

La IV^{ème} Semaine d'Études Ethno-Pastorales de Bandundu

Le Centre d'Études Ethnologiques de Bandundu (Congo-Kinshasa) qui est affilié à l'Institut Anthropos (Allemagne) [voir *Africa*, xxxvii. 1, 1967, pp. 88-9] vient de terminer son IV^{ème} congrès annuel sur le thème: 'L'organisation sociale et politique de la société traditionnelle.' Le Directeur du Centre d'Études, le Père Hermann Hochegger S.V.D., a préparé cette réunion par une équipe de collaborateurs qui ont étudié ce thème sur place chez les populations yansi, boma et teke. Parmi les participants se sont distingués M. Anicet Ngambene, Président de la J. M. P. R. Bagata, avec un exposé sur l'organisation cheffale des baTeke, Mlle Joséphine Charlotte Bulungu, Directrice d'École à Bandundu, sur l'installation du chef chez les baHumbu (groupe teke), et Père Alphonse Müller S.V.D., sur la structure sociale du milieu villageois et concernant l'organisation des chefferies des baYansi de la région de Bagata. Le Directeur du Centre d'Études a exposé ses recherches sur les baMbanda-Bansala, le groupement yansi de la rive gauche de l'Inzia. Une étude sur l'organisation sociale et politique des baBoma nord a été remis à l'organisateur de la session par le Père Frank Roelants S.V.D., qui par son congé a été empêché de participer personnellement.

Les rapports et le compte rendu de la semaine d'études seront publiés par le Centre d'Études Ethnologiques de Bandundu. Ce dernier vient d'éditionner le volume: *Dieu, idoles et sorcellerie dans la région Kwaugo/Bas-Kwilu* qui constitue le résultat de la session d'études de 1966.

Comme thème de recherche pour l'année prochaine l'équipe de collaborateurs a choisi: 'L'économie traditionnelle et ses perspectives d'avenir.'

Wenner-Gren Research Conference on Bantu Origins in Sub-Saharan Africa, March 1968

THE Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research supported a research conference, organized by Dr. Brian M. Fagan, on Bantu Origins in Sub-Saharan Africa, which was held from 25 to 30 March 1968 at the Center for Continuing Education, University of Chicago. (A full report has been published in *Bulletin of the African Studies Association of the United Kingdom*, 13 July 1968, pp. 2-9, and in *African Studies Bulletin* (U.S.A.), 11 September 1968, pp. 225-31.) No formal papers were presented, to leave maximum time for discussion; no publication resulting from the conference is planned.

Archaeologists felt that their evidence, although incomplete, suggests the strong possibility of the existence of dense populations in the more peripheral parts of the Congo Basin, and in the woodland savanna during the 'Later Stone Age'. Some of these peoples had specialized economies oriented towards fishing and intensive collecting. The interpretation of the history of the Bantu-speaking peoples had been made difficult by the perpetuation of outmoded typological concepts. Although the Bantu languages are, by African standards, closely related, linguists nevertheless postulated that the degree of differentiation existing between present-day Bantu languages could scarcely have come to pass within such a brief period as two millennia, the conventionally accepted chronological limit of the African 'Iron Age'. It was also pointed out that there was no remnant non-Bantu language in the north-west or central part of the present Bantu area which could be regarded as a possible predecessor of Bantu. It was almost certain that the affinities of the Central Bantu were with the Negroes of the West African forest rather than with the Central Sudanic-speaking Negroes or the Nilotes, living immediately to the north of the present Bantu sphere. There was strong support for the notion that the main concentrations of non-Bantu-speaking populations had lived in the eastern and southern parts of sub-equatorial Africa, Kushites living to the north-east, while the Khoi-Khoi (Hottentot) speakers and the Bushmen lived further to the south.

Although the archaeological evidence is at present totally lacking, one may suspect that cereal agriculture was introduced into parts of East Africa and perhaps into much of the sub-continent by Central Sudanic-speaking peoples living between the Kushites in the east and the Bantu in the west. The sorghums and millets grown in most of Bantu Africa are the eastern varieties. It is probable that agriculture was first introduced into this area prior to the adoption of metallurgical techniques. As yet Stone Age cereal agriculturalists have not been identified in most of Sub-Saharan Africa, but detailed research in the northern Interlacustrine area might yield critical information on this point.

Iron-working has been dated at Meroe to earlier than the fourth century B.C., while it is known to have flourished in West Africa at Nok as early as the fourth century B.C. Participants suggested that a likely route by which iron-working may have first spread into West Africa was from the west, whence it was diffused south-eastwards into Bantu Africa. The latest research from South Central Africa indicates that metallurgy was well established in these areas by the fourth century A.D. The arrival of iron-working and iron technology may not, therefore, have been responsible for the early settlement of Bantu-speaking peoples in the Southern Woodlands, but the new technology may well have led to the expansion of the Bantu from there into Eastern, Central, and Southern Africa. Evidence from traditional history tended to indicate that the Bantu-speaking world may have been centred initially on the Katanga or at least on the divide of the sub-continent.

