

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of History
Fall 2008

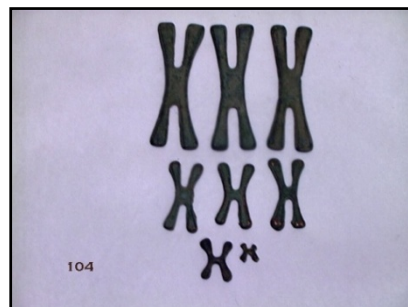
Florence Bernault
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History 445 : Equatorial Africa Since 1500
Mon.-Wed. 2:30 pm-3:45 pm, 1221 Humanities

From Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness to the current war in Eastern Congo, Equatorial Africa stands in common Western knowledge as the soft-belly of the Continent: a macro-region of long-standing ethnic rivalries, defeated modernity and collapsing nations. Classic scholarship on Equatorial Africa has emphasized explanations coming from a submission/domination perspective: submission of local societies to a daunting environment; submission of ancient polities to the colonial system; and more recently, domination of civil society by warlords and autocratic regimes.

This lecture will ask you to go beyond this cliché imagery, and to explore the complex history of this region. Recent historiography has recovered the existence of an Equatorial Africa civilization that has survived and innovated for several millenia, while successfully confronting pressures from the Atlantic after 1500. After the colonial conquest at the end of the 19th century, we know better how ordinary people resisted the colonial project, adapted to the challenges of every-day life, and invented the features of modern-times in multiple and intricate ways. Today, at a time of wars and deteriorating economic conditions, flourishing religious movements and vivid popular culture place Equatorial Africa among the most innovative areas of the African continent.



Grading:

- Map Quiz: 5%
- Quiz #1: 20%
- Short Essay on Fang (2-page): 10%
- Take Home Essay on Cloth (6-page): 30%
- Quiz #2: 20%
- Take Home Essay on Dongala (4-page): 15%

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

- Map quizz (take-home). Due on 09/10. (5%)
- Quizz #1 on course material and readings for weeks 1-5. In class on 10/01. (20%)
- Short Essay on primary sources on Fang. Write a two-page essay (min. 400 words-max. 600 words) comparing BOTH primary sources (Du Chaillu and Milligan) and their views on the Fang. Due in class on 10/22. [NB: all essays are double-spaced] (10%)
- Take Home Essay on History of Cloth. Write a six-page essay (min. 1,500 words-max. 1,800 words) on the history and historiography of cloth in equatorial Africa. The essay consists in a critical discussion about the long-term history of the production and uses of cloth in Equatorial Africa comparing and using three scholarly articles (see list below in reading packet). Your essay should not merely summarize the articles. Instead, it should analyze and discuss the production and uses of cloth in Equatorial Africa over the long term. It should also explain how different authors make different sense of this history, and write it from various perspectives. This will encourage you to adopt a critical eye on “real” events, and on history as an argumentative narrative making sense of the past. A guide sheet will be handed out ahead of time. Due in class on 10/29 [NB: all essays are double-spaced] (30%)
- Quizz # 2 on course material and readings for weeks 9-12. In class on 11/19. (20%)
- Take Home Essay on Emmanuel Dongala, *Johnny-Mad-Dog*. [four-page, double-spaced] Instructions given in class ahead of time. Due in class on 12/10. (15%)

2) CLASS PARTICIPATION:

Students are required to attend all lectures. In addition, there will be periodic discussion sessions during which you will be expected to come to class prepared to discuss the week’s readings and to actively participate in discussion. Both attendance and participation in discussions will be noted and will be taken into account in calculating your final grade.

3) GRADUATE STUDENTS should talk to me early in the semester for specific assignments.

Course Regulations

- Attendance is mandatory. You can miss one class during the semester-- but not one that features an important class-discussion (in bold in the schedule). Two unexcused absences will lower your grade. Four unexcused absences will result in a failing (F) grade.
- No make-ups for being absent, late, or late in turning assignments. Missed exams will only be excused with doctor’s notes or other formal documents.
- Late research papers will be marked down a grade (e.g.: from a “B” to a “C”) for each school day missed, and will not be accepted after three school days after the due date

(thus marked "F"). Papers or exams put under my office door will not be graded. Papers turned late can be put in my mailbox ONLY if signed, dated and timed by administrator at History Department front desk.

- The length of research papers is mandatory. Any paper more than ½ page shorter or longer than the assigned number of pages will be marked down. The police of characters should be no larger than 12, and the margins no wider than 1" (top and bottom), and 1.2" (left and right).
- Written assignments are individual. No collaborative work allowed. If you are unsure about what is considered plagiarism, check with me.

Readings:

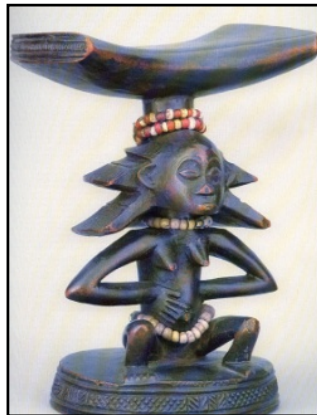
I have collected articles and book chapters and made them available in a reading packet, for purchase at the Humanities Copy Center, Hum. 1650.

The following books are required and available at the University Book Store. They are also on reserve at Helen C. White.

