands of men and women have quietly lived with the damage — physical, psychological, and economic — that was inflicted upon them during the Mau Mau war (Elkins, 2005).

### **Possibilities of a decolonised archive?**

According to a famous quotation from the Chinese Lu Xun "Lies written in ink cannot disguise facts written in blood". The discovery that the collections gap really exists has led archival institutions into pro-active programmes aimed at closing up information gaps or correcting distorted memories. This part of the article discusses these efforts. Repatriation efforts have been made since the 1990s in Southern Africa. Exiled records remain part of a people's heritage. These records are also coupled with human remains and artifacts in museums. The formal request to Natural History Museum Director, Sir Michael Dixon for the return of the Gibraltar Neanderthal remains stated:

It has been our desire for some time, and we feel that the moment is now the right one, that these human remains should return. You will agree,

I am sure, that it is entirely appropriate for these human remains return [sic] to their place of origin where they will be treated with the care and respect which they deserve.<sup>8</sup>

The return of exiled historical archives and artifacts provides completeness in the sovereignty of national heritage.

The return of the Smith Papers is one post-independence success story for NAZ. On former Prime Minister I.D Smith's instruction, some cabinet papers were exiled to Rhodes University, in South Africa and embargoed until 2009 when the Vice Chancellor opened them for public scrutiny. The matter was kept as a closely guarded university secret until 1995 when a public statement was made confirming that the 'Smith Papers', were indeed in the custody of Rhodes University. Unfortunately no efforts were immediately made to repatriate them because the political environment in South Africa was not conducive for such negotiations. Is repatriation synonymous with decolonisation of archives? Without these pieces of evidence our historical and cultural identity would be incomplete. NAZ is still in negotiations to repatriate exiled documents in the UK. Most pertinent are records looted by Rhodesian Officers at Independence that were in the custody of the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum in Bristol. Their future remains uncertain. Security documents in the UK remain an outstanding issue. It is obvious that the process may not be easy due to the nature of the records. It is understood that these records are now in private hands, which makes the bilateral talks between governments a complicated process.

One limitation to repatriation is that it tends to focus on state entities and excludes private players. There are many other records that are in private hands such as MNCs and churches that enjoy some level of autonomy from state interference. Can we say repatriation is complete without those records in MNCs and private estates being brought back?

Jump (2012; 150) as quoted by (Bishi , 2015) states that,

Archives contribute to a group or nation's ability to revisit, understand and attribute meaning to the past, thereby constructing collective memory. Furthermore, archive repositories can be considered 'sites of memory' places that gain significance and as locations where remembering takes place.

Oral History projects started as isolated programmes to capture identified aspects of the white community. The idea was to augment existing records with Oral History collections on under-documented and undocumented aspects of historic importance. It is easy to interpret thinness of information as a conspiracy of effacement. The Oral History programmes started in the 1970s

at NAZ with projects that were important and influential to white Rhodesians. Collections on African aspects started effectively in 1987.

After Zimbabwe's attainment of independence in 1980, a significant portion of the white community emigrated. One initiative was then to follow up some of these personnel who were either key political figures or had held prominent administrative posts in government. Some of the interviews were done in South Africa and others in the UK. The projects sought out 'white voices' that had left the country and hence did not make any significant contribution to adding African voices to the collection.

1987 was a turning point as NAZ established an Oral History Unit which then became dedicated to identifying aspects that required documentation. Flagship aspects identified included War Memories (Liberation War Narratives), Intangible Cultural Heritage and Minority History. Oral History has become a critical component of archival institutions. *Capturing a Fading National Memory* was one major post-independent initiative. This was a Government sponsored initiative carried out by NAZ, National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) and the History Department of the University of Zimbabwe to identify, document and preserve reminiscences on the 1st and 2nd Chimurenga. 124 hours of testimonies were collected.

The government of Zimbabwe through the NMMZ and NAZ has spearheaded memorialisation processes targeting liberation war heritage. Mass graves and battle sites have been a priority. The processes of memorialisation involve documentation and promoting accessibility. Bishi points out that most post-colonial governments were caught up in the dilemma of wanting to preserve 'national memory' although the memory was shaped by colonial knowledge production politics (Bishi, G., 2015, p. 67).

The most recent project is the Kamungoma site in Gutu where 104 civilians and one freedom fighter were massacred by the Rhodesian Forces. NAZ, also collaborated with NMMZ, Mafela Trust and ZIPRA Trust in documenting the second Chimurenga in Matebeleland. Another collaboration was with ZDF and individuals documenting the history of veterans of the struggle and struggle sites like Khami, Sikombela and Gonakudzingwa. These initiatives are meant to address memory imbalances and distortions. There are many other monuments that are post-independent initiatives to preserve liberation war memories.

Objectivity is always an issue with the need to relate oral and archival records. Oral History does not automatically solve the problem of pro-western epistemologies. There are Africans who are 'more white than whites'. In advancing this argument Muchefi and Bishi state that colonial court records tended to

be silent on the clashes of civilisation or cultural conflicts (Muchefta and Bishi, 2015).

## Digitisation

Digitisation has been perceived as a panacea to access. Many libraries and archival institutions have embarked on digitisation of selected collections in order to enhance access. It is generally assumed digitisation should allow institutions to share information without physically transferring archives. In the context of decolonisation, digitisation will help address the issue of sharing exiled records without the host institution losing the collection.

Digitisation requires a cultural shift within the organisation. The data revolution requires a paradigm shift in information management systems in order to transform the processes from data creation to end use. Many archival institutions have invented new job titles such as automation archivist, digital archivist, data curator, database administrator and systems administrator. Digitisation has accelerated competition amongst institutions.

Digitisation by its nature requires serious financial commitment; as a result many African archival institutions have extended the begging bowl to the First World. Problems that have emerged out of these professional synergies are a result of the absence of political trust. Many African archival institutions do not entrust their digital copies to European partners. Initiatives from Europe have shown that most funds towards digitisation are directed towards genealogical records, a clear indication of their interest in family histories in Africa.

International Council on Archives (ICA) has applauded the Archives Portal Europe (APEX) which provides a central platform for publication of and research in archival material based on standardisation and tools and also on professional exchange of knowledge and experience. APEX is currently active in more than 30 countries. National Archives of Zimbabwe like many other African archival institutions succeeded in publishing an Annual National Bibliography (up to 1998) but such a system/platform is yet to be synchronised and linked to other countries. The platform remains national and isolated to this day. In Zimbabwe, further steps have been taken to allow researchers to understand archival material that is in the UK and that which was published in exile during the liberation war (*Guide to Archival Material in the UK* and *Materials Published in Exile 1965-1979* respectively).

Many archival institutions in Africa lack digital platforms that give access to content. This is mostly due to technological challenges such as poor internet connectivity, challenges of security, copyright and admissibility of electronic records. Many African countries still do not have national digital repositories which is the way to go according to global trends. The idea of big data or Open



Data and advantages in sharing and connecting with users/stakeholders is still to be implemented in Africa systematically and in sustainable manner.

In November 2011 President Obama issued a memorandum to all Executive Agencies entitled 'Managing Government Records' calling for the US government to update all records management policies in line with 21st century technologies. A 2019 deadline was given by the National Archivist David Ferriero to ensure that all federal agencies would be depositing all records in digital or electronic form to the archives. This 2019 Digital Mandate ensured a series of technological innovations. These are lessons for Africa in terms of commitment and drive to see policy framework updated.

Having discussed all these presumed benefits, it is necessary to outline some foreseen challenges or unanswered questions. To what extent can organisations or nations entrust electronic records to private cloud service providers? What are the consequences for control and possible abuse of these records? Cloud computing! Whose clouds and whose computers?

European archival institutions also have limited access to collections in Africa. While digitisation may make the text itself accessible, it can elide its context. Moreover, since many African archives have become financially dependent on the researchers who visit them on site, digitisation can threaten their institutional survival. What appears as intellectual gate-keeping or technological obsolescence is often what keeps the lights on.

Digitisation has not done much in addressing decolonisation. It has not yet been harnessed to assist in relocating information resources from Europe to Africa. Digitisation initiatives are moving from global north to south and hence may not be used to redress colonial imbalances.

Despite the promises of the digital humanities, archival research in Africa continues to be a highly personalised and 'analog' process. Social scientists and those who study contemporary African history seldom have the luxury of working in a formal archive, state or otherwise due to access regimes in African repositories.

### **NAZ Publications**

The archivist has a duty to publish in order to speak to the research community. *Zimbabwean Political Materials Published in Exile 1959-1980* (Johnstone, 1987) was one major product of research done at NAZ. Materials listed in this bibliography consist of pamphlets, leaflets, serials, posters and other items published in exile during the Second War of Liberation. Also included are materials by individuals and solidarity organisations in support of the Zimbabwean cause. This was the first initiative to build a Chimurenga Archive.

There are many other publications that represent initiatives to communicate historical facts that are discovered in the archiving endeavors.

### **Funded scholarship and agenda setting**

Funded scholarship has persuaded many scholars into pursuing supported research interests. Research in Africa has largely been considered to be expensive because of access and infrastructure challenges at research institutions. Decolonisation has been perceived as a luxury. It is tempting to conclude that as long as African universities and archival institutions are incapable of funding such research areas, decolonisation remains a dream. Research in Africa has largely been affected by the following:

- Slow internet connectivity
- Analog formats
- Access restrictions
- Security concerns
- Poor/no funding

### **Private archives**

Private archives emerge as both competitors and complementary repositories for past heritage. Of particular interest are archives held by Liberation Movements/Parties such as Zimbabwe African National Unity (ZANU) Patriotic Front. Many such Liberation Movements in Southern Africa have opened up or collaborated with state universities in a bid to allow research and scrutiny.

### **Conclusion**

This article is a call for collaboration in decolonising archives management and use. Scholars have several platforms for robust engagements in discussing the meaning of decoloniality; the archivist is a duty bound, (mostly) government worker who is restrained. Can racism, reparation issues and other emotive issues that emerge from the use of archives be resolved if there are no platforms for neutral engagement? How can research work be constructive and developmental when access to primary sources is determined by racial privileges and vulnerability to political manipulation?

Can empiricist research be carried out when colonial archives are a product of unbalanced representation, scattered in diverse repositories and often not meant for research purposes. Records of service for ex-World War soldiers and of inter-racial marriages remain hard to find.

Individual attempts by historians and others to preserve the documents they find help to fill this gap, but the problem is larger than any one individual can

address. Despite their concealments and silences, most European records on the colonial period have been accessible to historians. The release of thousands of British documents from the period of decolonisation, including files describing the suppression of Mau Mau in Kenya, has confirmed the suspicion that what appears in finding aids and catalogues does not represent the true sum of the British Empire's archive. Research is always driven by curiosity hence concealments, questions and dilemmas about archives and libraries remain pertinent. It is essential to highlight that decolonisation remains largely relative and not static. The evolution of decolonisation as a discourse always unravels new epistemologies.

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## Notes

- 1 The paper that was presented at SCOLMA 2019 General Conference, Edinburgh was originally titled, '*The archivist and the scholar: re-interpretation and re-location of colonial archives*'.
- 2 Chieftainship issues have made many people visit the archives to establish their family history and family tree diagrams. Instances of individuals who were appointed to traditional leadership positions simply because they were loyal (now regarded as sell-outs) are abounding.
- 3 National Archives of Zimbabwe file ref. S3700/74 Recognition of tribal leaders 1951.
- 4 Sarabia, H. 2003, Language as an ideological weapon of oppression. Paper written for CCS 160: Introduction to Chicana/o Speech in American Society. Retrieved from [http://adelasu.tripod.com/papers/Bilingualism\\_pages.pdf](http://adelasu.tripod.com/papers/Bilingualism_pages.pdf)
- 5 <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2002/10/cong-o26.html>, visited 05/06/2019
- 6 Ramokate, K. Botswana Recovers Migrated Archives, quoted by Mnjama and Lowry, A Proposal for Action on African Archives in Europe, 2015
- 7 The Guardian 18 February 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/feb/18/uk-museum-face-pressure-to-repatriate-foreign-items> visited 30/09/19

# INDIGENOUS PUBLISHING IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: A CHRONOLOGY AND SOME LANDMARKS

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This chronological timeline sets out some of the key dates, events, and landmarks in the development of indigenous publishing in Sub-Saharan Africa. It also includes details of the major conferences, meetings or seminars on African publishing, held in Africa or at venues elsewhere, since 1968. An earlier version of this chronology first appeared in *The African Publishing Companion: A Resource Guide*<sup>1</sup>, and has now been updated through to the period up to 2019, and considerably expanded to include publication of a number of benchmark studies, conference proceedings, journals, and reference resources on the African book world.

## A note about the historical background<sup>2</sup>

Whereas Africa's association with printing and literature goes back many centuries – indeed, many African countries have a long and prolific artistic and literary history – the beginning of publishing probably started with the advent of Islam in the seventeenth century. Although literacy was restricted to a small minority, there was no real book trade in any sense, and the only libraries that existed were private collections. Later, in the early nineteenth century, it was largely through the influence and activities of the Christian missions that the book made its first real impact in Africa. The missionaries were also the first publishers in the modern sense, bringing with them printing presses that thereafter began to operate in many parts of Africa. In Nigeria, for example, the first mission printing presses were established as early as the mid-eighteenth century. From the nineteenth century to the Second World War there were mission presses in most of the (then) colonial territories in Africa, as well as printers and a small number of private commercial firms. This was followed, in the 1930s, by the establishment of Vernacular Literature Bureaux in several colonial territories, first in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Northern Nigeria, and later in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), and parts of East Africa. However, these literature bureaux – largely producing material in various African languages – were not run as commercial enterprises, but as government departments.

Publishing for schools and other educational institutions in the first half of the twentieth century was the domain of British and French publishing houses. Independence in many African countries subsequently created an education explosion: educational publishing for Africa became big business, with governments (through state-owned publishing houses) and foreign firms scrambling for a share of this lucrative market, and the few British publishers that

served these markets enjoyed rapidly rising sales and high profit margins. This was followed by the opening of branch offices in various African countries by a number of British firms. Oxford University Press and Longman were the first to open branches in the early 1950s, and other companies, such as Heinemann and Macmillan, gradually followed suit. The multinationals completely dominated the African publishing scene throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, and it was not until the late 1960s that the first genuinely autonomous, private sector publishing companies started to emerge on any significant scale.

### **The current picture**

Although some major challenges remain, the indigenous African book industries have made very significant advances over the past three decades or more, and there have been a good number of encouraging developments. Competing against the multinationals, or the major publishing conglomerates, will always be hugely difficult for independent publishers anywhere. Nonetheless, it is probably true to say that some of the larger indigenous publishers in Africa have now gained a much stronger foothold in recent years and have edged out the multinationals, in some countries at least, such as Kenya and Nigeria for instance.

Other positive developments include, for example, the strong presence of African books in the international market place through the activities of African Books Collective Ltd, and the emergence of a substantial number of innovative new African imprints — a whole new generation of enterprising publishers with a mission of transforming the African literary and publishing scene, who have demonstrated a great deal of creativity and agility.

On the downside, tangible government support for the book and libraries in Africa is still largely absent. In fact, it could be argued that the situation has actually gone from bad to worse, with an increasing number of African governments now heavily taxing books – and in turn knowledge – through debilitating VAT tariffs. At numerous past conferences (including those listed in this chronology) there have been repeated calls on African governments to provide positive assistance for their book industries, as well as urging them to establish national book policies, offer active support for their public and national libraries, and create an environment conducive to writing, reading, and publishing. Unfortunately, such support is still largely absent, or remains mere rhetoric.

An interesting recent development is that over the past three years there have been no less than six high-level seminars, meetings or workshops on the state of publishing in Africa, hosted by organizations such as the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the International Publishers Association (IPA), the Association for the Development of African Education (ADEA), the Global Book Alliance (GBA), and USAID. However, it is too early to evaluate

the impact of these meetings, and whether these organizations' action plans will lead to genuine progress and further growth of the African book industries in the years ahead.

## Acknowledgements

For comments and suggestions on an early draft version of this chronology I am indebted to Raphaël Thierry.

