

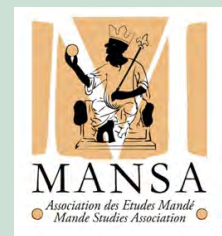


International Conference on Manding Studies / Congrès International d'Études Manding

School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)
University of London

**fiftieth anniversary commemoration /
commémoration du cinquantenaire
1972–2022**

MANSA Kibaru supplement, 2023



**International Conference on Manding Studies /
Congrès International d'Études Manding**

School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)
University of London

**fiftieth anniversary commemoration /
commémoration du cinquantenaire
1972–2022**



In memory of

David Dalby (1933-2022)

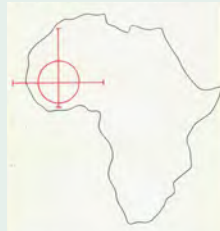
Herman Bell (1933-2023)

Lansiné Kaba (1941-2023)

Edited by Marcia Tiede
MANSA Secretary-Treasurer
Area Studies Cataloger (Africana)
Northwestern University Libraries
Evanston, Illinois, USA

Produced by the Mande Studies
Association (MANSA), with additional
support from the Program of African
Studies and the Melville J. Herskovits
Library of African Studies, Northwest-
ern University, Evanston, Illinois.

Revised from a special feature included
in *MANSA Kibaru*, issue 74, 2022:
“International Conference on Manding
Studies, 1972: A 50-Year Commemora-
tion.”



Logo (two versions) for the project **MANDING: Focus on an African Civilisation**, which included this conference as well as an exhibition of Manding art at the British Museum and related programming.

“The symbol superimposed on the map of Africa ... is adapted from a graphic symbol of the Manding, used in the Vai script of Liberia with the meaning ‘person’. The extension of the arms in three directions symbolises the historical contacts of the Manding civilisation northwards across the Sahara, eastwards to Nigeria, and westwards to North America.”

Manding : Focus on an African Civilisation (London: Centre for African Studies, SOAS, 1972), p. 1.

Cover: Detail of a commemorative stamp produced by the Posts & Telecommunications Office, Gambia, 1972. (See page 40 for more information.)

PREFACE

Fifty years that invite us to think about what we remember, and what we forget

By Sten Hagberg, MANSA President

Director, Forum for Africa Studies, Uppsala University

The fifty-year commemoration of the International Conference on Manding Studies that was organized at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London 30 June-3 July 1972, and chaired by David Dalby (who passed away in 2022), started as an initiative of our Secretary-Treasurer Marcia Tiede. She took the lead in bringing together an extensive documentation of the 1972 conference as part of the newsletter *MANSA Kibaru* 74, 2022. In reading it, we realized that the meticulous collective work coordinated by Marcia, which had mobilized several founding members, as well as the family of the late David Dalby, would merit a proper publication. We are therefore happy to publish the *MANSA Kibaru Supplement 2023* as a hard copy and digitally. MANSA gratefully acknowledges the contribution from the Program of African Studies and the Herskovits Library at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, USA, in support of publication costs.

Commemorating invites us to think about memory and oblivion. In the following lines, I would like to share some thoughts on the history of our scholarly community that we refer to as “Mande Studies.” What do we remember? What do we forget? Such questions tie into current discussions on decolonization and decoloniality, that is, of rethinking, reframing, decentering, and interrogating institutions, methodologies, epistemologies, etc. A call to rethink the research field of “Mande Studies” and to raise questions about it was published as a special feature in volume 23, 2021, of our journal *Mande Studies*, with thought-provoking contributions by Joseph Hellweg (2021a, 2021b), Maria Grosz-Ngaté (2021), Rosa de Jorio (2021), Alioune Sow (2021), Susan Gagliardi (2021), and Baba Coulibaly (2021). All these contributions provide an opening for reflections on the relevance of Mande Studies today, a topic that should always be on the agenda for a scholarly association as ours.

The Mande Studies Association (MANSA), founded in 1986, has always referred to the 1972 conference as a scholarly “ancestor” (Conrad 2008). Three of its founding members participated in the London conference: Lansine Kaba, Robert Launay, and Nehemia Levtzion (Grosz-Ngaté 2021:160). The London conference was indeed a major

event, and the publication of *MANSA Kibaru Supplement 2023* adds a source of valuable information in this regard.

