

The significance of this publication lies in the fact that it provides a synthesis of the principles and the methods of work observed in the execution of the Five Year Plan of Research of the Institute, the results of which are gradually appearing in a series of books. The Memorandum shows what the Institute understands by practical or applied anthropology, namely, a purely scientific method of study which lays the emphasis not on the past but on the present and its living problems of contact, change, adaptation, and the establishment of a new equilibrium.

The outstanding feature of the Memorandum is Professor Malinowski's introductory essay. It is an interpretation, a summing up, a criticism, and an extension of what the following authors say, almost all of whom have been his students. Professor Malinowski first gives a bird's-eye view of Africa to-day and then goes on to examine a number of questions, such as the new tasks of anthropology, the contact situation as an integral whole, the product of change as a mechanical mixture of elements, and the search for 'zero-point' (i.e. the conditions of pre-European tribal equilibrium).

He emphasizes the fact that under present conditions three forms of society are to be distinguished in Africa, viz. tribal communities, detribalized communities, and white communities; none of them exists independently, each is influencing the others, and consequently a constant change caused by contact is going on in each group. The future development will be marked by the fact that while the purely or relatively tribal groups are decreasing in numbers and influence, the two other groups are constantly growing. The state of things prevailing in detribalized society is, however, not only a mixture of half-forgotten elements of the old order and half-digested fragments of European acquisitions, but is developing into an entity of its own, a new order of things which will be African in a form adapted to conditions of to-day.

The Memorandum may well serve as a vade-mecum for every anthropological research worker going to Africa and will likewise be of interest to students in other branches of anthropology and sociology. Every contribution has its own special features, has something to teach, and stimulates thought.

A Note on 'The Bornu Sahara and Sudan' by the Author.

THE following interesting notes have been received from the author regarding points raised by Dr. Meek in his review of *The Bornu Sahara and Sudan*, by Sir Richmond Palmer, which appeared in the last number of this journal:

'That in detail what Dr. Meek terms "ethnological speculations" may not in all cases be correct I would be the last to question, nor does the book itself suggest a dogmatic attitude in respect of them. On the other hand, the pre-Islamic non-African characteristics and oriental non-Islamic peculiarities of old Bornu were and are, as a whole, so unlike anything else in the Central

and Western Sudan that quite obviously they came from somewhere outside—and that somewhere was certainly not either the Western or Central part of the continent of Africa.

‘If the name Bornu is, as there is no doubt it is, of similar provenance to the better known words Barbar, and Barabara (the Egyptian name for Nubian Barbars), and if all that name stands for in Bornu, as is also certain, was introduced into the Chad area, of which the inhabitants were then negroes, by nomad camel-owning Barbars about A.D. 800–1000, there are only two possibilities: (1) That these Barbars came from the Eastern Sudan. (2) That they came from North Africa.

‘Dr. Meek’s visits to parts of the Nigerian Province of Bornu would doubtless hardly suggest to him how close is the connexion in cultural contacts and indeed even in physical contacts between Bornu (with Kanem) and the Nile Valley either directly, or indirectly through Wadai—once part of the Bornu Empire—and Darfur. In fact, having regard to similarities which existed, and recorded connexion between old Bornu and the polity known as “Meroe”, it might, having regard also to chronological and other relevant data, be thought that the onus of proof lies on those who maintain that Bornu did not to a very large extent derive its characteristics from “Meroe”. A traveller who travels from the Bight of Benin along the Northern edge of the Sudan to the Red Sea at Suwakin cannot help observing that the intervening peoples divide themselves naturally into three and only three large, fairly homogeneous areas; to wit, firstly, the Southern Provinces of Nigeria and of the French Sudan: secondly, the Hausa countries as far as their boundary with Bornu: and thirdly, the long stretch from the Hausa-Bornu boundary to the Nile and Red Sea.

‘As regards the statement that written Bornu records are liable to be *textually* corrupt, while in some cases it is no doubt true that contemporaneous compilation is uncertain, yet I did not suggest, as Dr. Meek implies, that their general reliability as good evidence for the periods to which they respectively relate was open to substantial doubt. At the very lowest they represent what was regarded in the Bornu of A.D. 1600–1800 before N’gazar-gamu, the old capital, was sacked about A.D. 1806 by the Fulbe, as fact. That generally speaking these records are not genuine could not be supposed by any one who knew Bornu and had lived there.

‘I am aware that verbal assonance does not necessarily imply anything in particular. I can hardly here discuss all the cases that Dr. Meek criticizes, but as he considers the equation “Alwa = Yerwa = Herwa = Meroe” to be “a process of reasoning by which any word can be made to mean anything”, I may, perhaps, point out that this equation rests on something more concrete than he apparently assumes it to rest on. In the first place, the name Yerwa which is the most common Bornu name to-day for the region in which Maiduguri, the modern capital of Bornu, lies, is the same word which

is in Hausa pronounced *yelwa* (meaning both in Hausa and Kanuri “prosperity” or “abundance”). Its use as a place-name arises from the fact that this particular region called Yerwa derives its prosperity from a small lake which itself is called Alo or Aloa. It is the lake where Mai Idris Aloomo was buried, about 1603, and therefore historic. Herwa is a common local Kanuri variant of Yerwa, so that in any case the local equation Aloa = Herwa = Yerwa is hardly open to question.