## Chronology

### *Pre-1940*

1922/ **The Morija Sesuto Book Depot** of the Lesotho (formerly Basutoland)  
1931 Evangelical Church founded in 1922, followed in 1931 by the establishment of the **Mazenod Printing Works** of the Catholic Church, both of which are still in existence today. They published primarily in African languages – mostly in the Sesotho language – for use in schools and in the Church, but also creative writing. Lesotho's most celebrated writer, Thomas Mofolo (1876-1948, <http://www.kwela.com/Authors/8552>) was employed at the Sesuto Book Depot for more than a decade as a manuscript reader, proofreader, and secretary, and also published some of his writing with them. His most well-known work is *Chaka* (1925), a much-acclaimed historical novel, a mythic retelling of the story of the rise and fall of the Zulu emperor-king Shaka, which was subsequently also published in English and in several other languages. According to WorldCat, 123 editions were published between 1900 and 2017, in 9 languages.

See also:

*1861-2011: 150 Years Morija Printing Works of the Lesotho Evangelical Church: A Short Historical Review*. Morija, Lesotho: Morija Printing Works, 2011.

### *1940-1959*

1946 **South African Publishers Association (SAPA)** founded, later renamed Publishers Association of South Africa (PASA)  
<http://www.publishsa.co.za/>.

1947 **East African Literature Bureau** founded in Nairobi, with branches in Uganda and Tanzania. Later, following the dissolution of the East African Community, it became the Kenya Literature Bureau, still in existence today, as a leading educational publisher as well as providing printing services, see  
<http://www.kenyaliteraturebureau.com/>.



- 1951 **Ibadan University Press** established, the first African university press outside South Africa  
<http://www.ui.edu.ng/content/ibadan-university-press>.
- 1957 **Mambo Press**, in Gweru, Zimbabwe, founded, which originally started as the Catholic Mission Press. It provided an alternative outlet for local writers and developed a major programme of socially-committed literature. It is still active today, see  
[http://pazimba.com/index.php?id\\_supplier=8&controller=supplier](http://pazimba.com/index.php?id_supplier=8&controller=supplier).
- 1958 **Onibonoje Press & Book Industries** established in Ibadan, Nigeria, probably the first indigenously owned, private sector African publishing house of some size. The company is still active today, see  
<http://www.goonibonoje.com/>.

### 1960-1980

- 1961 **Mbari Publications**, Ibadan, Nigeria, a pioneering small publishing company established by a group of writers, artists and art lovers, also known as Mbari Mbayo Publications, Oshogbo. Earlier, in 1957, Mbari launched the famous *Black Orpheus* literary and cultural magazine, published in association with Longman Nigeria Ltd.
- 1963 **Editions CLE**, Yaoundé, Cameroun, established with Dutch and German church support, to become the first full-scale indigenous publishing house in francophone Africa <http://www.editionsacle.info/>.
- 1965 **East African Publishing House** in Nairobi founded. Although originally set up with the assistance of the British publisher André Deutsch, this can probably be considered the first major indigenous publisher in East Africa. EAPH quickly built up a very substantial list, and this included the work of what later became very well known East African writers such as Okot p'Bitek. Sadly, the company went into receivership in 1988.

**Nigerian Publisher's Association** formed. This was one of the first national book trade associations in Africa; others followed in the 1970s, e.g. in Kenya in 1971, and Ghana in 1975. The Nigerian Publishers Association is still very much active today <http://nigerianpublishers.com/>, provides a forum for the Nigerian book professions, holds an annual conference, and regularly organizes a range of training programmes.

- 1966 New African indigenous companies set up in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Zambia.

- 1968 **UNESCO Regional Meeting for Book Development** held in Accra, Ghana, in February 1968. The report of the meeting, *Book Development in Africa. Problems and Perspectives*, was published by UNESCO in 1969. The scanned version of this document can be found here: [https://unesdoc.unesco.org/in/rest/annotationSVC/DownloadWatermarkedAttachment/attach\\_import\\_6c977fc4-f0fa-45dc-be4b-ef40cd-8179fc?\\_=059548engo.pdf](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/in/rest/annotationSVC/DownloadWatermarkedAttachment/attach_import_6c977fc4-f0fa-45dc-be4b-ef40cd-8179fc?_=059548engo.pdf)
- 1968-1971 Further autonomous African publishing houses founded in various African countries, notably in Ghana and in Nigeria.
- 1970 The first edition of *Nigerian Books in Print* published by the National Library in Nigeria, the first national books-in-print listing in Sub-Saharan Africa. A second edition was published in 1971, but the next edition did not follow until 25 years later, in 1996, published by the Nigerian Publishers Association.
- 1972 **Les Nouvelles Editions Africaines**, Dakar, Senegal, formed, with branches in Abidjan and Lomé, as a joint undertaking by the governments of Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo, together with French publishing interests. In 1991 NEA-Dakar split with their former branches, with each going their own separate ways.
- 1973 **International Conference on Publishing and Book Development in Africa**, held at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), Ile-Ife, Nigeria, 16-20 December, 1973, attended by over 100 participants from all over Africa, North America, and Europe, including publishers, booksellers, librarians, and writers, with Chinua Achebe presenting one of the keynote addresses.

*Publishing in Africa in the Seventies*, the Ife conference proceedings, edited by Edwina Oluwasanmi et al, subsequently published by the University of Ife Press.

Extract:

Conference participants concluded "*there is no doubt that a lively and flourishing publishing industry is vital for the development of the reading habit, to foster and preserve a country's culture, and to produce inexpensive books which meet local needs.*"

**The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA)**, <https://www.codesria.org/spip.php>? headquartered in Dakar, Senegal, is established as an independent pan-African research organization primarily focusing on social sciences research in Africa, to

act as a non-governmental centre of social knowledge production on the continent, and to promote the publication and dissemination of research results undertaken by African scholars. Over the past four decades CODESRIA has established itself as the leading scholarly publisher in the social sciences on the African continent, with a very substantial list consisting of books, monographs, policy papers, conference reports, as well as 12 journals, which includes the twice yearly *Africa Review of Books* <https://www.codesria.org/spip.php?rubrique59&lang=en>, published in both English and French editions.

- 1975 First edition of *African Books in Print/Livres Africains Disponibles* (ABIP) published by Mansell Information/Publishing Ltd, London. Five further editions (vol. 1: Author and title index, vol. 2: Subject index) were subsequently published in UK/US co-editions between 1978 and 2000, and a 6th edition was published by K.G. Saur/de Gruyter in Munich in 2006. An e-book version of the 6th edition was published by de Gruyter in 2011 <https://www.degruyter.com/viewbooktoc/product/27156?rskey=aZ65Fi&result=1>, but no further editions have been published to date. The 6th edition provided full bibliographic details of 31,684 titles in print, from 893 publishers and research institutions with publishing programmes, in 45 African countries, published until the beginning of 2006.

First issue of the quarterly *African Book Publishing Record* (ABPR), edited by Hans Zell and published by Hans Zell Publishers in Oxford. ABPR, is now edited by Cécile Lomer and published by de Gruyter in Germany <https://www.degruyter.com/view/j/abpr>. It is currently in its 45th year of publication.

Establishment of the UNESCO co-sponsored **Centre Régional de Promotion du Livre en Afrique/Regional Book Promotion Centre for Africa (CREPLA)**, in Yaoundé, Cameroun. For a period of time this organization was active in various areas of book and reading promotion, organized training, seminars, and workshops for the book professions, and also published an informative *CREPLA Bulletin of Information* containing news, reports, and articles on publishing in Africa. However, CREPLA has been dormant for close to three decades now, and it looks unlikely that it will be revived in the future.

- 1976 The first **Ife Book Fair** held at the campus of the University of Ife in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, in March 1976, organized by the University of Ife Bookshop.

1977 First edition of *The African Book World & Press: A Directory/Répertoire du Livre et de la Presse en Afrique* edited and published by Hans Zell Publishers in Oxford, in association with co-publishers in the US, Germany and France. Two further editions were published in 1980 and 1983, and a 4th fully revised and updated edition was published in 1989. No further editions have appeared.

The **Ghana Book Development Council** <https://www.gbdc.gov.gh> founded in Accra; this was the first national book development council to be established in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is still active today.

1979 Inaugural meeting of the **Noma Award for Publishing in Africa** Council of Management, held at Ile-Ife, Nigeria, in March 1979, under the chairmanship of Professor Eldred Jones, the distinguished Sierra Leonean scholar.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noma\\_Award\\_for\\_Publishing\\_in\\_Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noma_Award_for_Publishing_in_Africa)  
The Noma Award, which ended in 2009, was significant because the principal aim of the award was the encouragement of publication in Africa of works by African writers and scholars. The Noma Award thus built a unique relationship with African books and has drawn attention to the scope and vitality of African publishing and the intellectual vigour and enterprise of African publishers, often in the midst of adversity. For a period of 30 years exposure was given to a wide spectrum of African writing and scholarship, which has provided visibility for a great variety of indigenous African publishing output. See also "A Sixteen-year Japanese Contribution to African Publishing" [https://www.academia.edu/1462168/A\\_Sixteen-year\\_Japanese\\_Contribution\\_to\\_African\\_Publishing](https://www.academia.edu/1462168/A_Sixteen-year_Japanese_Contribution_to_African_Publishing).

1980 Focus on Africa and African publishing at the **1980 Frankfurt International Book Fair**, under the theme 'Africa Asserts Its Identity'. See this AUFS report about the event by Barbara Harrell-Bond: <http://www.icwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/BHB-16.pdf>

Presentation at the 1980 Frankfurt Book Fair of the first **Noma Award for Publishing in Africa** to the Senegalese women writer Mariama Bâ, for her novel *Une si longue lettre*, published by Nouvelles Editions Africaines, Dakar, subsequently translated into 17 different languages. Published in English as *So Long a Letter*  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/So\\_Long\\_a\\_Letter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/So_Long_a_Letter).

## 1981-1990

1981 **UNESCO Meeting of Experts on National Book Strategies in Africa/Réunion régionale d'experts sur les stratégies nationales du livre**

**en Afrique**, Dakar, Senegal, February 1981. A scanned version of the report can be found here:

[https://unesdoc.unesco.org/in/rest/annotationSVC/DownloadWatermarkedAttachment/attach\\_import\\_d7436d29-9440-4aa3-a34d-84742588451b?\\_=047510freb.pdf](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/in/rest/annotationSVC/DownloadWatermarkedAttachment/attach_import_d7436d29-9440-4aa3-a34d-84742588451b?_=047510freb.pdf)

First issue of the pioneering book trade magazine *Pan African Book World* released by Fourth Dimension Publishing Company in Enugu, Nigeria. Three further issues were subsequently issued, but unfortunately the publication ceased soon thereafter. (WorldCat reports holdings of back issues by 10 US libraries.)

1982 First **Bookweek Africa** held at the Africa Centre in central London in June 1982, accompanied by a major exhibition of African-published books entitled 'Printed & Published in Africa', formally opened by (then) UNESCO Director-General Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow.

1983 First **Zimbabwe International Book Fair** <http://www.zibfa.org.zw/> held in Harare in August 1983. The above 'Printed & Published in Africa' exhibit was shipped to Harare to form the centrepiece display at the Fair, in addition to stands by close to 50 local and international publishers. For many years the Zimbabwe International Book Fair, with their supporting 'Indaba' events, was widely recognized to be Africa's premier book trade gathering, but sadly it is currently (2019) a shadow of its former self.

For a short history of the Fair (published in 2010) see

<https://www.sardc.net/en/uncategorized/zimbabwe-international-book-fair-27-years-as-iconic-african-book-fair/>.

For an account of the 1994 Fair, by its (then) Director, Trish Mbanga, see this article in *Information Development*:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/026666699401000105>

For a report about ZIBF 2000 see

<http://www.bellagiopublishingnetwork.com/newsletter26-27/aman-or-wilks.htm>.

1984 **Seminar on the Development of Autonomous African Publishing Capacity**, organized by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, held in Arusha, Tanzania, in April 1984. A report can be found at this link:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294867708\\_African\\_writers-publishers\\_seminar\\_A\\_report](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294867708_African_writers-publishers_seminar_A_report)

Now commonly known as 'Arusha I', three more meetings, 'Arusha II' in 1996, 'Arusha III' in 1998, and 'Arusha IV' in 2002. Papers presented at Arusha II can be found in this issue of the DHF's journal *Development Dialogue*

[http://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/1997/08/DD1997\\_1-2.pdf](http://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/1997/08/DD1997_1-2.pdf)

The main objective of the third seminar was to respond to a call for a 'New Deal' between writers and publishers in Africa in their struggle to strengthen African literature and culture, and the full text of the 'New Deal' statement was issued by participants at the seminar (see also Arusha III 1998, below).

Finally, Arusha IV, in 2002 (see also below), organised by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (DHF) and African Books Collective (ABC), in collaboration with the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), turned to the theme of 'Strengthening Scholarly Publishing in Africa'. That Seminar informed the planning and subsequent publication of a collection of papers *African Scholarly Publishing: Essays*, edited by Alois Mlambo, published by ABC in association with DHF. It offers perspectives from practising scholars and publishers, which are intended as a resource for scholarly writers and publishers in Africa. The full text of the entire book is now freely accessible at

[http://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/African\\_scholarly\\_publishing\\_essays.pdf](http://www.daghammarskjold.se/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/African_scholarly_publishing_essays.pdf).

*The Book Trade of the World. Volume 4: Africa*, edited by Sigfred Taubert and Peter Weidhaas (both former directors of the Frankfurt Book Fair), published. This was the final volume of a remarkable collective data gathering project of some magnitude, whose aim was to provide "an almost complete overview of the national book markets in all parts of the world". Published by K.G. Saur in Munich in association with publishers in the UK and the US, a wide range of information and book industry data on each country was presented under over thirty headings. Volume 4 also included an index to the contents of all four volumes.

- 1985 Coinciding with the second **Bookweek Africa** staged at the Africa Centre in London in October 1985, an **African Publishers Working Group Meeting on Collective Export Marketing and Promotion**, was held in London, 14-16 October, 1985. This led to the formation of African Books Collective Ltd. in Oxford. Following an initial meeting of its Council of Management in June 1988, it started trading in May 1990 (see also below).

First **Foire International du Livre et du Matériel Didactique de Dakar/Dakar International Book and Educational Materials Fair** held in May 1985. This was the first major book fair to be held in francophone Africa.

- 1989 **Association for the Development of Education in Africa. ADEA Working Group on Books and Learning Materials (WGBLM)** founded <http://www.adeanet.org/en/working-groups/books-and-learning-materials>. Originally set up in association with the Education Division of the UK Department of International Development, WGBLM is composed of African Ministries of Education, development agencies, and civil society organizations concerned with materials development and dissemination. It provides a forum for policy makers, teachers, curriculum planners and the book professions, and organizes workshops and seminars (see also below) facilitating the professional exchange of information on different aspects of the book chain in Africa. The ADEA Working Group also supports the formulation of national book policies and has provided support for research studies and publication of bibliographic tools and research studies on book development in Africa, including a very useful series of books entitled *Perspectives on African Book Development*. Between 1996 and 2008 a total of 18 titles were published, a small number of which are still in print, one of them available online.
- 1990 **African Books Collective Limited (ABC)**, registered as a company in 1989 and owned by its 17 African founder member publishers, starts trading in May 1990. The Oxford-based ABC <http://www.african-bookscollective.com/> is a worldwide marketing and distribution organization for books from Africa — scholarly, literature and children’s books. Founded, owned and governed by a group of African publishers, its participants are 154 autonomous and independent African publishers on the continent who share a common ethos of publishing from within African cultures, asserting Africa’s voice within Africa and internationally. Initially supported by a number of donor agencies in its early years, a major remodelling of ABC took place in 2007, when it became self-financing, and moved to a largely digital model at the same time. Print-on-demand is now a cornerstone in ABC’s workflow and service to participating publishers. As part of the transition process the entire ABC list was digitised, which included a backlist reaching back to the 1980s. Celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2020, ABC now offers over 3,000 titles available digitally and in print, and discoverable on multiple digital platforms. The full list of all ABC participating publishers (as at October 2019) can be found at <http://www.africanbookscollective.com/about-us>. For a recent interview with its current CEO see also “**African Publishing in the Digital Age: Interview with Justin Cox at African Books Collective**” <https://alliance-lab.org/african-publishing-in-the-digital-age-interview-with-justin-cox-ceo-at-african-books-collective/>.