A related event was, it seems to me, also important for the emergence of the scholarly field of “Mande Studies.” In the spring of 1969, the African Seminar of the African Studies Program at Indiana University was devoted to a series of papers on the Manding, which in turn led to the publication of *Papers on the Manding* (Hodge (ed.) 1971). Among the contributors to the edited volume, we find Mansadenw like Charles Bird, Nicolas Hopkins, and Barbara Lewis, as well as visiting professor David Dalby. As a PhD student in the 1990s, I read several of those papers with great interest when preparing my dissertation on farmer-herder conflicts in western Burkina Faso.

Commemorating the 1972 London conference furthermore reminds us that there are other histories within what we call “Mande Studies” that need to be better documented. There is the scholarly tradition of early African researchers working in West Africa, where Youssouf Tata Cissé’s (1964) seminal work on Malinke hunters can serve as an example. There is also the blind spot of African researchers who started their careers as interpreters and assistants of Western scholars.

In 2018, volume 20 of *Mande Studies* was themed “*First Fieldwork in West Africa*.” Many of MANSA’s founding generation wrote interesting pieces about their first field research: “Our generation was, though we did not fully recognize the fact, a generation of optimism” (Mark 2018:3). Remembering the first fieldwork makes us discover another missing piece: the voices and perspectives of their African colleagues. Maria Grosz-Ngaté’s (2020) exploration of questions related to the production and decolonization of knowledge in conversations with colleagues in Mali and Senegal is certainly an important piece in this regard. Other collaborative publications have also been taken up in recent years. Yet I would love to think that a follow-up publication of *Mande Studies* volume 20, 2018, should be the publication of the first fieldwork by the now oldest generation of African scholars. With the growing number of Africa-based Mansadenw (roughly one-third of our membership), we hope to see initiatives analyzing the field of “Mande Studies” from institutions and actors in countries like Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Senegal, to mention a few.

But back to the 1972 London Conference on the Manding. For Mansadenw, this conference is seen as the 1st International Conference on Mande Studies. In June 2024, we are organizing the 12th International Conference on Mande Studies at the Institut des Sciences Humaines in Bamako, Mali. The theme is “Towards a decolonization of knowledges in West Africa: history, actors, and productions,” to take stock of struggles and conversations, discourses and practices when it comes to decolonizing knowledge and knowing. Hopefully, we will see paper and panel proposals that look into our scholarly community so as to reflect upon what we remember and what we forget.



PRÉFACE

Cinquante années qui nous invitent à réfléchir sur ce dont nous nous souvenons et ce que nous oublions

Par Sten Hagberg, président de la MANSAA
Directeur, Forum for Africa Studies, université d’Uppsala

La commémoration du cinquantenaire du Congrès international des Études Manding, organisé au School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) de Londres du 30 juin au 3 juillet 1972 et présidé par David Dalby (décédé en 2022), a commencé comme une initiative de notre secrétaire-trésorière Marcia Tiede. Elle a pris l’initiative de rassembler une vaste documentation sur le colloque de 1972 dans le cadre du bulletin *MANSAA Kibaru* 74, 2022. En le lisant, nous nous sommes rendus compte que le travail collectif minutieux coordonné par Marcia, et qui avait mobilisé plusieurs Mansadenw de la première heure, ainsi que la famille de feu David Dalby, mériteraient une publication appropriée. Par conséquent, nous sommes heureux de publier le *MANSAA Kibaru Supplément 2023* sous forme imprimée et en numérique. Nous remercions le soutien financier à la publication du Programme d’études africaines et la bibliothèque Herskovits, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, États-Unis.

Commémorer nous invite à réfléchir sur la mémoire et l’oubli. Dans les lignes qui suivent, je voudrais partager quelques réflexions sur l’histoire de notre communauté savante que nous appelons « Études Mandé ». De quoi nous souvenons-nous ? Qu’est-ce qu’on oublie ? De telles questions sont liées aux discussions actuelles sur la décolonisation et la décolonialité, c’est-à-dire sur la nécessité

de repenser, de recadrer, de décentrer et d’interroger les institutions, les méthodologies, les épistémologies, etc. Un appel à repenser le champ de recherche « Études Mandé » a été publiée en dossier spécial du volume 23, 2021, de la revue *Mande Studies*, avec des contributions stimulantes de Joseph Hellweg (2021a, 2021b), Maria Grosz-Ngaté (2021), Rosa de Jorio (2021), Alioune Sow (2021), Susan Gagliardi (2021) et Baba Coulibaly (2021). Toutes ces contributions ouvrent à une réflexion sur la pertinence des Études Mandé aujourd’hui, un sujet qui devrait être toujours à l’ordre du jour d’une association savante comme la nôtre.

