

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Department of History
Semester I 1972-73

HISTORY 674

MR. VANSINA

Historical Methods for Verbal Societies

Each week two papers will be presented and one period will be devoted to lectures. Six or twelve week exams will not be given, except for those who wish to take a six weeks examination. But the grade will not count towards the final grade. More details at the first meeting.

Readings seem relatively light, but they are not! Many require extra effort because they deal with unfamiliar disciplines. Readings should be completed by the first session of each week, barring the first one, because the general principles relevant to each discipline and presented in the readings are taken as a point of departure, not one of arrival for the class.

Required Textbooks:

D. McCall, Africa in Time Perspective (abridged MC)

C. Gabel and N. Bennett, Reconstructing African Culture History (abridged GB.)

Although the textbooks deal with Africa only they have a much wider relevance and the course hopes to achieve a wider geographical coverage. It is a general course in methods. Africa is merely the most used example.

Suggested readings follow in the syllabus. In linguistics you might want to buy L. BLOOMFIELD, Language history (ed. HOIJER, Holt Paperback) reprinting relevant chapters of Language (1933) and MANDELBAUM, D., ed., Selected Writings of Edward Sapir, Berkeley, 1963. For those who go further, W. LEHMANN, Historical Linguistics (paperback ed.) is the next step. The basic texts are still H. PAUL, Grundprinzipien der Sprachgeschichte, Halle 1920 (translated in English 1970) and A. MEILLET, Introduction a l'etude comparative des langues indo-europeennes, Paris 1937 8th ed. and the latter's linguistique historique et linguistique generale, Paris I, 1926, II 1938. In Anthropology Mandelbaum cited above and C. A. Schmitz, Historische Volkerkunde, Frankfurt a/M 1967 are useful. In Archaeology no single text is recommended. C. GABEL, Analysis of Prehistoric Economic Patterns, 1967 (paperback Spindler) is limited but worthwhile. Perhaps the most equilibrated text is S. PIGGOTT, Ancient Europe, Aldine, 1965 (introduction!). The classics for biological data are for plants: ANDERSON, E., Plants, Man and Life (paperback, U. Calif., 1967); for animals H. E. ZEJNER, A History of Domesticated Animals, London, 1963, and H. EPSTEIN, The Origin of the Domestic Animals of Africa, 2 vols., 1971. (Ag. Library); for humans the only work with historical value remains J. HIERNAUX, La diversite humaine en Afrique subsaharienne, 2 vols., Brussels 1968.

It is obvious that students would do well to be acquainted with the basic notions of "classical" historical method. A book such as R. J. SHAFER, A Guide to Historical Method (paperback, Dorsey Press 1969) is useful (esp. parts III and IV). Among the classics BLOCH, M., Apologie pour l'histoire (translated) is a favorite. For "modern" history see F. GILBERT and S. GRAUBARD, Historical Studies Today, NY 1972 (abridged GG).

There is no reading period except for Week 9 when the basic texts on linguistics are introduced.

Week IV
contd.

Recommended Reading: papers on notion of Time (there are many), Cause (very few), Space (many), Fate (few), Truth (very few) and History in general. For the last, M. Mead, Homogeneity and Hypertrophy: A Polynesian-based Hypothesis in Highland et al, Polynesian Culture History, Honolulu 1967 (abridged POL) is the most stimulating.

Divergent traditions. For the cases cited see Were, G.S., A History of the Abaluyia of Western Kenya, Nairobi 1967 versus Ogot, B.A., History of the Southern Luo, Part I, Nairobi 1967. On Fipa R. G. Willis, Traditional History and Social Structure in Ufipa-Africa (abridged A) xxiv, 4, 1964, p. 340-352, and Willis, G.R., Kaswa: Oral Tradition of a Fipa Prophet -A., xl, 3, 1970, p. 248-256; on Igala, Boston, J.S., The Hunter in Igala Legends of Origin-A. xxxiv, 2, 1964, 116-125.

Week V:

Assessing and Collecting Traditions: How to collect.

Paper: The case of the Ifa divination texts or the Kumuhuona legends (Hawai) or others; assessment of the tradition.

Paper: Critique of a plan for collection on a case, e.g., Soga, Ewe, etc.