- 1991 **Conference on Publishing in the Third World**, hosted by the Rockefeller Foundation and held at the Rockefeller Conference Centre in Bellagio, Italy, in February 1991. The papers from the conference were published in *Publishing and Development in the Third World*, edited by Philip Altbach, and published by Hans Zell Publishers in 1992, with co-editions also published in Kenya and in India. The volume presents the first full scale discussion of publishing in Asia and in Africa, and features perspectives from 25 of those regions' most prominent publishers and recognized leaders in the field.

Following the above conference, establishment of the **Bellagio Publishing Network** <http://www.bellagiopublishingnetwork.com/>, an informal association of organizations and individuals committed to strengthening indigenous publishing and book development in the south, particularly Africa. The Network, which closed in 2003, aimed to provide a base of practical information, knowledge, and theory about publishing and book development. It included publishers, both government and private donor organizations, and others who are concerned with books and publishing, providing a forum for discussion and collaboration on publishing and book development activities. The Secretariat, based in Oxford, England, co-ordinated the day-to-day business of the Network. It organized meetings, published a newsletter, and was responsible for the development of the '**Bellagio Studies in Publishing**' series of monographs. Although the organization has ceased operations, and the website is no longer updated, a valuable archive of the *Bellagio Publishing Network Newsletter*, and some other resources, can still be found at [http://www.bellagiopublishingnetwork.com/newslett\\_index2.htm](http://www.bellagiopublishingnetwork.com/newslett_index2.htm) (issues 11, 1994, through 31, 2002).

*Takam Tikou. Le bulletin de la joie par les livres* <http://takamtikou.bnf.fr/> is launched by the Centre national de la littérature pour la jeunesse, Service du Département Littérature et art, at the Bibliothèque nationale de France. Established in 1965 and initially published by La Joie par les Livres (formerly Les Amis de la Joie par les Livres) the journal, currently published three times a year, promotes quality children's literature, aims to support initiatives that encourage children to read, and facilitates access to books by children in Africa. Attractively illustrated, Takam Tikou includes a diverse range of articles on children's books from and about Africa, African creative writing, and development of authorship, together with news and reports, interviews, bibliographic listings, and extensive reviews of new books (published in both Africa and in France). In March 2010 it moved to publication in digital format.



1992 Establishment of the **African Publishers' Network (APNET)** in Harare, Zimbabwe, in February 1992 — a Pan-African, not-for-profit network bringing together national publishers associations and publishing communities with the aim to strengthen indigenous publishing on the continent. See also this Wikipedia entry:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African\\_Publishers\\_Network](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Publishers_Network)

This was followed soon thereafter by the publication of the first issue of APNET's journal *The African Publishing Review*. 51 issues subsequently appeared 1992 and 2004, when it ceased publication. The journal aimed to provide a forum for discussion of common problems, as well as keeping people informed of developments in African publishing. It included news, analysis, and in-depth perspectives on African publishing, and also contained reports on APNET activities, together with profiles of people in publishing, reports about training courses, listings of rights on offer, announcements of newly published titles from African publishers, and occasional book reviews.

After being dormant for several years, APNET (see also above) announced in March 2018 that it would resume activities and launched a new website at <https://african-publishers.net/>.

In 2019 it released the first two issues in a 'new series' of the *African Publishing Review* [https://african-publishers.net/images/APNET\\_Newsletter\\_2019.pdf](https://african-publishers.net/images/APNET_Newsletter_2019.pdf) (February 2019)

[https://african-publishers.net/images/APNET\\_NEWSLETTER\\_2019\\_\(ENGLISH\).pdf](https://african-publishers.net/images/APNET_NEWSLETTER_2019_(ENGLISH).pdf) (October 2019, English)

[https://african-publishers.net/images/APNET\\_NEWSLETTER\\_2019\\_\(FRENCH\).pdf](https://african-publishers.net/images/APNET_NEWSLETTER_2019_(FRENCH).pdf) (October 2019, French)

**Promoting Technical Publishing in Africa-Seminar**, at the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation of AC-EU (CTA), held in Arnhem, the Netherlands, November 1992, which brought together some 60 professionals from the book industries in 22 countries. The seminar proceedings were subsequently published in 1994, see <https://cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/47031>.

The first **Pan-African Children's Book Fair** held in Nairobi, organized by the Council (later Foundation) of Children's Science Publications in Africa/CHISCI, which was founded in 1988. For an account about the 7th Fair (held in 1998), see this report

<http://www.bellagiopublishingnetwork.com/newsletter23/bugembe.htm>. CHISCI is currently dormant.

1993 **Third General Council Meeting of the African Publishers' Network (APNET)** convened in Accra, Ghana, 13-25 April, 1993. APNET sets up its constitution, agrees on a plan of action and the establishment of

training programmes; and appoints its first Chairperson, the late Chief Victor Nwanwko, and Executive Secretary, the late Paul Brickhill.

**Southern African Book Development Education Trust (SABDET)** founded in London. Working with partners in Africa and internationally, SABDET sought to support and strengthen co-operation in book publishing and distribution between the industrialised world and Africa. It worked in close association with the Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF) and offered travel grants to African publishers to attend ZIBF. It also supported the **African Journals Support and Development Centre and the African Periodicals Exhibit (APEX)** held annually at ZIBF. SABDET was the prime mover behind the **African Scholarship at ZIBF** initiative and organized training events at the ZIBF for young academics and scholarly publishers; as well as organizing a series of seminars – relating to various topics and issues of African publishing and book development – during the London International Book Fair. SABDET ceased activities in May 2008.

- 1994 First **African Rights Indaba** held during the 1994 Zimbabwe International Book Fair, to discuss major issues of rights protection and rights trading. The papers presented at the Seminar, *African Rights Indaba. Edited Proceedings of the Conference Held in Harare 1994*, edited by Murray McCartney, were subsequently published by the African Publishers Network (APNET) as the first title in a new series entitled 'African Publishing Handbooks.'

First **Africa Books Expo** held in London in October 1994 to publicise African publishing output in Britain.

The **Consortium for African Scholarly Publishing (CASP)** – formed to address the major issues and obstacles facing African scholarly presses – becomes operational, with headquarters in Nairobi. It subsequently organized a number of training workshops, and published a newsletter, but is currently dormant.

The **Network of Technical Publications in Africa (TEPUSA)** is established and incorporated in Dar es Salaam. This organization has been dormant for several years and its current status is not known.

- 1995 First issue of *Partners in African Publishing* published by CODE Europe; and thereafter published by Book Aid International (BAI). Edited by Kelvin Smith (with text in English and French), the aim of this very useful newsletter was to encourage and facilitate cooperation between publishers and development organizations in Africa and Europe. 20 issues were published through December 2000, when it

ceased, and was subsequently replaced by a new publication from BAI, *Book Links. The Networking Forum for the Book Chain*. Currently published as *BookLinks. Sharing Information Across Libraries in Africa and Beyond*, the latest issue is no. 21 published in November 2018, see <https://bookaid.org/publications/2018/12/20/booklinks-november-2018/>.

The first **Ghana International Book Fair** takes place in Accra in November 1996. This now well-established annual event <https://ghanabook-fair.com/> held its 17th book fair in August 2019.

- 1997 Following the first African Bookseller's Convention at the Zimbabwe International Book Fair in August 1997, the **Pan-African Booksellers Association** (PABA) is formed in Nairobi and Kampala with the support of a number of donor agencies. It is/was an umbrella organization of national booksellers' associations from across Africa intended to serve as a network for those in the retail trade, and aiming to promote and develop international cooperation within the industry. It had members in 25 African countries, published a newsletter, a couple of training manuals, and organized a number of meetings and capacity building workshops. It ceased activities several years ago after donor support was not renewed, but its former website is archived and still accessible at the Wayback Machine at <https://web.archive.org/web/20120313063651/http://www.panafrican-booksellersassociation.org:80/default.htm>

**Seminar on Understanding the Educational Book Industry**, Human Development Network, The World Bank, Washington DC, September 1997, devoted to strengthening publishing capacity in Africa and in other parts of the developing world. The proceedings of this meeting were published by the World Bank in 1998, as *Educational Publishing in Global Perspective: Capacity Building and Trends*, edited by Shobhana Sosale, and reflect the thinking and the deliberations that emerged from this important seminar. Participants included representatives of publishing houses and book trade associations from both industrial and developing countries, as well as donor representatives with a strong interest in strengthening publishing capacity in Africa and in other parts of the world. The book contains over 30 papers which are grouped under four major themes: 'Policies for the Long-Term Provision of Educational Materials', 'Finance and Book Trade Issues', 'Procurement, Protection, and Copyright', and 'The Role of Publishing Partnerships'. An e-book version of the volume is freely accessible at <https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/pdf/10.1596/0-8213-4254-1>. For a review see [https://www.academia.edu/3436975/Educational\\_Publishing\\_in\\_Global\\_Perspective](https://www.academia.edu/3436975/Educational_Publishing_in_Global_Perspective).

1998 Convened jointly by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (DHF) and the African Books Collective (ABC), African writers and publishers from nine countries met in Arusha, Tanzania, 23-26 February, 1998, for an **African Writers-Publishers Seminar (Arusha III)**. Participants released the *Arusha III Declaration: A 'New Deal' Between African Writers and Publishers*. An online version of the statement was published in the *Bellagio Publishing Network Newsletter*, issue no. 22, July 1998 at <http://www.bellagiopublishingnetwork.com/newsletter22/arusha.htm>.

See also details above for earlier Arusha meetings.

**African Journals OnLine (AJOL)** <https://www.ajol.info/> launched in May 1998 as a pilot project managed by the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) in Oxford. Its principal aim was to promote the awareness and use of African-published journals in the sciences by providing access to tables of contents on the Internet. In 2005, AJOL moved to African management and an enhanced digital platform, and is now a not-for-profit company in its own right, based in South Africa. It is currently the world's largest online library of peer-reviewed, African-published scholarly journals, hosting 524 journals of which 262 are open access.

*L'Afrique en livres*, compiled by Susanne Elpers, is published by France Édition, Paris, in 1998. Something of a mini books-in-print for African material in French, this useful catalogue listed some 4,000 books in French on Africa, from 600 publishers, including many published in francophone Africa. No further editions would appear to have been published.

1999 The work by African children's book authors and illustrators receives special prominence at the **Bologna International Children's Book Fair**, the leading international showcase for children's book publishing. To mark the occasion, the French book promotion organization Les Amis de la Joie par les Livres, publishes *Amabhuku. Illustrations d'Afrique/ Illustrations from Africa* <http://www.takamtikou.fr/dossiers/dossier-2013-patrimoine-et-transmission/illustration-africaine-les-empreintes-du-patrimoine> with extracts published at [http://cnlj.bnf.fr/sites/default/files/revues\\_document\\_joint/PUBLICATION\\_5502.pdf](http://cnlj.bnf.fr/sites/default/files/revues_document_joint/PUBLICATION_5502.pdf).

2000 The Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF) launches its **African Impact — A Celebration of Africa's 100 Best Books** project. To mark the

beginning of the 21st century, and encouraged by the Kenyan scholar and political thinker the late Ali Mazrui, the Zimbabwe International Book Fair launched the international compilation of 'Africa's 100 Best Books.' The project was organized in collaboration with the African Publishers Network (APNET), the Pan-African Booksellers Association (PABA), as well as African writers' associations, book development councils, and library associations. Nominations were sought throughout the African continent and internationally. A comprehensive list of all nominations was subsequently published at the ZIBF in August 2001, and during the course of the following year regional panels compiled their own short lists of 100 best books. A jury made the ultimate decision from the shortlist and the final list of Africa's 100 Best Books was announced on February 18, 2002. For details, and the complete list, see

<https://www.ascleiden.nl/content/webdossiers/africas-100-best-books-20th-century> or

[https://library.columbia.edu/libraries/global/virtual-libraries/african\\_studies/books.html](https://library.columbia.edu/libraries/global/virtual-libraries/african_studies/books.html).

View the top twelve list at <https://www.ascleiden.nl/content/webdossiers/africas-100-best-books-20th-century#Top%20twelve%20list>.

**Centre africain de formation à l'édition et à la diffusion (CAFED)** is established in Tunisia with the financial support of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF). It is a training centre for book professionals from French-speaking countries in the South, including training for book manufacturing, graphic design, publishing, distribution and marketing, as well as the retail sector. In recent years it has also offered courses to serve the training needs of African publishers in the new digital age. However, current activities would appear to be somewhat restricted at this time. (Contact: [cafed@topnet.tn](mailto:cafed@topnet.tn), no website?)

2001-2010

- 2001 **Africa Publishing Initiative (API)**, launched by the World Bank, Office of the Publisher, at the **Publishing for Development in Africa Workshop**, Washington DC, in May 2001. Among other activities, and a wide-ranging work programme, the API, founded in 1997, also hosted further 'Publishing for Development' workshops at book fairs and other book promotional events in Africa between 1999 and 2007. Activities ceased in 2007.
- 2002 *The African Publishing Companion: A Resource Guide* published by Hans Zell Publishing Consultants, Lochcarron, Scotland. Containing over a thousand annotated entries, it was published in both a print ver-

sion and online. It provided a collection of detailed information about many aspects of African publishing, and also including an extensive African publishers' email and website directory. This publication is now out-of-print and no further editions have been published.

**Afrilivres. Livres d'Afrique et des Disasporas** <http://www.afrilivres.net/index.php>, an important initiative launched in November 2001 by the journal *Africultures* and the Association d'Éditeurs Francophones d'Afrique Sub-saharienne (later L'association des Éditeurs Francophones au Sud du Sahara) in partnership with the organization Culture et Développement, the French Foreign Ministry, and financially supported by the Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer. It is a collaborative Web portal for a group of African publishers, currently comprising 33 publishers from 13 francophone African nations, and offering over 1,300 titles online. Afrilivres was restructured and relaunched in March of 2010 under a new management team, and is now based in Cotonou, Benin. The full publisher list, and publisher profiles, can be found at <http://www.afrilivres.net/editeurs.php>.

A major new reference resource, *The Book Chain in Anglophone Africa. A Survey and Directory*, edited by Roger Stringer, published by the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), Oxford. Contains a country-by-country analysis of the 'book chain' in 18 English-speaking African countries. Four introductory essays provide overviews of book and library development in anglophone Africa from different perspectives. These are followed by country surveys, each prepared by a book professional from the country concerned, most of them librarians. The final section, an annotated 'Directory of Selected Organizations in the Book Chain in Anglophone Africa', provides listings of the major players in the book chain in each of the countries covered, including professional associations, major publishers, printers, booksellers and libraries; regional and international bodies supporting book development, and training institutions for librarianship and the book industries.

No further editions have been published, but a full-text archival copy of the directory can be accessed at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08d33e5274a31e00016e6/Book\\_Chain\\_rev.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08d33e5274a31e00016e6/Book_Chain_rev.pdf).

Founding of the Paris-based Alliance des éditeurs indépendants, pour une autre mondialisation/Alliance of Independent Publishers Association for Another Globalisation, later renamed as **L'Alliance internationale des éditeurs indépendants/International Alliance of Independent Publishers** <https://www.alliance-editeurs.org/?lang=en>, a professional collective and network that currently brings together more than 730 independent publishing houses from 55 countries around

the world, including a substantial number from Africa, primarily from North Africa and francophone Africa. The Alliance supports a variety of co-publishing projects, undertakes studies and analysis of the book industries in member countries, and regularly facilitates and hosts a range of international meetings and thematic workshops (for example on children's book publishing, digital publishing, etc.), enabling independent publishers from various continents to exchange ideas, share know-how, and initiate collaboration. Since 2011 it has published the *Bibliodiversity* journal <https://www.alliance-editeurs.org/bibliodiversity-journal,118-> in both print and digital formats. For portraits of individual member publishers see <https://www.alliance-editeurs.org/portraits-d-editrices-et-d,1567>, while the complete list of all member publishers, with information about the nature of their publishing programmes, contact details, and other information can be accessed at <https://www.alliance-editeurs.org/-reseaux-linguistiques,017->.

*Sankofa: A Journal of African Children's and Young Adult Literature* launched. Founded and edited by Meena Khorana, Sankofa's primary objective was "to disseminate information on African children's and young adult literature; recognize common inaccuracies, stereotypes, and biases in books set in Africa; provide readers with in-depth book reviews and scholarly articles on emerging trends in African and African diaspora literatures; and stimulate a global conversation on the comparative patterns in the representation of children in literature." The journal ceased publication in 2014.

2006 *APNET-ADEA Study Project on Intra-African Book Trade* released by the African Publishers Network (APNET). Also published in a French version.