La Mande Studies Association (MANSAA), fondée en 1986, a toujours fait référence au colloque de 1972 comme étant notre « ancêtre » scientifique (Conrad 2008). Trois membres fondateurs ont participé au colloque de Londres : Lansine Kaba, Robert Launay et Nehemia Levtzion (Grosz-Ngaté 2021: 160). Le colloque de Londres a en effet été un événement majeur, et la publication du *MANSAA Kibaru Supplément 2023* ajoute une source d’informations précieuses à cet égard.

Un autre événement en rapport a été, me semble-t-il, important aussi pour l’émergence du domaine scientifique des « Études Mandé ». Au printemps 1969, le séminaire africain du programme d’études africaines de l’Université d’Indiana fut consacré à une série d’articles sur les Mandingues, qui par la suite aboutirent à la publication de *Papers on the Manding* (Hodge (éd.) 1971). Parmi les contributeurs à l’ouvrage, on retrouve des Mansadenw comme Charles Bird, Nicolas Hopkins et Barbara Lewis, aussi bien que le professeur invité David Dalby. En tant que doctorant dans les années 1990, j’ai lu plusieurs de ces articles avec beaucoup d’intérêt lors de la préparation de ma thèse sur les conflits agriculteurs-éleveurs dans l’ouest du Burkina Faso.

La commémoration du colloque de Londres de 1972 nous rappelle en outre qu’il existe d’autres histoires au sein de ce que nous appelons les « Études Mandé » qui doivent être mieux documentées. Il existe la tradition scientifique des premiers chercheurs africains travaillant en Afrique de l’Ouest, comme par exemple les travaux fondateurs de Youssouf Tata Cissé (1964) sur les chasseurs Malinké. Il y a aussi l’insuffisante documentation de chercheurs africains qui ont débuté leur carrière comme interprètes et assistants de chercheurs occidentaux.

En 2018, le volume 20 de *Mande Studies* avait pour thème « First Fieldwork in West Africa ». De nombreux chercheurs de la génération fondatrice de la MANSA ont écrit des articles intéressants sur leurs premières recherches de terrain : « Notre génération était, même si nous ne l'avions pas pleinement reconnu, une génération d'optimisme » (Mark 2018 : 3). Le souvenir de la première recherche de terrain nous fait découvrir une autre pièce manquante : les voix et les perspectives de leurs collègues africains. L'exploration par Maria Grosz-Ngaté (2020) des questions liées à la production et à la décolonisation des connaissances dans des conversations avec des collègues au Mali et au Sénégal est certainement un élément important à cet égard. D'autres publications collaboratives ont également été engagées ces dernières années. Pourtant, j'aimerais voir une publication de suivi du volume 20, 2018, qui devrait être la publication de premières recherches de terrain réalisées par la génération la plus ancienne de chercheurs africains. Avec le nombre croissant de Mansadenw basés en Afrique (environ un tiers de nos membres), nous espérons voir des initiatives analysant le champ de recherche « Études Mandé » de la part d'institutions et d'acteurs de pays comme le Burkina Faso, la Côte d'Ivoire, la Guinée, le Mali, Le Sénégal, pour n'en citer que quelques-uns.

Mais revenons au colloque de Londres de 1972 sur le Manding. Il est considéré par la communauté MANSA comme le 1^{er} Congrès international des Études Mandé. En juin 2024, nous organisons le 12^{ème} Colloque* International des Études Mandé à l'Institut des Sciences Humaines de Bamako, au Mali. Le thème est « Vers une décolonisation des savoirs en Afrique de l'Ouest : histoire, acteurs et productions », afin de faire le point sur les luttes et les conversations, les discours et les pratiques en matière de décolonisation des savoirs et des connaissances. Peut-être verrons-nous des propositions d'articles et de panels qui examineront notre communauté scientifique afin de réfléchir à ce dont nous nous souvenons et à ce que nous oublions.