Required Reading: A. Roberts, Recording Oral Tradition in East Africa Dar es Salaam, 1968, p.1-19; OT Appendix; E. J. Algoa -JAH, VII, 1966, 3, p. 405-420; P. D. Curtin, JAH, IX, 3, 1968, p. 367-386; M. G. Smith, JAH, II, 1961, I, 87-102

Recommended Reading: a body of traditions (there are a great many available). For Ifa see W. Bascom, Ifa Divination, Bloomington, Ind. 1970; for Kumuhuona, D. Barrere, The K. Legends, Honolulu (Bishop Mus) (1968?). For the Ewe, cfr. N'Sougan Agblemagnon, Sociologie des sociétés orales d'Afrique noire, Paris, 1969; For the Soga, D. W. Cohen, The Historical Tradition of Busoga, London, 1972, esp., 28-69. For West Africa, programs and comments in D. Laya, La tradition orale, Niamey, 1972;

Week VI:

Chronology: Written Records of Traditions: The chronology of Oral Tradition

Paper: a chronology, e.g. based on age-grades; on recurrence of ceremonies, etc.

Paper: Contamination of Traditions by Writing: a case

Required Reading: JAH, 1970, number two; D. Henige, JAH, 1971, xii,3,371-389.

Recommended Reading: papers dealing with time or chronology. A good example, G. Dieterlen, -A. 1971, I, 1-7 vs. M. Griaule, Masques Dogons, Paris, 1938. Contamination of tradition is commented upon occasionally in recent times. The interlactstrine area should be a good case (Uganda. Cfr. S. R. Karugire, A History of the Kingdom of Nkore, Oxford, 1971, esp. p.2-5, and tracking the references down. Any body of successive writings on the same area is worth investigating (e.g., Bunyoro, Yoruba, Benin...)

Week VII: Archaeology I. Introduction.

Paper: A Field Report analyzed, e.g. Ingombe Ilede, Igbo Ukw, Sanga Zimbabwe, Kilwa, Tegdaoust, etc.

Paper: Archaeology and ethnography: questions about pottery or the Phalaborwa case, or the Inca case, etc.

Required Reading: MC 28-37; GB 1-24, Graham Clarke, Archaeology and Society, Ch. II-IV, VI-VII. C. Gabel, Analysis of Prehistoric Economic Patterns, 1-68 (all), N.Y. 1968.

Recommended Reading: S. B. Binford, L. R. Binford, New Perspectives in Archaeology, Chicago, 1968, 1-48, part II and III; S. Piggott, Ancient Europe, Chicago, 1965, p. 1-23 and literature cited there; M. I. Finley, Archaeology and History - GG, 281-299. Most of this deals with the amount of social structure that can be reconstructed from archaeological remains. Two technical texts are W. W. Taylor, A Study of Archaeology, N.Y. (Arcturus) 1967, and Hole F., Heizer, R.F., An Introduction to Prehistoric Archaeology, N.Y. 1965, both still favorites., N. J. Vander Merwe, R.T.K. Scully, The Phalaborwa story, World Archaeology, 3 (1971/72), p. 178-196 plus reference. For pottery see e.g. N. David, The Ethnography of Pottery. On Inca: Work by J. V. Murra, C. Morris and D. Thompson on Huanuco from American Antiquity, 1962, 28, p. 1-4 to American Antiquity, 1970, 35, 3, p. 344-362, and eventual further publication.

Week VIII: Archaeology II. The Chronology of Archaeology (especially C.14).

Iconography and monuments (lecture)

Paper: interpret the iconography of Ife, Benin or rock art in Africa (iconography or monuments from other continents are welcome).

Required Reading: MC 107-119; GB 115-138; Graham-Clarke o.c., 132-168; H. Barker, JAH, 1972, XIII, 2, 177-187; Dyck, W., Recent Developments in C 14, Current Anthropology, 1967, 8,4, p.349-351; Renfrew, C., C 14, and the Prehistory of Europe, Scientific American, Oct, 1971, p. 63-72 (a bombshell), Mauny, R., Les fossiles directeurs en archéologie ouest-africaine, HTA, 257-262, can be replaced by the fishhook study of K. Emory, Hawaiian Archaeology: Fishhooks, Honolulu, 1959 (B. P. Bishop Spec.Pub.47).

Recommended Reading: H. C. Fritts, Tree Rings and Climate, Scientific American, May, 1972, p. 92-100; a monograph on excavations (excavation report); a monograph on iconography. F. Willet's Ife in the History of West African Sculpture, London, 1967, is a good example. J. Devisse, Archéologie et histoire en Afrique, Journal of World History, 1970, XII, 4, p. 539-559, shows what can be expected for that continent.