Following an earlier study on the intra-African book trade that was commissioned by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa: Working Group on Books and Learning Materials (ADEA) <http://www.adeanet.org/en/working-groups/books-and-learning-materials> in 1999, ADEA recommended that APNET should facilitate the sharing of information between national publishers' associations as it relates to the different procedures that need to be followed when exporting books from/to a particular African country, and with which all publishers and booksellers need to be familiar when embarking on the export of their books to another African country. Each national book trade association was asked to complete a detailed questionnaire setting out current procedures, and the legal and fiscal regulations in each country. A total of 29 national book trade associations responded and completed questionnaires. Each country response offered useful information not only on aspects of book export/import procedures and financial aspects (e.g. customs tariffs on imports, exemptions, tax

systems on inputs, other taxes such as VAT, export regulations, cost of financial transactions such as bank transfers, etc.), but also a variety of information on the 'book chain' in each country, for example number and type of publishers, printers, booksellers and book distributors, public libraries, legislation on copyright, book trade associations, national book policy situation, and other information relating to the state of the book in each country. The document is no longer accessible on the APNET website, but an archived version can still be viewed at the CORE (UK) site at <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/14520201.pdf>.

Launch of **Nouvelles Editions Numériques Africaines (NEMA)** and its **Librairie Numérique Africaine** (African Digital Bookshop, which subsequently started operations in 2014) in Dakar, Senegal. A pioneer in the field, it publishes/distributes a wide range of digital books, primarily with African content, and in many subject areas, available in different formats (PDF, ePub, HTML, MP3), and on a variety of digital platforms. The books can be purchased outright or can be made accessible as part of a subscription plan to a range of digital library collections.

See also this interview with the founder of NEMA, Marc-André Ledoux, at

<http://alliance-lab.org/nouvelles-editions-numeriques-africaines-entretien-avec-marc-andre-ledoux/?lang=fr>, and this report at EditAfrica <http://www.editafrica.com/ouverture-de-la-librairie-numerique-africaine/>.

2007 The Paris-based **L'Alliance internationale des éditeurs indépendants/ International Alliance of Independent Publishers** (see also above) releases its *International Declaration of Independent Publishers, for the Protection and Promotion of Bibliodiversity* [https://www.alliance-editeurs.org/IMG/pdf/Declaration\\_2007\\_eng.pdf](https://www.alliance-editeurs.org/IMG/pdf/Declaration_2007_eng.pdf) *Déclaration internationale des éditeurs indépendants, pour la protection et la promotion de la bibliodiversité* [https://www.alliance-editeurs.org/IMG/pdf/Declaration\\_fr.pdf](https://www.alliance-editeurs.org/IMG/pdf/Declaration_fr.pdf).

2008 Publication of *Publishing, Books & Reading in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Critical Bibliography* by Hans M. Zell, and with an introductory essay by Kenyan publisher Henry Chakava. Published by Hans Zell Publishers both in print and electronic formats, it listed more than 2,500 critically annotated entries, making it probably the most complete documentation resource on the current state of the book and publishing in Sub-Saharan Africa. The online version was continuously updated, and by November 2014 had grown to 3,062 records. In January 2015 the database, along with a collection of books and journals on publishing and book development in Africa, was donated to Kwara State



University Library in Nigeria, who also agreed to take on the hosting and future development of the online database, on an enhanced digital open access/open source platform.\*

For reviews of this reference resource see

<http://www.hanszell.co.uk/reviews.htm#section1>

\**Note:* unfortunately, due to a number of persistent technical problems relating to metadata mapping and software functionality, as well as ongoing software development and data transfer issues, there have been serious delays in the migration of the database. The new hosts in Nigeria hope that remaining problems and issues can now be resolved shortly, and that they will be able to relaunch the database sometime in 2019 on a more dynamic, Drupal-based open source content management platform. The first batch of updates and over 700 entirely new records will then also be added to the database. See also

<http://www.hanszell.co.uk/pbrssa.htm>.

- 2009 The first African Union (AU) **Pan-African Conference on Curriculum, Literacy and Book Sector Development: Rebuilding Education** held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 23-27 March 2009. During the course of that conference, participants studied and debated papers presented by representatives of AU member states, as well as experts and stakeholders in curriculum, literacy and book sector development. It considered the future of the African publishing industry, including support for publishing in African languages, and training and capacity building for African publishers. A major outcome of the conference was a **Draft Framework for Continental Book Policy\***, and the adoption of a draft **Pan-African Charter of the Book**, whose vision was “to establish Africa’s book industry as a key sector in contributing to development of culture, information and education. [and]... to serve as a model for development, enactment and application of national book policies in Africa.” Sadly, ten years later, there is still no evidence that such a policy has translated into national book and publishing policies. However, an ADEA-hosted **High-Level Regional Workshop on National Book and Reading Policies** (see below), convened in June 2019 in association with the African Union and the Global Book Alliance/USAID, “validated the African Union (AU) continental framework to support quality education for national development. ... During the Workshop, ADEA and USAID signed an agreement to support the Continental Framework for National Book and Reading Policies.”

\**Note:* The AU’s Draft Framework for Continental Book Policy is reproduced in full (pp.117-124) in an interesting MA thesis by Bob Lapajian, which can be accessed at <https://dspace.library.uu.nl/bitstream/handle/1874/40455/MA%20Thesis%20of%20Bob%20Lapajian.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>. The document sets out the rationale

for a book policy, its objectives and guiding principles, as well as offering a set of recommended policies relating to writing and publishing, bookselling, book printing, library development, reading promotion, and copyright.

## 2011-2019

- 2011 **International Conference on Book Development in Africa** hosted by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), Working Group on Books and Learning Materials, Nairobi, Kenya, October 2011, and attended by 67 participants from 24 countries <http://www.adeanet.org/en/activities/adea-conference-on-book-development-in-africa>.

Click on the above link for all post conference documents. For the conference report see

[http://www.adeanet.org/includes/programs/PDF/ADEA%20Conference%20Report%20\(Final\)books\\_en.pdf](http://www.adeanet.org/includes/programs/PDF/ADEA%20Conference%20Report%20(Final)books_en.pdf).

Extract:

*"At the end of the three days' conference, participants were in agreement that for the African book industries to develop and be self-sustaining, National Book Policies must be formulated and implemented through legislation fully supported by governments."*

**Edit Africa – Réflexion et information sur le monde du livre africain**

<http://www.editafrica.com/fr/> launched by the French scholar Raphaël Thierry, an information-rich resource and platform for dossiers, news, reports, articles, analysis, and links about African publishing generally, and the francophone African book world more particularly. A series of podcasts, 'EditAfrica Sessions', was added in September 2019.

- 2012 *Surveys on the Publishing Sector in Selected Sub-Saharan Countries: Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda*, compiled by Bernadette Böcker, published jointly by the Goethe Institut-South Africa and the Frankfurt Book Fair

[https://www.goethe.de/resources/files/pdf90/survey\\_publishing.pdf](https://www.goethe.de/resources/files/pdf90/survey_publishing.pdf).

- 2016 African Books Collective (ABC) launches a new platform called **Read African Books** <http://www.readafricanbooks.com/> showcasing the latest books available from ABC, together with news, reviews, articles, comment and opinion, on many different aspects about African publishing.

**The Academic Book in the South Conference**, held at the British Library, London, March 2016. This two-day conference was organized by the British Library in association with The Academic Book of the Future project <https://academicbookfuture.org/> and the Oxford Inter-

national Centre for Publishing Studies <https://publishing.brookes.ac.uk/> at Oxford Brookes University. The conference report can be viewed here: <https://ucldigitalpress.co.uk/BOOC/Article/1/23/>

- 2017 A meeting hosted by Witwatersrand University Press, held in Johannesburg on 30 August 2017, brought together a number of African scholarly publishers to discuss a wide-ranging study undertaken by François van Schalkwyk and Thierry Luescher entitled *The African University Press*, <http://www.africanminds.co.za/african-university-presses/>, providing an overview of the current African university press landscape, and examining the opportunities and constraints faced by university presses in Africa. Funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, as part of this project the authors established a comprehensive database, mapping university presses in Africa (as well as other scholarly publishers) on an interactive map that is continuously being updated. It enables publishers to indicate corrections and updates online, and feedback can be submitted by following the link under the information box on the map.

Reports:

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/specialreports/index.php?action=view&report=134>

[https://www.academia.edu/33799890/The\\_African\\_University\\_Press](https://www.academia.edu/33799890/The_African_University_Press) and see also “The African University Press – A Gloomy Picture”

<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20170922175606239>

High-Level Regional Conference, **The Publishing Industry in Africa and its Role in Education and Economic Growth**, hosted by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, November 2017.

Provisional programme:

[https://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/copyright/en/wipo\\_hl\\_cr\\_yao\\_17/wipo\\_hl\\_cr\\_yao\\_17\\_1\\_prov.docx](https://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/copyright/en/wipo_hl_cr_yao_17/wipo_hl_cr_yao_17_1_prov.docx) (also available in French)

Action plan:

*The Publishing Industry in Africa and its Role in Education and Economic Growth Yaoundé (Republic of Cameroon), November 22 and 23, 2017 Action Plan Publishing Industry and Access to Educational Material*

[https://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/copyright/en/wipo\\_hl\\_cr\\_yao\\_17/wipo\\_hl\\_cr\\_yao\\_17\\_action\\_plan.pdf](https://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/copyright/en/wipo_hl_cr_yao_17/wipo_hl_cr_yao_17_action_plan.pdf) (English)

[https://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/copyright/fr/wipo\\_hl\\_cr\\_yao\\_17/wipo\\_hl\\_cr\\_yao\\_17\\_action\\_plan.pdf](https://www.wipo.int/edocs/mdocs/copyright/fr/wipo_hl_cr_yao_17/wipo_hl_cr_yao_17_action_plan.pdf) (French)

See also this (unofficial) report

<http://allafrica.com/stories/201711230219.html>

Extract:

The Director General of WIPO, Francis Gurry, is quoted as saying the development of the publishing industry in Africa was vital considering that the continent had the fastest growing youth population that will soon make Africa the centre of human resources. African governments, he stated,

*"are resolutely determined to get the publishing industry one of the main pillars of the continent's economic growth by putting in place actions for the public/private partnerships in order to get in Africa good benchmarks and good practices on which to build."*

- 2018 **Regional Workshop for African Book Industry Stakeholders**, hosted by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and the Global Book Alliance (GBA)/USAID, held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, January 2018.

Workshop report:

[http://www.adeanet.org/sites/default/files/adea\\_gba\\_workshop\\_report.pdf](http://www.adeanet.org/sites/default/files/adea_gba_workshop_report.pdf)

Extracts:

*"Publishing and use of materials in mother tongue languages, to support instruction during early childhood is seriously hampered due to a dearth of books, especially those in languages children speak and understand. The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), through its Working Group on Books and Learning Materials (WGBLM), teamed up with the Global Book Alliance (GBA) to dialogue with African book industry stakeholders about these pertinent issues and to come up with a way forward. The dialogue focused on how to ensure sustainable book provision for children in lower primary schools by improving the creation, production, access, distribution and use of books in local languages. ... In the end, an African Publishing Collaborative was agreed upon with a five-point agenda."*

**IPA Regional Seminar. Publishing for Sustainable Development-The Role of Publishers in Africa**, hosted jointly by the International Publishers Association (IPA) and the Nigerian Publishers Association (NPA), held in Lagos, Nigeria, May 2018.

Programme:

<http://nigerianpublishers.com/downloads/ipa-seminar-lagos.pdf>

Pre-seminar IPA press release:

<https://internationalpublishers.org/events/ipa-congresses-and-events/other-ipa-events/663-ipa-regional-seminar-an-empowerment-programme-for-africa>

Post-seminar IPA press release:

<https://www.internationalpublishers.org/news/press-releases/671-ipa-regional-seminar-tackles-the-challenges-of-african-publishing>

Video recordings of the different panels, and the opening and closing speeches, from the Lagos Seminar can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/internationalpublishers>.

The IPA document *Lagos Action Plan 2018-2019. Quick Impact for the Future of African Publishing* is accessible at

<https://www.internationalpublishers.org/images/aa-content/events/other-ipa-events-2019/Lagos-Action-Plan-Report-Website.pdf>

For a comprehensive independent account about the Seminar, see also this report by Olatoun Gabi-Williams at

<http://www.bordersliteratureonline.net/eventdetails/Olatoun%20Williams%20-%20Reviewer%20of%20African%20Literature>.

**African Observatory of Publishing Professionals (OAPE)** is established in Yaoundé, Cameroun, in May 2018 <http://www.oape-africa.org/> by Ulrich Talla Wamba, a not-for-profit organization that aims to promote good practice in publishing, and conduct research, studies and analysis on the African book industries. It publishes the magazine *Publishers & Books*, subtitled 'Mensuel d'Afrique-Magazine Spécialisé & Professionnel-Livres et Éditions' <http://www.oape-africa.org/pages/publishers-books/>, containing a variety of news, reports about book fairs and other book promotional events, interviews, as well as articles (primarily in French, but also some in English) about the book world and the publishing industries in Africa.

**ADEA/APNET Open Forum on The Future of African Publishing**, held in Accra, Ghana, September 2018, and which also included an open licensing seminar and workshop in the use of Bloom publishing software.

Report:

<http://www.adeanet.org/en/news/adea-and-usaid-move-forward-the-african-book-industry-through-the-global-book-alliance>

**Lettres d'Afrique: Changing the Narrative** programme held during the Frankfurt Book Fair in October 2018. Organized by the **Agence Culturelle Africaine (ACA)** <http://www.agenceculturelleafricaine.org>. This was an extensive series of events and panel discussions designed to promote international networking between African publishers and those from elsewhere, and intended to provide visibility for the hugely diverse range of current African publishing output from throughout the continent.

Programme:

<https://www.editafrica.com/programme-lettres-dafrique-changing-the-narrative/>

Frankfurt Book Fair press release:

<https://www.buchmesse.de/en/press/press-releases/2018-10-05-lettres-dafrique-changing-narrative>

Interview (in French) with the convenor of the event, Raphaël Thierry: <http://www.oape-africa.org/news/interviews/dr-raphael-thierry-a-c-ur-ouvert-lettres-d-afrique-il-y-a-eu-plusieurs-moments-tres-beaux-durant-ce-programme.html>

For an informative account and appraisal of this event, by Olatoun Gabi-Williams, see also

<http://www.bordersliteratureonline.net/eventdetails/Frankfurt-Book-Fair-2018-The-African-Stage>.

- 2019 **Forum on Publishing Collaboratives**, under the theme ‘Enabling African Publishers to Provide Quality Books in African Languages through the African Publishing Collaborative Initiative’, Abidjan, May 2019, organized by the Books and Learning Materials section of the Inter-Country Quality Node on Teaching and Learning <http://www.adeanet.org/en/inter-country-quality-nodes/teaching-and-learning> of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). <http://www.adeanet.org/en/news/global-book-alliance-adea-and-us-aid-support-african-publishing-stakeholders-in-the-creation-of>.

**International Publishers Association (IPA) Regional Seminar ‘Africa Rising: Realising Africa’s Potential as a Global Publishing Leader in the 21st Century’**, held in Nairobi, Kenya, June 2019. Jointly organized with the Kenya Publishers Association, it attracted more than 200 delegates from 40 countries.

Seminar programme for the two-day meeting:

[http://kenyapublishers.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Nairobi\\_IPA\\_Program\\_FullBooklet\\_V22DigitalFINAL.pdf](http://kenyapublishers.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Nairobi_IPA_Program_FullBooklet_V22DigitalFINAL.pdf)

Report and highlights of the Seminar, and extracts from the welcoming and keynote speeches, and the various panel discussions:

[https://gallery.mailchimp.com/f381a436521c51063f62e51b1/files/9d584453-2eaa-4cdb-9e0c-1e23919deca2/IPA\\_Seminar\\_Nairobi\\_Report\\_V15\\_Digital\\_.pdf](https://gallery.mailchimp.com/f381a436521c51063f62e51b1/files/9d584453-2eaa-4cdb-9e0c-1e23919deca2/IPA_Seminar_Nairobi_Report_V15_Digital_.pdf)

Extracts:

*“Perhaps one of the best results of the seminar was the opportunity for African publishers to feel part of the international publishing community. ... The feeling is that Africa is rising, is beginning to tell its story in its many mother tongues in addition to English and that its own ‘upright revolution’ is taking shape. It is ready to invest, nurture and then harvest — and the International Publishers Association Africa seminars are pleased to be part of this evolving story.”*

Video recordings of the discussions at the different panels will become available shortly on the IPA website. Interviews with seven African publishers who were participants at the IPA and WIPO seminars in Nairobi in June 2019 can be viewed at

[https://internationalpublishers.org/images/aa-content/news/news-2019/WIPO\\_Nairobi\\_-\\_African\\_publishers\\_interviews.pdf](https://internationalpublishers.org/images/aa-content/news/news-2019/WIPO_Nairobi_-_African_publishers_interviews.pdf).