* Nouvelle appellation

References

- Cisse, Y. 1964. Notes sur les sociétés de chasseursmalinké. *Journal de la Société des Africanistes* 19, 175-226.
- Conrad, D. 2008. The Founding of MANSA: <http://mandestudies.org/history/>
- Coulibaly, B. 2021. Identité mandingue et culture du fleuve Niger : la perception des communautés riveraines des régions de Ségou et de Mopti, Mali. *Mande Studies* 23, 185-191.
- de Jorio, R. 2021. Rethinking Mande Studies with Shaka Bagayogo: Imagining Post-National Futures in West Africa. *Mande Studies* 23, 193-203.
- Gagliardi, S. E. 2021. What Is in a Name? *Mande Studies* 23, 175-184.
- Grosz-Ngaté, M. 2020. Knowledge and Power: Perspectives on the Production and Decolonization of African/ist Knowledges. *African Studies Review* 63(4), 689-718.
- Grosz-Ngaté, M. 2021. Identities, Histories, and Challenges of (Re)Naming. *Mande Studies* 23, 159-168.
- Hellweg, J. 2021a. Introduction. *Mande Studies* 23, 155-157.
- Hellweg, J. 2021b. Reckoning Mande: The Politics of Ethnic and Academic Identity in West Africa and Beyond. *Mande Studies* 23, 205-215.
- Hodge, C. (ed.) 1971. Papers on the Manding. Bloomington: Indiana University.
- Mark, P. 2018. Editor's Introduction. *Mande Studies* 20, 3-6.



Logo of the project.
MANDING: Focus on an African Civilisation

INTRODUCTION

This project began when I cataloged our holdings of the 1972 SOAS conference proceedings at Northwestern University Libraries this past summer [2022]. Shortly afterward I had a conversation with Lansiné Kaba, who had attended the conference, and he mentioned some recollections. It soon occurred to me that this was the fiftieth anniversary year of the conference that is considered the predecessor of MANSÁ, or at least of its triennial conference. And that it would be good to gather some of those recollections while still possible.

The conference organizer, David Dalby, had sadly died just a couple of weeks before this idea came together. But his daughter Alison Dalby responded to my email to him, and she and her mother, Winifred Dalby, have given their full support. Alison's last-minute discovery of her father's West Africa travel journal while planning the conference (1971) is enlightening in many respects, and excerpts are provided.

Robert Launay leads with a survey of the intellectual history of Mande studies, despite not having been at the conference himself. (This was the first text for the project, and gave me faith that it was possible.) Pascal Imperato gives a firsthand perspective on the range of events around the conference; and Roderic Knight provides photos and even some recordings (now available online) of those events. Lucy Durán providentially supplies a message from David Dalby to the 1998 MANSÁ conference held in Gambia, and concludes with her own recent celebration of fifty years of the kora at SOAS, dating back to the 1972 conference.

One question for me early on was how it happened that Alex Haley was an associated speaker, given that his *Roots* was not published until 1976. That 'mystery' is well addressed herein by Peter Weil. Haley was a surprisingly strong thread throughout these recollections (enhanced by editorial bias, perhaps). Another powerful memory-thread was the presence of the kora players.

A list of the 1972 conference papers is provided, as well as institutions known to hold all or part of the proceedings. Although they were to be distributed in Africa as well, I did not find documentation for that, other than South Africa.

The full text of the opening speech by Léopold Sédar Senghor, honorary president of the conference, is included. (Thanks to Maria Grosz-Ngaté for that as well as other helpful suggestions.)

I regret the relative lack of francophone, African, and female voices. But I am very grateful to everyone who did share their experiences of, or around, the conference. Every contribution, elaborated or informal, was welcome.