Week IX: Linguistics I

Required Reading: L. Bloomfield, Language, 297-320; Lehmann, Historical Linguistics, 1-14, 83-97, 115-146 (fundamental: if you can read it all); J. Greenberg, Essays in Linguistics, 35-55 and JAH 1972, XIII, 2, p. 189-216 (not for Bantu but for method).

Recommended Reading: If you have no notion of descriptive linguistics use H. A. Gleason, An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics, 1955. There are workbooks for both Gleason and Lehmann. One can read in addition, E. Sapir, Language, 147-191, esp.; E. H. Sturtevant, Linguistic Change, Chicago, 1961, the rest of Bloomfield and C.H. Hockett, A Handbook of Linguistics, N.Y. 1958; R. King, Historical Linguistics and Generative Phonology is not so convincing (1968).

In later weeks we will use mainly D. Daley, Language and History in Africa, London, 1970 (abridged DAL). One could read non assigned papers now.

Week X: Linguistics II: The Comparative Method

Paper: Comparative Bantu (e.g., use Guthrie's Comp. Bantu I and relevant articles in DAL or a problem on Austronesian or Athabascan.

Paper: Protovocabulary as a source. (Any language group OK. including an IndoEuropean one, or I.E. itself).

Required Reading: Bloomfield, 425-495; Lehmann, 193-231; Greenberg 66-74; DAL 20-49; 146-159, especially the last (Ch.S. Bird on Mande); D. Dalby, Levels of Relations, African Language Studies, VII, p. 171-179.

Recommended Reading: Sapir, Language, 197-220; C. Ehret, JAH, VIII, 1967, 1-17 and IX, 1968, 2, 213-222; Greenberg, JAH, I, 1960, 2, p. 205-212. W. W. Elmendorf, Some Problems in the Regrouping of Pwell Units, Canadian Journal of Linguistics 10 (2,3); 93-107, 1965; Murdock, G. P., Genetic Classification of the Austronesian Languages; a Key to Oceanic Culture History, Ethnology 3, 117-126, and the brilliant K. Williamson, Some Food Plant Names in the Niger Delta, International Journal of American Languages, 36, 2, 1970, p. 156-167; M. Haas, The Prehistory of Languages, 1969 (Janua Linguarum S. Minor 57), 120 p. contrasts the comparative method for written languages with the study of unwritten ones, starting from Bloomfield's work on Algonkian. Example of W. Elmendorf, International Journal of American Linguistics 29, 1963, p.300-309, and 30, 1964, p. 328-340, for detailed work on Yukian and Siouan.

Week XI Linguistics III: Borrowing, onomastics, dialect geography and lexicostatistics.

Paper: Loanwords in a particular language: e.g. Swahili, Hausa, Javanese (from Sanskrit), Spanish (from Arabic) or any other.

Exercise: in Lexicostatistics or Paper in onomastics or dialect geography.

Required Reading: Lehmann, 107-113; 233-242; J. Bynon -Dal:64-77; J. Knappert-Dal, 78-88, Mandelbaum (Sapir), 213-224; E. Haugen, The Analysis of Linguistic Borrowing, Language, 1950:26, 210-231. Dialect-geography of two tendencies: Cfr. W. W. ELMENDORF, Linguistic and geographical Relations in the Northern Plateau Area, Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, 1965, 21, I, 63-78, and J. A. Ballard, A. XLI, 4, Oct. 1971, 294-305. On personal names, Deluz, A.: Anthroponymie et recherche historique, L'Homme, 1967, I, 32-49 (for those who know French).

Recommended Reading: Armstrong, R. HTA, 127-144; C. Wrigley, M. Guthrie, R. Armstrong, JAH, III, 1962, 2, 269-285; B. Trigger and H. Lewis, JAH, VII, 1966, I, 19-46; section on Linguistics, POL, 255-338; Garvin, P.L., Kutenai Lexical Innovations, Word, 1948, 4, 120-126, Salisbury, R. F. (Bilingualism and Change in New Guinea), Anthropological Linguistics, 1962, 4 (7), 1-13, C. Ehret, Southern Nilotic History, Evanston 1971, all but esp. 10-25. For Onomastics the classics are by A. Dauzat, Noms de lieux, 1926, and Les noms depersonnes, 1924; Cfr. also C. Rostaing, Les noms de lieux (Que sais-je?) 1961, and F. Guiraud, La sémantique, 1964. On glotto chronology and lexicostatistics, cfr. Current Anthropology, Jan. 1960, July 1960, April 1962, July 1966 and C. L. Chretien, The Mathematical Models of Glottochronology, Language, 28, 1962, 11-37.