An independent report about the seminar, by Olatoun Gabi-Williams, can be found at

<http://bordersliteratureonline.net/eventdetails/IPA-Nairobi-Seminar>.

The next IPA seminar is scheduled for Marrakesh Morocco, in December 2020.

**High-Level Regional Workshop on National Book and Reading Policies in Africa**, hosted by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), in association with the African Union (AU), the Global Book Alliance (GBA), USAID, and the Kenyan Ministry of Education, held in Nairobi, Kenya, June 2019

<http://www.adeanet.org/en/news/adea-and-usaid-organize-a-high-level-workshop-on-national-book-and-reading-policies-in-africa>.

Report:

<http://www.adeanet.org/en/news/adea-and-usaid-gba-lead-participants-to-validate-the-au-continental-framework-on-book-and>

Extracts:

*“Participants at the just-concluded workshop in Nairobi on National Book and Reading Policies for Africa have validated the African Union (AU) continental framework to support quality education for national development. ... During the Workshop, ADEA and USAID signed an agreement to support the Continental Framework for National Book and Reading Policies that participants had interrogated in round-table discussions and eventually adopted. The Framework provides a road map for African member countries to formulate National Book and Reading Policies that will enable each country to address the various challenges facing the book publishing industry, a key sector for the achievement of quality education for economic, social, cultural development.”*

An independent report about the meeting, by Buma Kor, can be found at

<http://www.oape-africa.org/news/tribune-libre/en-african-publishing-on-the-rise-for-the-best-by-buma-kor.html>.

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1 *The African Publishing Companion: A Resource Guide*, edited by Hans M Zell. Lochcarron, Scotland: Hans Zell Publishing Consultants, and Oxford: African Books Collective Limited, 2002, 150-154.

2 Some of this information has been extracted from “Publishing in Africa” by Hans M. Zell. In *International Book Publishing. An Encyclopedia*, edited by Philip G. Altbach and Edith S. Hoshino. New York: Garland Publishing, 1995, 366-73.

# MISSIONARY ARCHIVES ON AFRICA: A FINE GRAINED UNDERSTANDING<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Much historical evidence for the activities and reception of early African converts and indigenous Christian movements is found in the vast corpus of documentation produced and preserved by western missionary societies in Europe. In order to understand the evidence, historians, archivists and librarians do well to comprehend the nature of the sources that they use. In recent years there has been greater attention to archives as collections in order to appreciate the rationale behind historical events, personages and thought. This short essay gives some background to these historiographical issues before examining the outputs of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionaries in order to provide a case-study that may be a useful comparator for similar collections. My reflections emerge from my own research into socio-religious change in East Africa through a biography of a prominent Ugandan clergyman, Apolo Kivebulaya, who worked alongside CMS missionaries from the British Isles.<sup>2</sup>

I suggest that an understanding of the range of material contained in a missionary archive and the rationale for its production is important for historians of religion in Africa. I also suggest that historians are alert to other sources, beyond official missionary repositories, for a fine grained appreciation of historical actors and observers.

## Against or along the grain?

The literature found in archives of missionary societies has been considered flawed evidence. It is often focussed upon the concerns of missionaries, their societies and supporters, and has been generated by an evangelistic intent and, often, to convince of the importance of literacy, bio-medicine, and so on. It has, therefore, been regarded as unrepresentative of the social, political and economic dynamics of communities that missionaries were working amongst and dismissive of their cultural norms. Historians were expected to treat such material with caution and read it 'against the grain'. Over the last thirty years there has been increasing use of missionary archives by historians and new interest by anthropologists (Peel 1996). Indeed, it took an anthropological reading of archive collections to challenge the position of reading against the grain. Anne Stoler's book, *Along the archival grain: epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense*, critiqued the assumption that there was a grand narrative



of colonialism which scholars could safely assume when they used colonial collections.<sup>3</sup>

Stoler argued that reading along the grain of the contestations, rumours, and confusion found in a range of genres within the colonial collection brought fresh understanding of the sources and their role in the historical record. The way in which the sources are organised, archived and conceptualised plays a role in understanding their historical significance (Stoler 2009, 32-38, 52; Burton 2005, 6-9). This reading along the archival grain has influenced two broad, and at times overlapping, assessments regarding cultural change that scholars of Africa have reached in their use of missionary archives. The first assessment holds that Christian mission is a form of cultural assault often associated with colonial practice or assumptions and, furthermore, that mission activities marginalise and alienate indigenous populations and increase the inequitable distribution of resources and power. The second view considers that mission is a form of cultural exchange, in which all the actors have the potential to be changed: conversion changes the missionary as well as the convert. The result of this change is a new form of Christianity that is embedded in a new situation. Of course, competing interpretations of missionary sources are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Missionary activity, in general terms, can be both assault and exchange. Examining the nature of missionary documentation, rather than simply reading it for its relevant content, reveals the situated intent and perspective of missionaries.

### **Missionary archives: an example.**

The official Church Missionary Society (CMS) archives, housed at the University of Birmingham, are a vast collection of institutional papers and correspondence with missionaries. They comprise records on the running of the society from the administrative departments of its London Headquarters, correspondence and reports from its missionaries and the mission's periodicals and other publications. As interest in missionary sources has increased the official archives of missionary societies have gained particular attention. Anna Johnston (2008, 6-7), has asked that they be recognised as a genre in their own right called 'missionary literature,' which is characterised by a propagandist intent and highly-regulated content. This formal literature is extensive, well-known and provides valuable information. The accessibility of this literature has played a role in its use. Large missionary societies of mainline churches in Europe and the USA have been studied because they have housed their archives in academic institutions or provided funding for their maintenance, cataloguing and, increasingly, their digitisation. This is certainly true of the CMS archive which has been mined by a variety of historians and anthropologists. Smaller, independent societies have not always provided the same resources for generating, maintaining or making accessible their literature and correspondence and have consequently received less attention to date. How-

ever, there are a number of considerations to bear in mind when using this literature.

The volume of material produced and stored by large missionary societies has meant that scholars have often limited their attention to official publications of a single mission. However, the regular concerns of the institution do not always reflect the intercultural encounters of missionaries. The administrative records illustrate the complex bureaucratic machinery of missionary societies and their relations with the missionary-supporting public but they often have little detail on mission work beyond the headquarters.<sup>4</sup> Correspondence from missionaries sometimes includes their work, particularly if it was intended for publication, as in the CMS *Annual Letters*. Occasional letters are more likely to include requests for individual support or travel plans. They show the practical issues involved in being a missionary and how missionaries viewed their work. Periodicals offer more illumination. CMS also produced a variety of periodicals intended to promote its aims and increase its support in Britain and targeted at different audiences and changing tastes over its two-hundred-year history. They include the *Intelligencier* (1846-1906) which aimed to provide detailed and informative articles, the *Gleaner* (1841-1921) which had a more popular approach, special interest periodicals (like the *Mission Hospital* 1922-1939) and periodicals for children (like *Children's World* 1891-1900). Missionary correspondence was reproduced for the volumes of *Annual Letters* and edited by staff in London for the society's annual reports, *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society*. Like the publications of other mission agencies these were predominantly written by male European missionaries, except where magazines for women were produced. Reports from indigenous church leaders are included but, for the most part, only when those leaders are in the employ of the CMS. Kivebulaya, for example, is mentioned by a number of missionaries in their letters and articles but there may only be two occasions when his words have been translated and published. Authorial intent is an important consideration. Missionaries wrote for missionary societies requiring statistics and demonstrations of diligence, the general public, learned societies seeking different forms of knowledge about Africa, supporters desirous of information for prayer and financial assistance, and close confidantes who expected frank accounts. Missionary sources were influenced by the perceived interests of potential readers and viewers. The official missionary archives of CMS provide a huge quantity of reportage on events, characters, strategies and statistics. Nevertheless, a study which relies upon this kind of 'missionary literature' for its sole insight into religious encounter in Africa is liable to emphasise the institutional concerns of the organisation in the metropole, the interests of the missionary supporting public, and the way in which the mission field was conceived in the metropole.

## Beyond the official missionary archive

Missionary writing is much wider than the literature published by the headquarters of any society. Missionaries published books of their experiences, not all of which were published by missionary presses. Missionary literature has been criticised for focussing on positive stories of foreign missionary success and ignoring indigenous agency (Johnston 2008, 7). Missionary struggles were part of a larger Christian expectation of sacrifice and suffering for the propagation of the Gospel. Such narratives can form tropes of heroism, persecution and martyrdom that glorify the missionary endeavour. However, book-length treatments can also reveal more complex narratives. Longer memoirs can discuss death, lack of converts, friendships and loneliness in a less-stylised manner than missionary periodicals. CMS publications included several biographies of Kivebulaya by A.B. Lloyd. He presented Kivebulaya as a figure whom British Christians should emulate (1934). In contrast, A.B. Lloyd's travelogues which were published by secular publishing house, Unwin, are replete with 'Boy's Own' style adventure (Wild-Wood 2010, 285-288) and show a closer imbrication of colonial and missionary perspectives and a greater acceptance of imperial ideals that were often critiqued elsewhere within missionary circles (Griffiths 2005, 53-55).

Missionaries contributed to the production of knowledge in a variety of *academic disciplines* and so there are porous borders between what might be called missionary writing and anthropology, geography, medicine and so on (Harries and Maxwell 2012, 1-29). CMS missionary, Revd. John Roscoe, for example, wrote anthropological works on the Banyoro and the Baganda. In the latter he collaborated with another amateur historian and anthropologist, Apolo Kagwa, the Prime Minister of Uganda. The first book on the Banyoro was written by another CMS missionary, Ruth Fisher, who also wrote a popular travelogue (1904, 1911). She worked closely with the rulers of Bunyoro and Toro to produce her book. Missionaries provided descriptions of indigenous societies as they encountered them, and as they learnt about them through relations with local people. The African involvement in these collaborations deserves further study. Careful reading of these missionary investigations of the pre-Christian past can indicate the shifting concerns of healing cults and the influence of African rulers on rituals of prosperity. Missionary commentary on these societies was infused with Christian assumptions, but even these assumptions do not conform to one understanding – some saw continuity between Christianity and African beliefs and practices, others saw profound differences.

Another source of missionary writings is private papers. Missionaries were often encouraged to keep journals in preparation for official accounts to be written for headquarters. They wrote private and round-robin letters to friends, family, home-churches and corresponded with other missionaries and African colleagues. These letters often contain more local detail and describe

events incidental to that required by mission agencies. They have a warm, even intimate, quality and are frequently frank in their accounts and opinions. The comparison between private letters, diaries and published records of the same events can be illuminating. Private papers may be the most difficult to access because they are not always held with the institutional archive. The Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide, for example, has an archive of private missionary papers donated by family members. The largest holding in its possession is 33 boxes of the Joe Church archive. From the 1920s, Church, a Ruanda Mission (CMS) doctor, kept a rich and varied collection of correspondence, diaries, press cuttings, minutes, reports, audiotapes, photographs, annotated books and pamphlets. The collection provides insights into the history of the East African Revival and its international impact, prominent African and European figures, women in the movement and relations with colonial officials (Barringer, 2012). The Joe Church collection offers just one example of the way in which private papers add to the variety of missionary sources.

Missionary sources are not limited to published and manuscript writings. They include the visual and the material. Photographs are found in considerable quantities in many mission archives. The art of skilled missionary photographers demonstrates how photography allowed missionaries greater liberty than did their official written reports to examine indigenous cultures (Jenkins 2001, 73) and it reveals the complexity and ambiguity of the intercultural encounter (Maxwell 2011, 73-74). For example, photographs taken by missionaries in Toro in the first forty years of the twentieth century depict the natural environment, and also show social change through the construction of churches and schools, the gathering of Christians for worship, schooling and training and individual Europeans and Africans. Some photographers capture members of the royal family in traditional regalia or participating in rituals. The artefacts that missionaries collected from around the globe and their use in displays and museums have been studied as examples of networks of global exchange (Sivasundaram, 2005, 179), as a source of metropolitan knowledge and as providing information on pre-Christian religious practice (Wingfield, 2016; Hand, 2016, 75-76).

Regional missionary publications are sometimes overlooked. They often include greater local detail than was considered necessary in general publications. Furthermore, regional publications show that the authorial boundaries of 'missionary literature' were porous, extending to Africans who identified with the missionary enterprise. CMS's *Uganda notes*, for example, was published in Uganda from 1901. It contains contributions from an emerging lay Christian elite, from African church leaders and from European missionaries. Missionary printing presses were also used for newspapers and magazines published in vernacular languages. In Uganda, two vernacular publications emerged in the early twentieth century to address the concerns of the growing

literate and Christian public. *Ebifa mu Buganda* (est. 1907) was supported by CMS and *Munno* (est.1911) by the Roman Catholic White Fathers, copies of which can be accessed in Makerere University, and St Mary's Cathedral library and archives, Rugaba, Kampala. The contributions within these Luganda periodicals include discussions of religious and social affairs, poems, proverbs, obituaries of Church leaders and accounts of customs and traditional ways of life. Contributors were enthusiastic users of literary techniques to record the past in such a way that it supported their development of a modern future. Kivebulaya contributed to *Ebifa* and in its pages he is eulogised after his death. These periodicals contributed to information dissemination in the wider East African region and prompted the rise of vernacular newspapers. Henry Wright Duta, an early Ganda clergyman and prominent bible translator, wrote for *Ebifa* and for *Msimulizi*, the Swahili magazine of St Andrew's Kiungani, the Universities Mission to Central Africa school in Tanzania, where he had studied (Stoner-Eby 2003, 173). The information sharing and knowledge production by Christian elites in print-media provides historians with accounts of current events and interpretations of the past. These periodicals also illuminate three developments influenced by the spread of Christianity. First, they show the asymmetries of influence among African populations in which particular languages and their speakers gain prominence. Second, they demonstrate multi-directional transnational connections beyond a familiar north-south trajectory (Korschoke 2016: 42). Third, they demonstrate the development of a Christianised ethno-nationalism and the inculcation of pan-African and transcontinental identities as Christian elites shared stories of Christian expansion and examples of greater autonomy across nations and continents (Korschoke et al. 2016, 11-20).

In providing a list of missionary sources a number of problems have been exposed. First, the sheer volume of the missionary sources means that researchers may only examine one set of archives. They may also neglect the careful work of scrutinising a variety of texts and triangulating them with other sources in order to perceive the religious encounter in Africa. Second, many missionary sources are written with metropolitan audiences in mind: understanding those audiences and their perspectives permits researchers to interpret more effectively what missionaries say about the indigenous people amongst whom they work. Missionary literature is usually best understood in conjunction with sources from the country of missionary encounter. Historians who wish to give priority to indigenous sources in an attempt to provide a polyvocal perspective on historical events will find in missionary sources a rich seam of historical material. They encompass a great deal of material beyond that which was produced by the headquarters of missionary societies, and cannot be understood as a single genre with a master narrative. They also include publications to which indigenous Christian elites contributed who were – to one extent or other – engaged in the missionary project. A careful reading of these publications begins to collapse grand colonial narratives

and to show that, even in situations where the asymmetries of political power loomed large, there were mutually beneficial relations between foreign missionaries and African people.

### **Reading African Voices in archives**

To achieve a polyvocal perspective, missionary sources require triangulation with other sources – oral history data, the work of local historians, student dissertations, the private records and letters of Africans. In research on socio-religious change in East Africa I also used the Uganda National Archives, Entebbe, the Kabarole District Archives, Mountains of the Moon University, Fort Portal, the Church of Uganda archives, Uganda Christian University, Mukono, and the parish registers of St John's Cathedral, Fort Portal and St Peter's Church, Butiti. The most comprehensive archive was the Africana Collection at Makerere University, Kampala. Periodicals, oral history transcripts, and colonial and missionary documents, small collections of occasional unpublished papers, and student dissertations reliant on primary sources can all be found.