The latest issue of *Mande Studies* (volume 23, 2021) includes several papers based on a roundtable at African Studies Association (ASA) in 2020, on the future of Mande studies. Maria Grosz-Ngaté surveys the history of MANSÁ, including a look back at the 1972 SOAS conference, and suggests a shift to a "regional space of focus." Alioune Sow gives a literary analysis, with social change/ 'dilution' and cosmopolitanism as prevalent themes around "Mandenness." Susan Gagliardi discusses the importance of a name in projecting a certain 'story' that obscures heterogeneity, and her own experience of MANSÁ as a diverse and open community beyond what its name suggests. Baba Coulibaly describes the Niger River as "a marker of Mandé culture and identity in all its diversity," but that rural vs. urban perspectives produce often opposed logics about its management. Rosa de Jorio looks at the *mansa* vs. *faama* (king vs. warrior) models of power, the appropriation of those models by contemporary elites in Mali, and the need for broader models of cooperation for democratic development, drawing on the work of the late Malian anthropologist Shaka Bagayogo. Joseph Hellweg proposes a re-evaluation of MANSÁ's scope and name in view of "critiques of ethnicity" such as those of Jean-Loup Amselle and across various disciplines, and points to the MANSÁ triennial conference held in Grand-Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire (2017) as indicating a shift already underway.

So it seems timely, in more ways than one, to look back at the conference formally marking the appearance of "Manding studies" as an international and interdisciplinary endeavor.

Marcia Tiede



Logo du projet.
MANDING: Focus on an African Civilisation

INTRODUCTION

Ce projet a commencé lorsque j'ai catalogué, l'été dernier [2022], nos fonds des actes du congrès SOAS de 1972 à Northwestern University. Peu de temps après, j'ai eu une conversation avec Lansiné Kaba, qui avait assisté au congrès, et il a évoqué quelques souvenirs. Il m'est alors venu à l'esprit que c'était l'année du cinquantenaire du congrès qui est considéré comme le prédécesseur de la MANSÀ, ou du moins de son congrès triennal. Et qu'il serait bon de recueillir certains de ces souvenirs pendant que c'était encore possible.

L'organisateur du congrès, David Dalby, était tristement décédé quelques semaines seulement avant que cette idée ne se concrétise. Mais sa fille Alison Dalby a répondu à mon courriel à lui, et elle et sa mère Winifred Dalby ont apporté tout leur soutien. La découverte par Alison au dernier moment des carnets de voyage de son père en Afrique de l'Ouest lors de la planification du congrès (1971) est éclairant à bien des égards, et des extraits sont fournis.

Robert Launay mène avec une enquête sur l'histoire intellectuelle des études mandé, bien qu'il n'ait pas lui-même assisté au congrès. (C'était le premier texte du projet, ce qui m'a donné la foi que c'était possible.) Pascal Imperato donne une perspective de première main sur la gamme d'événements autour du congrès; et Roderic Knight offre des photos et même des enregistrements (maintenant disponibles en ligne) de ces événements. Lucy Durán fournit providentiellement un message de David Dalby au congrès MANSÀ de 1998 tenue en Gambie, et conclut avec sa propre célébration récente des cinquante ans de la kora à SOAS, une histoire remontant au congrès de 1972.

Une question pour moi au début était de savoir comment il se faisait qu'Alex Haley était un conférencier associé, étant donné que *Roots* n'a pas été publié qu'en 1976. Ce 'mystère' est bien abordé ici par Peter Weil. Haley était un fil étonnamment fort tout au long de ces souvenirs (renforcé par un parti pris éditorial, peut-être). Un autre fil de mémoire puissant était la présence des joueurs de kora.

Une liste des communications du congrès de 1972 est fournie, ainsi que des institutions connues pour tenir les actes du congrès, ou une partie de ceux-ci. Bien qu'ils devaient également être distribués en Afrique, je n'ai pas trouvé de documentation à cet égard, à part l'Afrique du Sud. Le texte intégral du discours d'ouverture de Léopold Sédar Senghor,

président d'honneur du congrès, est inclus. (Merci à Maria Grosz-Ngaté pour cela aussi bien que d'autres suggestions utiles.)

Je regrette le manque relatif de voix francophones, africaines et féminines. Mais je suis reconnaissante à tous ceux qui ont partagé leurs expériences du congrès de 1972 ou autour de celui-ci. Chaque contribution, élaborée ou informelle, était la bienvenue.