Week XII: Anthropology I: structural/functional arguments; analogy; retentions (survival).

Paper: Festivals and History (e.g. Festivals in Nigeria).

Paper: Retentions or Survivals? Can they be of use? Do they even exist?

Required Reading: MC 72-88; GB 25-44, 83-114; E. Sapir, Time Perspective in Aboriginal America, Mandelbaum, 389-462.

Recommended Reading: F. Graebner, Methode der Ethnologie, 1911; C. A. Schmitz, Historische Volkerkunde, 1967; W. Schmidt, The Cultural Historical Method in Anthropology, N. Y., 1939 (For those who do not read German don't identify with Grabner!). Also F. Boas, Race, Language and Culture, N.Y. 1940, p. 295-304 for a negative review by the leading U. S. Culture historian of the day. (All Histories of Anthropology comment on the U.S. and the Viennese Historical schools).

Week XIII: Anthropology II: Distributions.

Paper: discussion of The Sun Dance of the Plains Indians by L. Spier, 1921 (Am.Mus.Nat.Hist.XVI, Part 7, 451-527).

Paper: A study of distributions (e.g., xylophones in Africa, Banana in Africa, "Divine Kingship", etc.)

Required Reading: Herskovitz, M., Man and His Works, N.Y., 1956, 461-560.
Kroeber, A., Anthropology, 1948, 538-571.

Recommended Reading: Herskovits, ibid., 563-635; Kroeber, ibid., 344-538; Barnett, H., Innovation, N.Y. 1954; Vansina, J, article -Ranger T. C., Emerging Themes of African History, Dar es Salaam, 1968, 97-124. (All of these are exceptionally important). Also R. Narroll, R. Cohen, Handbook of Method in Cultural Anthropology, N.Y. 1970, 620-639, 676-688.

Week XIV: Anthropology III: Reconstructing Societies and Cultures, Chronology of Cultural Data.

Paper: Zaria and Abaja, or I. Goldman, Ancient Polynesian Society, Chicago, 1971 (evaluation and critique), or a similar study.

Paper: Historical Sequence of Culture in the Tropical Forest Zone of South America (start, and R. Lee, I. Devore, Man the Hunter, Chicago, 1968 with W. Lathrap's article and bibliography there).

Required Reading: HTA, 145-149; 339-354; 375-386; 390-408 (by M. G. Smith, Wilkes, Bradbury, Vansina): I. M. Lewis, History and Social Anthropology, London, 1967, ix-xxvi.

Recommended Reading: articles, 43-102; 141-166; 215-240 in POL (Howard, Finney, Green) I.M. Lewis, ibid, 1-25, 127-151 (Morton-Williams P; Southwold, M.) R. Narroll, R. Cohen, ibid, 834-871 (Carneiro, read critically!) Compare last item and Driver, H. E., et al. Statistical classification of North American Indian Ethnic Units, Ethnology XI (3) 1972, 311-339, and the theories of C. Wissler.

Week V: Synthesis I: Biological evidence: plants, animals, men, other possible evidence.

Paper: a case study of plant, animal or human biological data and history. (either history derived from the genetics or diffusion of plants or animal(s) and problems raised by their integration into a new biological and human environment.

Paper: A Theory of migration, e.g. Bantu or Polynesia, using all sorts of evidence.

Required Reading: MC 89-106; 120-156; GB 139-199, 229-246; JAH III (2), 1962, 195-267, 291-305, and VII(3) 1966; 361-376, 1968 (IX) (I), 1-12 (4), 505-516.

Recommended Reading: Biological books cited in introduction to syllabus. Lynn White, Medieval Technology and Social Change, London 1962 with the footnotes! The set of Wiener Ethnohistorische Blätter (Heft 1-4, 1970-1972), and such large scale reconstructions as Heyerdahl's (TH) Aku-Aku vs. Suggs, The Island Civilisations of Polynesia. Note Murdock, G. P., Africa: A Culture History, 1959, is not only a reference work but contains definite historical reconstruction (valid or not).

Week XVI: Synthesis II. Discussion, recent views, overflow.