- John Thornton, *The Kongolese Saint Anthony* (1998)
- Phyllis Martin, *Leisure and Society in Colonial Brazzaville* (1995)
- Emmanuel Dongala, *Johnny-Mad-Dog: A Novel* (2005)

Also in the Reading Packet: Articles for the Essay on the History of Cloth:

- Phyllis Martin, "Power, Cloth and Currency on the Loango Coast," (1987)
- Phyllis Martin, "Contesting Clothes in Colonial Brazzaville," (1994)
- Jan Vansina, "Raffia Cloth in West Central Africa, 1500-1800" (1998)



SCHEDULE

Week 1. Introduction 1

09/03 Do the reading and work on the map quiz

Reading packet: Jan Vansina, *The Land and Its Settlement*, 35-69 [34 pp]

Week 2. Introduction 2

09/08 Course routines

09/10 Mapping Equatorial Africa by 1000 *****MAP QUIZZ due in class*****

Reading packet: Jan Vansina, *Tradition: Ancient and Common*, 71-100 [29 pp]

Week 3. Social Diversity 1000/1500

09/15 Farmers and Traders. A-territoriality.

09/17 Debating Hunters-Gatherers—**IN CLASS DISCUSSION ON FORAGERS**

Reading packet: Roy Grinker, *Houses in the Rainforest*, 1-9, 18-34, & 138-146 [skip 35-52]
Kairn Klieman, *Pygmies Were Our Compass*, 1-20 [53 pp]

Week 4. Chiefdoms and Kingdoms: Political Complexity by 1600

09/22 Lineage Ideology and Competition

09/24 The Kongo Kingdom

Readings packet: Jan Vansina, 101-110, 120-27 & 146-162
Jan Vansina in S. McIntosh, *Beyond Chiefdoms*, 166-172
Start John Thornton, *Kongolese St Anthony*, 1-81

Look at Map on Empires and Kingdoms 1400-1800 [140 pp]

Week 5. Production of Slaves: 1600-1800

09/29 The Production of Slaves

10/01 Early Impact -*****QUIZZ #1 IN CLASS ON WEEK 1-5*****

Reading packet: Joseph Miller, *Way of Death*, 71-139 [68 pp]

Week 6. Equatorial Africa and the Atlantic World

- 10/06 The Kongolese Saint Anthony—**IN CLASS DISCUSSION**
- 10/08 American Imports and Social Changes

Reading: John Thornton, The Kongolese St Anthony, 82-217 [134 pp]

Week 7. Caravans and Costal Ports 1700-1850

- 10/13 Hinterland and Caravans
- 10/15 Luanda —**IN CLASS DISCUSSION ON SLAVERY AND LONG TERM IMPACT**

Reading Packet: Phyllis Martin, The External Trade of the Loango Coast, 117-135
Miller, Way of Death, White Man's Grave, 284-313 [46 pp]

****START WORKING ON PRIMARY SOURCES FOR NEXT WEEK****

Week 8. Transitions in the 19th Century

- 10/20 Legitimate Trade and Creole Societies on the Coast.
- 10/22 The Fang: Farmers, Migrants, and Warriors- **IN CLASS DISCUSSION**
*****2-PAGE ESSAY ON PRIMARY SOURCES DUE IN CLASS 10/22*****

Reading Packet: Phyllis Martin, Family Strategies in Nineteenth Century Cabinda, 65-86
James Fernandez, Narratives of Fang-Europ. Contacts, 1840-1910, 29-48
[leave pp. 271-412 for now]
Primary Sources:
Paul B. Du Chaillu, Explorations and Adventures in Equatorial Africa
(1861), 102-111 & 118-129
Robert H. Milligan, The Fetish Folk of West Africa (1912), 240-245
[66 pp]

Week 9. The Colonial Conquest

- 10/27 Why the Conquest? How did it happen?
- 10/29 Early Violence and Resistance****6-PAGE ESSAY ON CLOTH DUE IN CLASS 10/29****

No Reading—Look at Map on European Explorers [0 pp]

Week 10. Nodes of Power

- 11/03 Land, Labor and Chiefs: Colonial Territoriality
- 11/05 Missions and Towns

Reading Packet: Roy R. Grinker, Houses in the Rainforest, 35-52
Phyllis Martin, Leisure and Society, intro & chaps. 1 & 7: 1-44 & 173-197
[85 pp]

Week 11. Ideological and Spiritual Encounters

- 11/10 Missions, Cannibalism, and the Fang –**IN CLASS DISCUSSION**
- 11/12 Independent Churches and Syncretic Cults (Bwiti)

Reading Packet: Nancy Hunt, Dining and Surgery, 117-158
James Fernandez, Reinterpretations of Mission & Bwiti Chapel,
271-287 & 371-412 [96 pp]

Week 12. Social Dynamics from the 1930s to the 1950s: I

- 11/17 Struggles in the City
- 11/19 Women (intro) *****QUIZZ #2 IN CLASS, ON WEEKS 9-12*****

Reading: Phyllis Martin, Leisure and Society, chaps. 2, 3 & 4, 45-126 [81 pp]

Week 13. Social Dynamics from the 1930s to the 1950s: II

- 11/24 Women and Gender roles
- 11/26 New Elites: Leon Mba

Reading: Phyllis Martin, Leisure and Society, chaps. 5 & 6, 127-173 [45 pp]
START READING EMMANUEL DONGALA, JOHNNY-MAD-DOG

Week 14. Independence and Beyond, 1950s-2000s

- 12/01 Zaire/DRC : Case Study on Decolonization
- 12/03 Congo Wars

Reading: Emmanuel Dongala: Johnny-Mad-Dog, all book [200+ pp]

Week 15. Conclusion

- 12/08 No Class--Work on Paper
- 12/10 Conclusion *****4-PAGE ESSAY ON DONGALA, JOHNNY-MAD-DOG, DUE IN CLASS on 12/10*****

No reading [0 pp]

****END****