The diaries, notes, letters and short autobiography of Apolo Kivebulaya found in the Africana collection provide one example of the perspectives of one who embraced religious change and who recorded his work of preaching and church planting.<sup>v</sup> Kivebulaya's writings are in Luganda and largely pertain to his work in Toro and Ituri (Congo). They note life's activities, his journeys and acquaintances and list biblical texts for sermons, and teaching points. If they are judged on the intent of the author, Kivebulaya's writings are every bit as much missionary sources as the records of European societies and their agents. His record illustrates the extent to which indigenous and foreign missionaries collaborated in a shared endeavour. Kivebulaya was also a forerunner of a piety propagated through the East African Revival that continues to infuse contemporary Christianity in the region and influences in the Great Lakes region. Scholars examining early Islam in Buganda, politics and witchcraft in Toro, and dissent in East Africa, have also recognised the value of Kivebulaya's writings as eye-witness accounts of social change. They are less extensive than the literary output of other African churchmen, like Anglican Bishops Samuel Ajayi Crowther and James Johnson of West Africa, or Presbyterian ministers Theophilus Opoku of Ghana or Tiyo Soga of South Africa. However, they do show how a literate Christian identity was formed away from centres of power.

Kivebulaya's writings are situated in a particular context and fabricated from the circumstances that surround their composition. Kivebulaya's writings give the impression of an individual who is practising literacy through regularly recording events and occasionally adding personal reflection. Sometimes Kivebulaya repeats his reflections, as if honing his account. Furthermore, the entries in the black book are not always in Kivebulaya's hand. Several, as yet unidentified, hands have contributed to the task. It is not a private journal but

a collaborative work, a corporate log of social activity with a prominent individual at its centre. Here, we see the importance of examining the construction and *materiale* of documents and collections within an archive. They may give glimpses into the way in which programmes and events were carried-out and the rationale and relationships behind them. The documents provide insight into the motivations of Kivebulaya and his colleagues. They also give glimpses of those whose perspectives are even more elusive in the historical record – those who opposed or were indifferent to Christian mission, or who maintained their own spiritual traditions.

## Conclusion

This short article has argued for the positive use of missionary archives for historical research into religion in Africa through understanding the nature of the collections and the intention of the production of different genre of literature within them. It has shown the utility of a comparison of different sorts of missionary writing in order to gain a deeper understanding of the context. These points hinge upon two important issues: missionary writers were conscious of various audiences and they wrote according to their audiences' interests. Even when missionary concerns are not central to the African history under investigation, an appreciation of the motivations behind their record-keeping stops the historian from making easy assumptions about missionary perspective or intent. Finally, the fine grained approach promoted by this article requires other sources beyond official missionary collections. Wherever possible, historians will seek out documents by Africans to triangulate with European sources.

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## Notes

1 A version of this article was presented at ELIAS, the European Librarians in African Studies conference, 'Religious collections on Africa – Reading archival & library collections against the grain,' 11th June 2019. Similar themes are explored in a longer historiographical article, 'Interpretations, problems and possibilities of missionary sources in the history of Christianity in Africa,' in Martha Fredricks and Dorottya Nagy (eds), *The Study of World Christianity: Approaches, Methods, Case-studies* (Leiden, Brill, 2020).

2 *The Mission of Apolo Kivebulaya: religious encounter and social change in the Great Lakes c.1865-1935* (Melton, Suffolk, James Currey, 2020).

3 I also saw anxiety and confusion in my reading of documents in the Archives Africaines, Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Bruxelles (AA).

4 The official archive of the British and Foreign Bible Society Archives (University Library, Cambridge), has perhaps a greater percentage of documentation that references African languages.

5 They will form part of a source book being prepared in the British Academy *Fontes Historae Africanae* series published by Oxford University Press.

# GOOGLING AFRICAN HISTORY: CONNECTING STUDENTS TO AFRICA'S PAST WITH DIGITAL PRIMARY SOURCES

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This paper was originally presented on the panel "The past is present: African primary sources and cultural materials in the digital age" at ECAS conference, Edinburgh, June 2019.

## Introduction

Primary sources are evidence created at the time of an event or after by participants or observers. Examples may include text – memoirs, letters, manuscripts, diaries, newspapers; images – photographs and posters; audio or video recordings – oral histories and speeches; artifacts – furniture, pottery, and cultural objects. These are the raw materials historians use to meaningfully reconstruct the past. These along with previous interpretations by other historians or secondary sources are the tools needed to perform historical research. This paper examines the intersection of African primary sources, new digital technologies and new active learning teaching methods within the teaching of African history. It discusses new approaches to teaching and learning history in undergraduate programs in the United States using both tangible and digital primary sources. It examines the potential impact of digital primary sources on the teaching and learning of African history and how it could effectively be used to contextualize and connect students to Africa's past. Selected examples of freely accessible online collections of primary sources are examined as well as their discovery and access. Also examined is the potential role of faculty, librarians and archivists in the discovery, access and adoption of digital primary sources in an African history classroom.

Traditionally most primary sources are found in museums, archives, libraries, private collections or reproduced in print or microform. Some collections are found in endangered conditions, without care in obscure locations or exposed to poor environmental conditions. Materials were typically locked in drawers and boxes, scholars, researchers and graduate students used to be the sole consumers of these materials often with some restrictions and at great costs to their budgets. In the mid-1990s libraries, archives, museums and other cultural institutions began projects to digitize and preserve historically valuable collections, opening local collections to wider audiences. Millions of primary source materials are now accessible online, drastically changing the way historians search, access, and utilize such materials in teaching, learning and

research. The majority of these collections are freely accessible online and often show up in Google or other search engine searches. Dooley and Luce (2010) reported a 2010 OCLC survey of special collections and archives in member libraries of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) in the United States that had 72% of libraries reporting library wide digitization projects with 47% participating in large scale digitization projects.

### **Primary sources in teaching and learning**

New approaches to the methods of teaching history in the United States increasingly emphasize historical thinking resulting in the adoption of inquiry driven teaching methods in undergraduate courses. This method involves integrating primary source research in instruction and students are expected to engage with these sources in both introductory and upper level courses. The 2016 update of the core competencies and outcomes for undergraduate history teaching by the American Historical Association includes this statement: “recognize history as an interpretive account of the human past – one that historians create in the present from surviving evidence.” This is a shift from an instructor centered to a student centred approach to learning history. Instead of memorizing facts from a professor’s lecture or the textbook, students are expected to engage in active learning by analyzing primary sources and creating their own narratives of the past. They are required to investigate and answer questions, obtain and examine evidence from primary sources, read, analyze, and corroborate the evidence; provide perspective in accounts and interpretations of events. Primary source research also featured prominently in upper level seminars and capstone or honors thesis research.

Various studies have increasingly shown the strength of primary sources in the development of analytical and critical thinking skills in students. Anderson, Golia, Katz & Tally (2013) reported findings from a study by the Students and Faculty in the Archives (SAFA) project of the Brooklyn Historical Society. Results showed undergraduate students became more engaged and interested in coursework, with improved academic skills and course outcomes, when primary source research was integrated into the curriculum. Tona Hangen (2015) describes the effectiveness of primary sources in promoting active learning in history survey, methods and elective courses. She observed an improvement in student engagement resulting in better learning outcomes, with a recommendation for greater exposure of undergraduate students to digital primary sources. Krause (2010) argues that the use of primary sources enables a deeper understanding of course content because it engages students at a personal level with more opportunities to ask questions than the textbook. The emergence of digital technologies has made the integration of primary sources in teaching and learning at the undergraduate level much easier. It has enabled the digitization of primary sources resulting in the elimination of logistical challenges such as finding and scanning published primary sources

or sending large classes to a library special collections or archives. Townsend (2017) reported a 2015 survey of history faculty by the American Historical Association that found almost all historians use library databases and online archives, a slight increase over a similar survey in 2010. In a study of uses and users of digital sources in teaching undergraduate humanities Harley et al, (2006) observed a motivation in faculty to using digital sources due to improvements in student learning, ability to contextualize and excitement on a topic. Other studies have shown that usage of digital primary sources by historians has increased in recent years. Malkmus (2007) studied 627 American history faculty on their use of all types of primary sources in teaching at the undergraduate level. Results showed a trend towards increased use of digital primary sources even though the majority of faculty still relied on published primary sources. The study also reported that teaching faculty consider primary sources as essential to their teaching with a majority voicing positive experiences using primary sources either online or tangible. Faculty comments expressed enthusiasm about the richness and convenience of on-line primary sources and described their classes as successful, creative, and teaching their students historical topics in an engaging and intellectually challenging way.

### **Potential impact of digital primary sources on African History**

African history is taught in many undergraduate programs in universities and colleges in the United States and is also covered in courses in world history. Typical courses include first year survey courses in early African history and modern African history; second year historical methods; and upper level courses on thematic topics like women in African history, Atlantic slave trade, Islam in Africa or apartheid in South Africa. Many of these courses emphasize primary sources in course learning outcomes. Typical learning outcomes include statements such as “demonstrate an ability to recognize and interpret multiple forms of evidence (visual, oral, statistical, artifacts from material culture);” “evaluate historical evidence and differing interpretations of the African past;” and “primary source analysis through reading and identifying the key points, meaning and significance of arguments and ideas presented in historical documents and cultural artifacts created during the time periods we are studying.”

Although there is not much in the literature on the use of digital primary sources in undergraduate African history courses it could be argued that it has significant potential in impacting upon the teaching and learning of African history. Since digital primary sources are virtual and are accessible in transnational spaces, it makes possible the representation of Africa to audiences outside of Africa. This is significant because access to tangible primary sources from Africa is limited and full of challenges. These sources mostly reside in national and local archives in African countries, at times in precarious conditions while others are found in national archives in former

colonial capitals. Prior to digitization it was typical for researchers to encounter logistical challenges in locating such collections. Other challenges to access are costs of travelling distances to access collections, government and regulatory restrictions and legal and privacy concerns.

Like other primary sources, digital sources related to Africa have proliferated online. Some are freely accessible while other collections such as the Adam Matthew and British Online Archives collections are available on subscription. Studies discussed above showed that when integrated in a course, primary sources engage student interest. They could be an invaluable resource for the study of Africa. In addition to serving the curriculum and research needs of faculty and students the materials can be important pedagogical tools used to engage students in contextualizing Africa. The flexibility of digital sources allows use in innovative ways such as in course packs, course management systems, collaborative work, online courses, flipped classroom, and in multimedia presentations to maximize the benefits to students. A conclusion can be drawn that digital sources have potential in creating student interest in African history and assisting in contextualizing Africa's past when integrated in an African history course.

### **Digital primary sources related to Sub-Saharan Africa**

Collections selected for examination in this paper are limited to digital collections curated in the United States and in Sub-Saharan Africa. Also considered was the reputation of the source institution. The digital collection, *Africa Online Digital Library* (<https://www.aodl.org/>) is an open access digital collection of cultural heritage materials from and about Africa. The collection is curated by Michigan State University in collaboration with museums, archives and scholars around the world. Organized primarily for classroom use it provides a single portal to a wealth of primary source materials; including documents, photographs, videos, maps, interviews and oral histories, some available in African languages. Collections are keyword searchable and results can be filtered by date, format, media and collection.

Among the many notable collections in this digital library is the *African activist archive* (<http://africanactivist.msu.edu/>). It contains records of activism in the United States in support of the struggles of African peoples against colonialism, apartheid, and social injustice from the 1950s through the 1990s. Materials in the collection include publications such as pamphlets, newsletters, press releases as well as buttons, posters, T-shirts, photographs, and audio and video recordings of speeches and testimonies. These materials could be used to teach students the contributions from outside Africa towards southern African liberation struggles. Another example is *South Africa: Overcoming Apartheid, Building Democracy* (<http://overcomingapartheid.msu.edu/>). This collection provides first-hand accounts of ordinary South African

experiences with the apartheid state. It includes interviews with South African activists, video footage documenting mass resistance and police repression, historical documents, rare photographs, and original narratives of stories of resistance to apartheid in South Africa. These online sources provide access to rich and compelling sources such as photographs, protest petitions and flyers produced by South African women's organizations to mobilized nationwide protests, against apartheid pass laws in the 1950s. These documents are especially powerful tools for helping students understand how apartheid affected women and the fearless contributions of women to the resistance of the apartheid state. Unlike traditional textbooks these sources bring alive to students the voices and experiences of marginalized people.

An example of a freely available online collection of documentary sources on Africa is *Archives online at Indiana University* (<https://libraries.indiana.edu/resources/archivesonline>). In these collections are several papers of Liberian politicians, intellectuals and scholars including former President William Tubman. In the Tubman collection are his correspondence, government reports, and civil society related materials. Also available in these collections are the archives of H. K. Banda, first president of Malawi. Interesting items in the Banda collection include a letter from Kenya's Oginga Odinga to Dr. Banda advocating the release of Jomo Kenyatta from prison. Other examples of documentary sources are the *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964–1968, Volume XXIV, Africa* (<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v24>). This contains official documentary historical records of major foreign policy decisions and significant diplomatic activity of the United States Government related to Africa and specific African countries. Other sources are available in the Woodrow Wilson Center Digital Archive (<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/>), these collections are declassified government documents from all over the world including Africa. Notable in this collection are documents related to China's relations with Africa during the 1960s and Cuba's policy towards Southern Africa during the cold war.

Digitized collections of both current and historical maps of Africa are freely available online in the collections of libraries that have digitized their maps. Examples of such collections are the University of Texas's Perry–Castañeda Library map collections (<https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/>). The collection contains several historical maps dating from 19th century South Africa, Madagascar, and parts of West and Central Africa. The site also has current maps of continental Africa, political, shaded relief, and individual country maps and a continental map. Another notable collection of maps are the Stanford University maps of Africa collections (<https://exhibits.stanford.edu/maps-of-africa>). The collection contains historical maps of Africa dating back to 1486. Maps include Southern Africa and sea charts; the Cape of Good Hope; North, East, and West Africa; islands, ports, and town plans. Types of maps include a physical map of Africa dated 1891 as well as a 1908 railway

map of the Cape government showing railway routes in South Africa. The digital collections of the Herskovits Library of African Studies at Northwestern University Libraries contain historical maps of Africa from the 16th – early 20th century (<https://www.library.northwestern.edu/libraries-collections/herskovits-library/collection/digitized-collections.html>). Examples of maps included in this collection are a 1747 map of Africa and 1729 map of the Gold Coast (Ghana). These historical maps have full metadata, are searchable and search results could be refined by date, topic, era, author, region and other categories. Digital maps could be viewed either in thumbnail or full screen, zoomed in and out, shared or downloaded.

The Library of Congress World Digital Library (<https://www.wdl.org/en/>) provides free access to manuscripts, rare books, travel descriptions, maps, photographs, and other important cultural documents from all countries including some African countries. The amount of material differs from country to country. The website provides multiple ways to search and browse content, including by place, time, topic, type of item and contributing institution. Every item can be viewed with state-of-the art zoom features capturing details of an object and materials can be downloaded or viewed online.

Other digital collections contain ephemera such as posters from the Africana Poster collection at the Herskovits Library of African Studies (<https://www.library.northwestern.edu/libraries-collections/herskovits-library/collection/posters.html>). These posters are a form of primary source that address various political, social and cultural issues such as liberation and independence struggles, anti-apartheid movement, political campaigns, HIV/AIDS, civil wars and popular culture. The materials are important teaching tools providing historical context to events and showing how institutions and organizations communicated with Africans during a certain period in history. Examples include a poster of the 1994 parliamentary and presidential elections in Malawi depicting a set of voting instructions illustrated by a woman performing the various steps at the ballot box. Another is a health promotion poster from the University of Cape Town AIDS Awareness Program aimed at HIV/Aids prevention and care of those afflicted with the disease.

Digitized collections curated in Africa include the *Genocide Archive of Rwanda* ([http://genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php/Welcome\\_to\\_Genocide\\_Archive\\_Rwanda](http://genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php/Welcome_to_Genocide_Archive_Rwanda)).

This is a digital collection of items related to the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda, pre-genocide history and post-genocide reconstruction. Materials are also available at the physical archives in Kigali. This collection contains photographs, objects, audio recordings, video recordings, documents and publications as well as interactive mapping data. The collection is well organized with basic and advanced search features and browsable by material format.