The most serious gaps in our knowledge relate to the north-west region through which 'Pre-Bantu' or remote ancestors of the present Bantu-speakers must almost certainly have passed. This does not seem to have been an area where there was an early or rapid expansion of peoples speaking 'true' Bantu languages. Neither archaeology nor traditional history have yet contributed any significant data from this area.

Studies of the linguistic evidence suggest that the most crucial of all areas for future investigation seems to lie in the relations between the peoples living north and south of the Congo forests. Dr. David Dalby presented Professor Malcolm Guthrie's linguistic evidence based on a comparative study of over 300 Bantu languages. This showed that there was an urgent need for the uniform training of comparative linguists and for the further extension of Guthrie's data. Guthrie considers that the forest has had some special quality which may have accelerated the process of linguistic diversification although in his scheme it appears as a high index of Common Bantu roots to the south and a very low one in the north. This might indicate a late reflux of Bantu-speaking population from the centre of the Bantu world into an area only lightly colonized by collateral descendants of the Pre-Bantu.

Finally, there was general agreement that the spread of agriculture, the history of domestic animals, and the diffusion of iron tools and metallurgy are all separate problems which have to be considered separately from one another and from the history of Bantu languages. Only when more is known about each separate problem will it be possible to establish meaningful correlations between languages and cultures.

The participants at the conference made the following specific recommendations:

A number of areas adjacent to, and surrounding, the equatorial forest regions can be expected to yield archaeological data of vital importance to the study of Bantu origins. Those of most crucial interest lie to the north and south of the Congo Basin, namely the forest mosaic, savanna and grassland north of the Ubangi River in the Central African Republic, and the savanna regions in the central Katanga, Guthrie's supposed nuclear area for the Bantu languages. These areas should be investigated by interdisciplinary teams collaborating in archaeological programmes. Such teams should include a botanist, an ecologist, an oral historian, a zoologist, a Bantu linguist, an ethnographer with archaeological training, and a physical anthropologist. The project should begin with an initial survey followed by the excavation of carefully selected 'Late Stone Age' and early 'Iron Age' sites designed

to yield maximum information concerning economic and settlement patterns. Analyses and interpretation of information recovered from these sites must utilize to the full the techniques of all the disciplines involved.

The complexity of the study of Bantu origins makes it essential that there should be maximum collaboration between the relevant disciplines and institutions. This will need to be achieved through careful consultation and co-ordination in the planning of research, and through the regular exchange of staff and students. Visiting studentships and professorships need to be established on an international basis.

In the interpretation of archaeology and linguistic data it is of great importance to use the detailed evidence about the development of society and material culture during the past 500 or 600 years. It was noted that the trend in research in traditional history is increasingly towards intensive work in particular linguistic communities and that, since in most of Africa these communities are small, research work must justify the heavy investment in linguistic training by working over a large chronological span in geographically limited areas. In all such studies scholarly presentation of the primary evidence is at least as important as the work of interpretation, and most research projects need to be conceived in terms of three or four years of research at dissertation level, including a substantial period spent in the field.

There is need to train ethnographers to specialize in those aspects of culture which are relevant to the archaeological and historical understanding of the African past: e.g. distribution studies, studies of patterns of settlement and of trade, the manufacture and use of artefacts, attitudes towards these and their nomenclature, and the technology of iron working.

The most definitive evidence concerning the origin and evolution of cultivated plants may be expected from the field of archaeology. Critical botanical evidence is frequently ignored or of little use for lack of efficient means of positive identification.

Centre of African Studies, Edinburgh: Seminar on Witchcraft and Healing

AN interdisciplinary seminar on this subject was held at the Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh, on 14 and 15 February 1969, under the joint chairmanship of Dr. R. G. Willis and Mr. Christopher Fyfe.

Papers were read and discussed on the following subjects: Healing as a Psychosomatic Event (the Revd. Fred Welbourn); Sickness Behaviour in Western Nigeria (Dr. Una Maclean); Persistence of Supernatural Beliefs among Ghanaian University Students (Professor Gustav Jahoda); The Political Role of Witchfinding in Malawi during the Crisis of October 1964 to May 1965 (the Revd. Dr. Andrew Ross); and The Horseman's Word: a Secret Ploughman's Cult in nineteenth-century Scotland (Mr. Hamish Henderson).

Centre international d'Études et de Recherches sur l'Intégration Économique de l'Afrique

IN October 1968 a meeting was held at the Faculty of Law and Economic Sciences in Paris to establish an 'Association Internationale pour le Développement, en Afrique, des Sciences humaines Appliquées' (AIDASA) with the object of promoting the development of applied human sciences relating to Africa and the dissemination of information in this field. It will seek to secure profitable applications for socio-economic growth in Africa of scientific studies already undertaken or being planned. The Association was established under the Presidency of Professor Gaston Leduc of the Faculty of Law and Economic Sciences and Professor Bruno Tohngodo, of the Institut de Droit Appliqué, was elected Secretary-General.

Considering that there was a lack of a specialized scientific organization with reference to researches directed towards the development of common regional markets in Africa and