‘Not very far away from Maiduguri is the region of Marwa now in the French Cameroon. Marwa again is a name which derives from circumstances analogous to those of Yerwa, i.e. it is the same type of name for a well-watered region which at Maiduguri takes the forms of Yerwa and Alo (Aloa). There is an obvious parallelism between this nomenclature and the fact that in the Egyptian Sudan the classical *Meroe* (also called *Beroe*) was later replaced in the same well-watered Khartum region by a Kingdom called *Arwa* or *Aloa*; and that the *stele* of Hersatef about 327 B.C. records: (1) Year 18. Raid on *Barua* (Meroe) and utter defeat of its chief *Kherua*. (2) Year 23. Slaughter of *Arwa* chief of the district of *Meroe*.¹ There seems no reason to doubt that Sudanese chiefs in 327 B.C. would be called by the same name as the name of their towns, as chiefs still are all over the Sudan. Having regard to the fluidity of certain kinds of consonantal change in the languages of the Kanuri group and the obvious similar connotation of these names both on the Nile and in Bornu—why should such verbal assonances be fortuitous or meaningless?

‘In my book I brought together many scattered threads of evidence—severally perhaps by themselves inconclusive—converging on the views which I advanced as to the probable origin of Bornu and its former ruling race. Uncritical acceptance of these views is hardly to be expected, particularly as they conflict with better known theories concerning Sudanese and Saharan ethnology. These latter, however, are equally unproved, and I think that having regard to all the circumstances and facts available, as set out in the book, it should be possible to go beyond the general proposition that Bornu is “a very hybrid mixture of elements drawn from various centres of bygone civilizations”, though even that reversion to the ethnological vagueness of the Psalmist who called the Sudan “the land of mingled peoples” does at least discard the idea that the distinctive culture of Bornu was evolved out of the inner consciousness of Africans as an autochthonous growth.

‘It may appear that perhaps the anthropological “trees” which have grown out of specialized study of the minutiae of cultural data in selected areas tend to become so numerous as to obscure a general view of the Sudanese ethnographic “wood” in the light of history, geography, tradition, and it may be added, inherent probability at least in the minds of most of those, whether

¹ Budge, *History of Ethiopia*, vol. i, p. 47.

European or African, who have seen, and who know, however imperfectly, the whole area from west to east which is concerned.

‘Is it so very improbable that radical changes in our conceptions with regard to Arabian ethnology, which have come about from recent explorations in Arabia, may find some counterpart in a Sahara and Sudan, which really is not so very far away from Southern Arabia, and has for many centuries been most closely connected with it in religious thought, in tradition, and by human contacts?’

‘The interior of Africa was for so long a blank, East Africa and West Africa were for so long “sundered apart” in European concept, that it would seem as if even to-day it is sometimes forgotten that they join in the middle, and that from that middle of the Sudan (Bornu) to its eastern edge there exists in many respects a homogeneous cultural, and in some respects a homogeneous ethnical similarity.’

‘Dr. Meek in this connexion mentions the Jukon. That the Jukon of the Gongila and Bornu came originally from Kanem and Bornu is a well authenticated and documented fact; no Kanuri or Jukon would dispute it; though neither the Jukon nor the Zagnawa, to whom, as Dr. Meek notes, they bear cultural resemblance, are synonymous with the Maghumi aristocracy of nomads who founded the Kingdom of Bornu.’

‘On the other hand if, as is the case, a migration of “Zaghawa” culture can be traced in detail from Kanem to the Benue and on to Idah and Aro Chuku in Southern Nigeria since A.D. 1000, is it not probable that a similar process, of cultural migration took place at an earlier epoch from farther east to Kanem? On what other supposition can we account for the fact that not only the Moslem Kanuri, but all the Nigerian tribal units that came within the orbit of Jukon culture, believe that their culture eventually came from Yam on the Nile, if not Yaman in Arabia, apart from the very considerable data for supposing that to have been the case which the book itself contains.’

‘Obviously any relationship between similar forms or words showing verbal assonance found in different parts of the Sudan should only be predicated if there are reasons, other than mere superficial resemblance, to suppose them to have been related, or that they might well have been related. Naturally a book of some 200 pages which is in the main composed of translations from old records, with explanatory notes or excursion on their subject-matter, could hardly embrace full etymological discussions also, even though the author had not neglected to make some study of a number of the languages that are mentioned.’

‘But as at least an indication of the reasoning on which all the deductions from “similarity of nomenclature” are based is to be found in some part of the book itself, a mere statement of comparisons which seem obscure to Dr. Meek is hardly sufficient to put them out of court. For instance, the well-known fact that the words for “father” present a certain similarity in many

regions does not explain the fact that several hundred years ago the word *Ada* was a kingly title among the Jukon, the Kanuri, and the Southern Tuareg, whereas to-day it exists as the word for "father" in the case of the last named only, and that a variant form of *Ada* (found in Arabic authors) as a title of the Mai of Bornu who introduced Islam about A.D. 1000 was *Hadi* which, considering all relevant data, can hardly be other than the Abyssinian title "*Hati*", which in turn was apparently the Meroitic title *Ate*.

'I should welcome correction or proof that I am in general mistaken in my thesis about the origins of Bornu and its cultural associations with both the Nile Valley and Southern Arabia, to which culturally Abyssinia in large measure belongs—a thesis which concerns the Tuareg of the Sahara as well as the Maghumi of Bornu.'

The Food and Nutrition of African Natives.

THE following Bibliography has been provided by Professor Labouret in connexion with his article entitled 'L'alimentation des autochtones dans les possessions tropicales' which appeared in the last number of this Journal. It supplements the information given in the bibliography contained in the Institute publication, *The Food and Nutrition of African Natives* (Memorandum XIII) in regard to studies made in French, Belgian, and Italian territories, and will thus be of special interest to a considerable number of readers.

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