Another collection is the *Digital Innovation South Africa* (<https://disa.ukzn.ac.za/>). The collection contains varied materials from the Alan Paton, Gandhi-Luthuli, and Campbell collections. Materials include photographs, videos, speeches, letters, oral histories, interviews, testimonies related to the freedom struggle in southern Africa. It covers the period 1950-1994 providing insights into the political and social turbulence of the apartheid period, and the struggle for democracy and justice. The collection can be browsed, searched by keywords, title, creator and content can be filtered by resource type.

The Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand (<http://www.historicalpapers.wits.ac.za/>) contains over 3400 collections of historical, political and cultural importance, from the mid-17th century. Some collections in the archive have been fully digitized while other collections are partially digitized. Collections include records of human rights NGOs, trade unions, labor federations, political parties, women's organizations, churches and church bodies, and the papers of human rights activists. They include photographs, newspaper clippings and oral interviews.

Most of the digital collections discussed above have interfaces that are user friendly, users can browse or conduct a basic search or an advanced search using keywords. Results could be filtered by date, format, media, collection or contributing institution. Images can be zoomed in and out and many of the materials are downloadable. Most items have metadata attached with information about source, its origins, nature and subject matter. Some collections provide information on the copyright status of a digital item.

### **Discovery and Access**

The discovery of and access to digitized collections is an important component of their adoption in teaching and research. Although digital sources are regarded as beneficial to student learning many of the studies on the use of online digital primary sources in teaching and research report that discoverability is a major barrier to access. Malkmus (2008) found in her study that faculty are not always aware of which primary sources have been digitized. Diekema, Leary, Haderlie, & Walters (2011) noted that unless users find and use digital primary sources anything less is a waste of effort and the potential of such resources. This indicates that much work remains to improve the discovery and access to online primary sources. Efforts in improving discovery and access could include outreach programs such as the Library of Congress's Teaching with Primary Sources program. To encourage use of materials in its American memory digital collections the library collaborates with school districts, universities and libraries to offer professional development workshops and fund outside activities. Other examples are the U.S National Archives DocsTeach program, an online tool for teaching with documents and the Virginia Center for Digital history's outreach program which offers



training workshops for K-12 and university educators to integrate digitized primary resources in teaching. Many digitization projects are grant funded by organizations such as the National Endowment for the Humanities, Mellon Foundation and the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme. Some grant money could be set aside for outreach activities to encourage use. Studies have reported that faculty seek information about new on-line primary sources from E-mail announcements, browsing Web sites and blogs, professional publications, or informal conversations with colleagues. Chassanoff (2013) reported a desire among history faculty for a uniform access to digital sources and a system for getting updates on new collections. It could be useful to implement sustainable promotional strategies. This could be achieved with outreach tools excellent for sharing information such as newsletters, collection blogs on library websites, social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Flickr and Pinterest.

### **Implications for librarians, faculty and archivists**

Librarians, faculty and archivists have a significant role in the discovery, access and adoption of online primary sources in an African history classroom. Schonfeld and Housewright (2012) in an Ithaka S+R survey reported the changing research methods and practices of academic historians in the United States. Among recommendations were that libraries should develop new research support models that address historians' needs for assistance in discovering and accessing primary source materials. Dominique (2012) recommended direct librarian involvement in course design, implementation and in assignments. Weiner, Morris & Mykytiuk (2015) in identifying archival literacy competencies among undergraduate students recommended a strong need for faculty, librarians and archivists to combine their expertise to train students in analyzing, interpreting and evaluating both print and digital sources. This collaboration is necessary to successfully engage and train students in finding and using digital primary sources. Faculty have expertise with course content, create course outcomes and have knowledge of the skill levels of their students as well as the needs. They are also better equipped to teach students how to develop research questions and interpret sources. Librarians and archivists are experts at locating and evaluating sources and have knowledge of fast-changing information technologies.

It is important for librarians and archivists to be aware of faculty and course use of digital primary sources since it will help in targeting outreach and collaboration and designing instructional needs. Malkmus (2010) identified three areas where faculty utilized all types of primary sources in teaching. These were specified as document analysis at the freshman level; developing search skills in a second-year methods course and in-depth consultations for upper level students. Course integrated instruction is an example of a library support model where faculty, librarians and archivists can collaborate

to introduce students to digital primary sources. This involves a one-shot instruction class or a librarian engaging in a more active role by embedding in a course. An embedded librarian has the advantage of meeting students at the point of need in the research process including teaching them how to search, select and evaluate the credibility and authenticity of online primary sources. Specific tutorials could include information on how to add country codes and domains such as educational institutions, museums and governments in searches to help student and faculty get specific results from search engines. Other studies have found a pressing need for a clearinghouse of online archives together with guidance and tutorials on how to use content in repositories. Overholt (2013) recommended a multi-institutional repositories interface like the Europeana digital library. Libraries and archives could work with aggregators such as the Hathi Trust and Digital Public Library of America to aggregate digitized collections. At the local level librarians and archivists could create tools to consolidate online digital resources. Examples of such tools include course guides that provide comprehensive listings of relevant digital collections. A guide can also be an appropriate tool for posting video tutorials on how to use Google searches effectively to get desired results using specific terms such as “testimony, diaries, personal narratives” in searches. Librarians could also assist in introducing social media tools like History pin, Wikimedia commons and Flickr into assignments. Other collaborations could involve library, faculty and students in exhibits incorporating primary sources. These collaborations will help improve the discovery and access and result in the increased use of such resources in an African history classroom.

## **Conclusions**

The abundance of online freely accessible primary sources related to Africa has the potential to transform the teaching of African history. Introduced in the African history classroom students will be able to interact with unique documents and objects that provide insights into events and people from the past, helping them relate in personal ways and promoting a deeper understanding of Africa’s past. Though there are problems such as incomplete collections, fragile or unstable websites, dead links and copyright issues digital sources are adequate to use in undergraduate level courses. However, to make online digital sources discoverable, accessible and useable, faculty, librarians and archivists need to collaborate and to advocate for platforms and the creation of central search systems or gateways for digital primary source materials.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**The Leopard, the Lion and the Cock: Colonial Memories and Monuments in Belgium**, by Matthew G. Stanard. Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2019. 338 pp. ISBN 97894 6270 1793.

This innovative work really consists of two books, running in parallel. On the one hand, there is the normal text which lays out the Belgian experience of colonialism from Leopold II to the present day, providing the political, economic and military background to the principal theme, evidence for the cultural history of this imperial experience. On the other, there are the boxes (at least 84 of them), most of them demarcated by an 'M' which describe and chart the history of colonial monuments, together with plaques and street signs, erected in Belgium during the period. Most are accompanied by photographs, often taken by the author. The genesis, inauguration and after life of these monuments is described in detail, including the destruction of some of them, and the anti-colonial demonstrations they have invoked. The title needs explanation – the leopard symbolises the Congo itself (it was the emblem of Mobutu, dictator of the Congo from 1965-1997), the lion is the symbol of the Flemish northern part of Belgium, while the cockerel denotes the French-speaking Wallonia in the south. Most British-orientated historians, as well as more general readers are only acquainted with the Congo on the one hand through the horrors of the rubber system introduced by Leopold II during his period of personal rule and the struggles of the Congo Reform Association (probably the most popularly active movement after Slavery Abolition) to produce change, and on the other with the violence of the rapid and unplanned decolonisation of 1960. During that period the mineral-rich Katanga attempted to break away under Moïse Tshombe, a movement supported by southern African capitalists and politicians which produced civil war, the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, the first Congolese prime minister, and the death in an air crash in 1961 of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld.

The plain text fills in a great deal more about both the modern history of Belgium and of its relations with the Congo. Stanard pursues here a cyclical theory for popular reactions to this imperial adventure (the single vast colony of the Congo was supplemented after the First World War with the mandate of the formerly German Ruanda Urundi, now Rwanda and Burundi, which remained as UN trust territories until 1962). He charts the manner in which public interest rose and fell through the twentieth century, with the popular profile of the Congo often occurring in ex post facto rather than contemporary circumstances. Thus, the interest in and controversy about the Leopoldian era tended to come after it ended in 1908. Actions against Germany in the First World War had the capacity to create colonial military heroes, while (strikingly late in the history of European colonialism in Africa), the 1950s was a 'golden age' with considerable economic development, many more Belgians going to

the Congo, and a sense of greater administrative and missionary fulfilment. Almost inevitably, a great deal more interest was shown after the disasters of 1960 and after, while anniversaries (such as the 100th anniversary in 2008 of the Belgian take-over of the Congo or the 50th anniversary of Congolese independence in 2010) tended to arouse fresh interest in ceremonial, publications, performances and sometimes demonstrations. Through all of this, the author takes a relatively sceptical approach, suggesting that the Belgian public at large was far from being obsessed with anything approaching a dominant ideology of imperialism.

However, there are other highly significant interpretations embedded here. Stanard suggests that it is at least possible that possession of the Congo as a major national enterprise helped to unite the Flemish and Wallonian population of the country, serving to smooth over the ethnic and linguistic fracture so long a problem of the young and somewhat artificial nation (only founded of course in 1830). Such strains re-emerged, whether coincidentally or as a direct consequence, after the end of the whole Congolese enterprise from the 1960s. Moreover, for some at least of the successors of Leopold, the Congo continued to represent a larger stage for a monarchy with only limited geographical significance. Royal tours in Africa had the effect of producing greater publicity for the Congo as well as increasing the monarch's public profile. In addition, the mission *civilisatrice* was particularly emphasised by missionary activity, though it also of course had administrative, economic, medical, infrastructural and military dimensions. Missionaries, as elsewhere, had a major international organisation behind them as well as their own publications and lecture tours to help propagate the heroism, selflessness, and significance of their activities. Such heroism was emphasised throughout by the prevalence of early deaths through disease that afflicted all those Belgians (and representatives of other nationalities) who went to the Congo, particularly in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For Stanard perhaps the greatest irony of all is that the most notable public recognition of the Congo happened in more modern times with the development of the revulsion against imperialism and the emergence of movements dedicated to the repudiation of not only Leopold, but also subsequent Belgian colonial activities.

There are two other strands running through this richly textured book. One is the cultural manifestations of the Congo and colonialism in literature, the theatre, architecture, exhibitions, film and pictorial representations. The other is the history of the extraordinary museum at Tervuren, which seemed to offer for much of its history imperial propaganda and commemorations to an almost embarrassing degree, complete with a commemorative hall listing all the Europeans (and no Africans at all) who died or were killed in the Congo during the earlier colonial era. When I visited it in 2007 it remained in its colonial aspic, but it closed in 2013 and only reopened in an updated form in 2018, with its title symbolically changed from the Royal Museum of Central Africa

into the Africa Museum. Stanard examines all of this in an incisive manner, including a critique of the extent to which the renovation does the job expected of it. He also considers the inevitable theme of racism, its role in Belgian society (where there were very few immigrants until modern times), and its manifestation in all the many cultural expressions he unveils.

The major strand, the survey of the memorials, runs along with this. Each box contains information on the origins of the monument, its dedication, its sculpture and its inauguration. There is also material on the significance of its location, its subsequent history, site of ceremonies (for example commemorations by ex-colonials, military or religious organisations and those supportive of the imperial thrust) as well as the demonstrations, graffiti, the dousing in red paint symbolic of blood, mutilations, and even in one case temporary theft, that have occurred in the modern era of rejection and revulsion. These run through every chapter, even although the great majority have their origins in the post-1908, inter-war and sometimes post-Second World War period of the twentieth century. However, they are usually tied into the chronology of the chapters by specific events that took place in relation to them in the later period. It is an immensely useful catalogue of these Belgian *lieux de mémoire*, particularly when supplemented by the listing in the digital appendix which provides columns on the city, region, year built, person/place/thing commemorated, type, sculptor or architect, selected sources, existence confirmed, and the location information and notes. The only possible criticism is that there is some repetition between the text and the monument box (in one case we hear about one incident three times).

Inevitably, historians of other European empires must think about whether such listings would be possible elsewhere. Stanard makes the point that no Belgian historian had direct experience of empire within their own upbringing, which is of course a relatively common experience among the older generation of British historians of empire. In the British case, there are several active organisations dealing in genealogy and family history of people who went to the colonies, as well as bodies attempting to look after graveyards and cemeteries in former colonies, but this kind of listing would probably be impossible, for reasons of scale, in the British case. Apart from the mandate, Belgium had only one colony and yet its appearance in material culture was striking, even if its entry into popular culture may not have been as profound as in the British case. Stanard's book is something of a revelation and prompts many parallel thoughts in respect of other European empires.

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**Fieldwork of Empire, 1840-1900: Intercultural Dynamics in the Production of British Expeditionary Literature**, by Adrian S. Wisnicki. New York and London, Routledge, 2019. 205+xviii pp. ISBN 978-0-367-20745-8 (hardback).

This is an ambitious, perhaps over-ambitious, book in which the author examines the inter-cultural dynamics of the title in the expeditionary work of David Livingstone, John Hanning Speke, Richard Burton, Samuel Baker, and others. Wisnicki has the considerable reputation of having illuminated, even revolutionised Livingstone studies by his remarkable projects, Livingstone On-Line and the Spectral Imaging of the Livingstone field notes and letters. In consequence the reader embarks on this book with high expectations, which, it has to be said, are only partially fulfilled. After the introductory chapter on the purposes of the work, there is a brief, often problematic, chapter on Livingstone (see below). There is a considerable gear change when the author moves on into the maps of the East African Expedition, then the writings of Samuel Baker and field notes by various explorers on the Lualaba River in the Congo. The final chapter is a brief examination of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* as an example of both an expeditionary and conspiracy narrative. Wisnicki's argument here is that despite the enormous literature on Conrad, these connections have been missed by many literary scholars. The book then ends with an epilogue demonstrating the value of digital humanities research in this field.

This summary of the contents helps to reveal the disparate character of the chapters. Although 'intercultural dynamics' are clearly intended to be the unifying factor of these different approaches, the fact is that the changes of direction often cause problems. The Livingstone chapter is based on texts and illustrations before we move on to very detailed cartographical material relating to East African exploration, as well as complex parallel narratives and discussions of ethnographic constructions and problems. But to emphasise the positive, it must be said that the qualities of the book include its placing of the work of Roy Bridges at the centre of its discussion. Bridges has in many respects never received the attention and praise that he deserved, partly because so much of his work on exploration appeared in the form of articles, introductions, and the editing of journals and narratives. In particular, Wisnicki highlights Bridges' important analysis of the various stages of these exploratory narratives, from field notes and journals to letters, reports and lectures, and on to the original versions of published works before editors and publishers got their hands on the material to prepare it appropriately (as they saw it) for public consumption. Wisnicki certainly does a good job here. The other qualities include the vast range of sources used and the extraordinary level of detail, for example in both the cartographical and ethnographic discussions. He is also rightly interested in the various ways in which the expeditionary narratives 'constructed' aspects of African geography, preparing the continent for the scramble inherent in the conference and Treaty of Berlin of



1884-5, as well as creating the image of 'darkness' so important to imperial and missionary propaganda.

When all that has been said, however, Wisnicki sometimes comes off the rails. In the Livingstone chapter there are a number of dubious judgements or inaccuracies. For example, he castigates Livingstone for being belated in his confirmation of Murchison's theory of the physical and hydrographic formation of Central Africa. Yet all theorisation must necessarily be tested by empirical observation and Livingstone was loud in his praise for Murchison's theoretical position and demonstrated that he had confirmed this by testing it on the ground (he still got some things wrong of course). That just seems like a normal progression rather than some belated arrival at the same theory. But it gets worse. Wisnicki suggests that Livingstone's famous encounter with the lion reveals his 'interest in self-aggrandizement' (p. 23). He then demonstrates that Livingstone's description of the incident in his letters and the illustration in *Missionary Travels* diverge seriously, apparently revealing the missionary's self-serving revision in the published version. However, if Wisnicki had taken the trouble to read Tim Barringer's analysis of the publisher's illustrations he would have discovered that Livingstone found the illustration 'absolutely abominable' and asked the publisher to suppress it since 'Everyone who knows what a lion is will die with laughing over it'.<sup>1</sup> 'It's like a dray horse over me'.<sup>1</sup> The publisher, who had probably paid for it, failed to do so and it duly appeared in the published version. Yet another of Wisnicki's strange comments comes with the famous description of the Victoria Falls. In what he describes as 'the most telling passage' in *Missionary Travels*, 'Livingstone narrates his phallic-like visual penetration of the Falls' (p. 34). In the passage in question, Livingstone, peering over the edge of the Falls from the island in the river, describes how a stream 'a thousand yards broad leaped down a hundred feet and then became suddenly compressed into a space of fifteen or twenty yards'. How this becomes a 'phallic-like visual penetration' is surely to plumb the depths of overwrought interpretation. In fact, Livingstone's description is entirely accurate (although the dimensions are even more dramatic) and can be understood in terms of the basaltic formation of the Falls which, over geological time, had formed a whole succession of such narrow, tight gorges. It is in the realm of such detailed technical understanding that Wisnicki surprisingly falls down. For example, in his analysis of Livingstone's relationships with various African peoples there are surprising silences. The Afrikaners (Boers) never appear and, more culpably, there is no mention at all of the Nguni Mfecane and the ripples of disturbances that the Nguni migrations caused throughout Central Africa. The peoples whom Livingstone encountered were often in the process of looking for allies and protection from these powerful forces around them.

Wisnicki has done a great deal to foster the understanding of multiple texts and of hidden or complex images in the productions of explorers. He has pro-

duced astonishing detail, particularly in the chapters that are not centrally about Livingstone. But, perhaps by extending himself too far, he has fallen into a number of traps. In some respects he has also followed so many lines of enquiry in his pursuit of 'intercultural dynamics' that he has missed key areas of analysis.

## References

1 Tim Barringer, 'Fabricating Africa: Livingstone and the Visual Image 1850-1874' in National Portrait Gallery, *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter with Africa* (London, NPG, 1996), pp. 178-9.

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**Taking African Cartoons Seriously: Politics, Satire, and Culture**, edited by Peter Limb and Tejumola Olaniyan. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2018, xlviii+ 259 pp. ISBN 978-1-60917-676-X.

The introductory chapter by Peter Limb provides a well-argued overview to cartooning that goes beyond mere chronicling of cartooning in Africa to a deeply historical and analytical account of cartooning in the 'continent'. The book, in this section, both acknowledges previous work on cartooning, and raises key questions of interest to scholars of contemporary cartooning such as animation, media freedom, the ambiguous role of cartoonists as both artists and journalists, and the role of the digital media infrastructure in shaping both cartooning cultures and practice in Africa. In the context of debates on the dynamics of knowledge production in the continent, I am not too sure of the role that Tejumola Olaniyan – the second author – played in editing the book, since his name (and contribution) is missing in possibly the most important section of an edited book, the introductory chapter. Whether his inclusion as an editor was an afterthought or the omission an oversight, the section does not disappoint in highlighting the theoretical debates that have captured the scholarly thrust of cartooning and comic cultures in Africa.

Further, the book's major strength is in its ability to bring together scholars from diverse fields such as history, popular culture, languages on the same platform with cartoonists from the continent. The interesting sections of the book also comprise interviews with prominent cartoonists such as South Africa's Zapiro, Botswana's Mabijo, Nigeria's cartoonists scholar Jimga and Kenyan based Tanzanian cartoonist Gado. These cartoonists no doubt comprise the pantheon of African cartooning today. Still, as one reads on, a clear, possibly unavoidable case of the 'usual suspects' emerges which eventually defines the soul of this book. The book is primarily a case study of a handful of English-Speaking African countries whose ranking in the media freedom index is comparatively higher than other African countries. The chapters are from South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Botswana and Ghana only. Whether it is Ganiyu's satirical piece on the National Police Force in Nigeria, or Tejumola's profile of Bisi Ogunbadejo's collection, Mason's and Opperman's chronicling of Post-Apartheid cartooning, Paula Callus' ground-breaking study of Kenya's XYZ show or Oduro-Frimpong's survey of cartooning in Ghana's fourth republic, the portrait of 'African cartoons' given in this volume may be seen as misleading. While this is not entirely surprising, it points to the reality that the future of African cartoons is inextricably tied to the political realities of their geographies.

Despite its shortcomings in scope, this volume is an important scholarly intervention in capturing and documenting an industry and popular cultural form that is vastly and quickly changing. Furthermore, the capacity of the editors to convene the quintessential pantheon of cartoonists from Africa – profiling

their work and experiences – in the same volume as scholars working on these texts, is the book's main strength. There is little doubt that the authors take African cartoons seriously.

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**Debating African Philosophy: Perspectives on Identity, Decolonial Ethics and Comparative Philosophy**, edited by George Hull, London and New York, Routledge, 2019, xvi+321 pp. ISBN (hardback) 9781138344952, £96, (paperback) 9781138344969, £32

Reviewing an edited collection is no easy task, as one is expected to give a snapshot covering a wide array of pieces which may not really be in conversation with each other. Misleading generalisations are often a real danger. Nevertheless, I will attempt to note down a few impressions about the book, which in my view is not only timely but also generally well organised, distributed in coverage, and argued.

The academy is currently preoccupied with questions of decolonisation, stretching across the disciplines and speaking to all sorts of perspectives. At the Centre of African Studies at Cambridge University from where I am writing this review, in the past two months, I have attended about four workshops on decolonisation. Though seemingly a direct theme, the more one listens to the debates around it the more you realise its complexity – let alone that its definition itself is contested and not helped by its elasticity. This book thus comes in at the right moment, especially as a contribution by philosophers to the subject, most of whom speak out of immersion in the thick of the phenomena being discussed. Anyone familiar with more recent decolonisation debates must be aware of the catalytic role of the Rhodes Must Fall movement at the University of Cape Town. The spirit of the book is clearly animated by the fact that, as George Hull narrates in the Introduction, some of the papers in the seminar series from which the book emerges were:

... presented in hidden locations to the nearby accompaniment of struggle songs, as groups of students and workers protesting outsourcing and fees advanced along University Avenue, interrupting lectures and ejecting academics and administrators from their offices as they went (p.2).

The subject of decolonisation is not new; but, as the articles in the book show, it keeps evolving, taking with it some old questions and seeking to address itself to emerging ones. The book discusses issues around conceptions of ‘African Philosophy’ and the different questions they raise. These are old questions too, but they are here extended to wider debates in Ethics, Meta-Philosophy, Epistemology, Justice, and Race Relations – and joined by philosophers from outside Africa too.

African Philosophy has perennially faced a challenge of being reactive to ‘Western Philosophy’ and seeking by performance to be accepted into the latter’s orthodoxies. As part of the recent move away from that approach, there are legitimate attempts in this book by contributors to debate on their own critical terms, even when they engage other philosophies. The overly self-just-

tificatory tone that characterised much of earlier philosophical endeavours in Africa seems to be gradually receding to rest.

Much to its credit, the book treads along the idea that philosophers can be relevant to questions in their contexts while at the same time producing knowledge that can be of use elsewhere (questions of particulars and universals). This is exemplified by the contributors' engagement with issues of justice, ecology, bioethics, human relations, identity, and values. Yet, commendably, most of them stay away from the temptation of romanticising things 'African' as contrasted against their historical 'other', the 'West'. They are progressively critical of each other; even those like Mogobe Ramose that come in announcing 'war with epistemic and social slavery' attempt to 'fight' with weapons of evidence.

One of the debates in Philosophy Departments in Africa today is on what and how Philosophy should be taught. How should the Philosophy curriculum be decolonised? Should 'African Philosophy' be taught as a standalone course into which all that has been written under the subject for years should be compressed in one semester alongside all else that is 'Western'? Should it be integrated into all sub-disciplines and not be treated as a special category? This collection thinly addresses this debate, but nevertheless provides useful material/readings that would inform a couple of Philosophy sub-disciplines in a decolonised curriculum. It richly adds to the voluminous *Palgrave Handbook of African Philosophy* that was only published two years ago (Afolayan and Falola, eds 2017).

Whereas common generalities are mostly avoided or clarified in the book, it is evidently difficult to avoid unduly lumping so many varied things together under oversimplified convenient continental categories. For instance, the 'African' in 'African Ethics' is elaborated to be in reference to "indigenous cultures, practices, ideas, etc" (Angier, p.207), with the exclusion of those of "non-African origin". On the surface, this seems self-evident, but it raises critical questions on indigeneness and the criterion of 'African origin'. How recent should a practice have come to Africa to be considered original or indigenenous? How far back do we go in tracing origin?

Other references to Sub-Saharan Africa also carry with them race bound essentialism and nativist subtexts which are sometimes only but political inventions of colonisers that were appropriated by the colonised as a reactionary political identity into which subsequent scholars struggle to pour homogenising content. This is not to deny the existence of significant similarities in black Africa, but to warn against racialising and overstretching them. The same tendency is seen in some hasty comparative reference to the 'West', as though it is a homogenous philosophical tradition!

My attention to one other debate that is conspicuously missing in this book came about in the follow-up of what transpired at the most recent African Philosophy World Conference hosted by the University of Dar es Salaam (28th – 30th October 2019) – the issue of gender! There was insistence by some female participants on adding gender in African Philosophy to the agenda. For a number of structural reasons, and perhaps more than in Philosophy elsewhere, African Philosophy has been mostly a preserve of men. It is quite commendable that almost half of the contributors to this volume are female. However, beyond this statistical balance, gender barely features in the focus and analytic frames of the contributions. Given the so many gender questions inherent in African Philosophy, this is a notable omission.

To the silence on gender, I may add the observation that, whereas the title and overview of the book are apparently generic in geographical coverage, contributors appear to be exclusively from South Africa, Europe and America! Considering that the collection acknowledges the significance of location and experiences in the production of Philosophy, it would have benefited from wider inclusion in Africa. Perhaps this limitation was occasioned by the fact that the book originated from internal seminars at the University of Cape Town.

Nevertheless, overall, the collection is a great read and welcome extension of the boundaries of African Philosophy. My key highlight is how it brings the iconic philosophers, Immanuel Kant and John Locke, to the scholarship dock to take moral responsibility for their unforgivable silence and racist jests during anti-slavery debates. The irony of it is that Kant is considered to be one of the greatest moral philosophers and Locke among the greatest political thinkers!

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**Life in Three Worlds: Reminiscences**, by Sumitra Talukdar with David Ambrose. Roma, Lesotho, House 9 Publications & Mohokare Trust, 2018. vi, 410pp. (Copies available from Mohokare Trust, P.O. Box 958, Ladybrand 9745 South Africa)

The name Sumitra Talukdar may not readily come to mind except to botanists, but the name of David Ambrose will be recognized by most readers of *ARD* as the dedicated chronicler, bibliographer and cartographer of Lesotho over many decades. They are in fact wife and husband. This is her story which he encouraged her to write and which as he points out in a preface he had to complete when "her memory began to fade".

The first of the three worlds is India where the author was born in 1931 and left in 1966 to take up an appointment in Lesotho, thereafter only returning to India for visits to family and travel. The second world is the U.K., beginning with Oxford where the author did her D.Phil, 1954-1958 (the reviewer and she may have passed each other cycling down the Banbury Road) moving on to a post-doctorate fellowship at the University of Liverpool, 1965-1966, and then to visits to her in-laws living in retirement in Loughton (and eventually purchasing the house next door), and amongst other events accompanying David Ambrose to receive his MBE at Buckingham Palace in 1994 and to see their son's passing-out parade at Sandhurst, 1997. The third world of course is Lesotho, and Southern Africa in general. The author was appointed as a Senior Lecturer at what was then the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland in 1966. She there met David, already on the staff, they married in 1971, and remained colleagues until retirement just over the border to Ladybrand in the Free State in 2008. It sometimes seems that this third world was really only a base for travel: we are told that they together visited some 55 countries and much of this travel is related and illustrated in the book. Indeed chapter 33 is entitled "Around the world in 192 days" and gives an account of travel in 1981, first to India, then to Australia, New Zealand, four Pacific island states, the U.S. and the U.K.

'Illustrated' should be emphasized: it is certainly the most pictorial autobiography that the reviewer has ever read. The book's cover tells us that there are 370 illustrations. Most are in colour and the paper chosen for the book has allowed them to be printed within the text. Some have separate legends but many are simply referred to within the adjacent text, thus working them seamlessly into the narrative.

The two most striking impressions of the work as a whole are the author's concerns with family and friends and also her sense of place. On family: four chapters at the start of the book are devoted to accounts of her father and her mother's families, complete with family trees, before the author is even born: an appendix contains a further five page genealogy of her mother's family.



Her mother died while she was still at school but her father survived for a further 40 years and her concerns for him recur regularly throughout the book. As do updates on her other relatives in India, their education, employment, marriages and children. In Lesotho, family are replaced by colleagues, friends and retainers and an endless flow of visitors and guests: a typographical convention of the book seems to be to print the names of new arrivals in the “cast of thousands” in bold. As for ‘place’, the book’s cover again tells us that there are 23 maps and plans. Every family dwelling in each of the three worlds is illustrated by photos, often by reproductions of street (or campus) plans, and often of actual house layout plans, some drawn from memory.

Is the narrative all domestic? By no means: political events and ideologies, natural and man-made disasters all appear, but accounts are largely matter of fact. The Bengal famine of 1943: “when we could I went with my second cousin ... taking what rice we could spare to distribute to needy people. It was quite common to find corpses on the pavement”. There is just over a page on the communal riots between Muslims and Hindus in Calcutta in 1946, leading on to a description of a personal encounter with Gandhi visiting the troubled city: just a paragraph on actual partition in 1947 (when of course the author was still only 16). Apartheid in neighbouring South Africa naturally appears frequently, but usually in a matter of fact description of “the bizarre discriminatory practices” (her phrase) which I found helped to emphasize its absurdities. On first arriving to take up her post in Roma she flies into Bloemfontein then the nearest international airport, is collected by her head of department and wonders why he is driving so fast to cross the border, only discovering later that ‘persons of Asiatic descent’ had to have left the Free State by sunset. A typical remark, after a couple of pages discussing her Roma “helpers” (in this case the cook, the washerwoman and the gardener) is to write “unsavoury though it is, our life is not complete without an account of political developments”, in this case disturbances connected with opposition to the ruling Basotho National Party. Later the Maseru Raid of 1982 gets six paragraphs and the military coup of 1986 gets a couple. Mandela’s release is discussed but most emotion is shown over his “tragic” break with Winnie. The only lengthy account of matters political is an account of the various coups and administrative changes in Lesotho’s Government during 1990 to 1994 which gets three pages

The rhythm of the narrative speeds up and slows down depending on events of the years covered – and there is always room for asides and for detours from the chronology. There is a fascinating chapter on ‘Theko Maama’, one of 32 male children of the former chief of the Roma area, whose knowledge of Lesotho history, of the names and uses of local plants, and the names and occurrences of Lesotho birds and other animals proved useful to both Sumitra and David. Their involvement in helping the local hospital, St. Joseph’s, in the 1980s and 90s requires a history of the hospital since 1937. The book has com-

paratively little about the author's botanical studies and teaching and it was a pleasure to see a whole chapter devoted to "The Spiral Aloe, *Aloe polyphylla*", a plant often used as a national symbol but rapidly disappearing to poachers supplying a foreign market. The final chapters cover co-operative activity between husband and wife: designing an issue of Lesotho postage stamps in 1995 to mark the 50th anniversary of university studies in the country, working together on editing *Biological diversity in Lesotho* (2000) and on House 9 publications and indeed films, one the personal account of the Ambroses "An academic partnership: 40 years in Lesotho". House 9 was the building on campus into which they moved after marriage. The very last chapter is an account of the Mohokare Trust, set up to maintain the activities of *The Lesotho annotated bibliography* and its associated collection of books, periodicals, documents (350+ storage boxes) and thousands of photographs, all now stored in their retirement home in Ladysmith (for further details on this see <http://www.mohokaretrust.org/index.html>). "If sufficient capital is available the Trust can survive and continue the work which we have jointly initiated". A final unusual touch is Appendix I which reproduces Sumitra's horoscope, cast in India in 1959, and not merely of academic interest, since it was the document, offered in lieu of a non-existent birth certificate, that persuaded the South African government to issue her with a South African ID for her retirement!

The book is a most enjoyable read. The author has a dry humour, a great deal of human compassion, an interest in everything she eats and in everyone she meets from Vice-Chancellors to cooks. And quietly the narrative offers many telling, even if introduced almost incidentally, insights into life in both India in the 20th century (the introductory chapters take the story back long before the author's birth) and particularly of course in Lesotho over nearly 50 years.

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