Le dernier numéro de *Mande Studies* (volume 23, 2021) comprend plusieurs articles basés sur une table ronde à l'Association des études africaines (ASA) en 2020, sur l'avenir des études mandé. Maria Grosz-Ngaté passe en revue l'histoire de la MANSÀ, y compris un retour sur le congrès SOAS de 1972, et suggère un passage à un « espace de concentration régional ». Alioune Sow offre une analyse littéraire, avec le changement social / 'dilution' et le cosmopolitisme comme thèmes prédominants autour de « mandé-isme ». Susan Gagliardi discute de l'importance d'un nom pour projeter une certaine « histoire » qui masque l'hétérogénéité, et sa propre expérience de MANSÀ en tant que communauté diversifiée et ouverte au-delà de ce que son nom suggère. Baba Coulibaly décrit le fleuve Niger comme « un marqueur de la culture et de l'identité mandé dans toute sa diversité », mais que les perspectives rurales et urbaines produisent des logiques souvent opposées quant à sa gestion. Rosa de Jorio examine les modèles de pouvoir *mansa* contre *faama* (roi contre guerrier), l'appropriation de ces modèles par les élites contemporaines au Mali, et la nécessité de modèles plus larges de coopération pour le développement démocratique, en s'inspirant du travail du regretté anthropologue malien Shaka Bagayogo. Joseph Hellweg propose une réévaluation de la portée et du nom de MANSÀ au vu des « critiques de l'ethnicité » telles que celles de Jean-Loup Amselle et à travers diverses disciplines, et rappelle le congrès triennal de MANSÀ qui s'est tenue à Grand-Bassam en Côte d'Ivoire (2017) comme indiquant un changement déjà en cours.

Il semble donc opportun, à plus d'un titre, de revenir sur le congrès marquant formellement l'apparition des « études mandingues » en tant qu'entreprise internationale et interdisciplinaire.

Marcia Tiede



I was in the Peace Corps in Nigeria 1964-66 (Igboland one year, Hausaland one year), and then wrote an M.A. thesis at San Francisco State on Jaja of Opobo. I didn't get involved with Mande topics until my year at U.C. Berkeley (1971-72). I was just getting started with the subject of griots there, and was clueless about any preparations for a conference in London. If I'd known it would be happening, I couldn't have done anything about it anyway.

It was just coincidence that my arrival at SOAS was in the year following the big conference. When I got there, I of course heard all about it, and by then was familiar with most of the participants' names. The collected papers were in piles down in the SOAS basement. I remember finding many copies of each stacked in random piles. Somebody, probably David Dalby or my supervisor Humphrey Fisher, invited me to go down there and help myself to whatever interested me, so I have many original copies in my own files and I think I cite a lot of them in my dissertation and a few early publications.

David Conrad

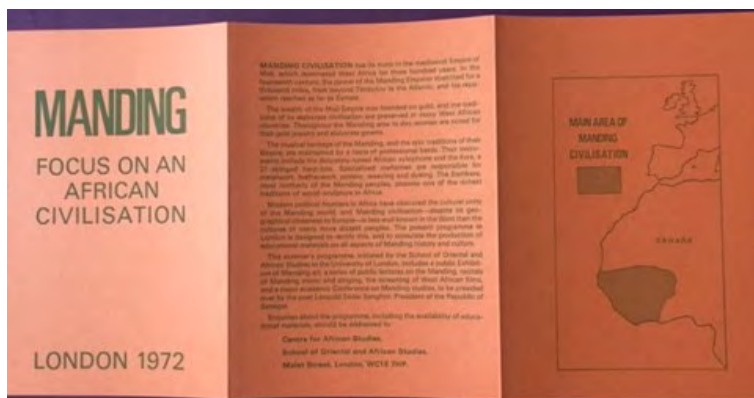
Emeritus Professor, History, SUNY Oswego
President of MANSÁ (1986-2008)

As a recent PhD with two years of university teaching, my participation in the 1972 Conference on Manding Studies at SOAS was a stimulating and enjoyable personal experience. Many outstanding scholars presented papers or participated in discussions about Mande history and culture, while films and musical presentations contributed to the developing study of one of the most significant global civilizations. The many conversations I had with senior scholars during meals and social occasions provided me with insights about the Mande world and with ideas for further research.

My paper was the first of many publications about the relationship between Mande communities and Islam, and I was so very fortunate to initiate relationships with many fine scholars at the conference, who kindly gave me advice and help with my research for decades. One of my strongest memories about the conference was its relaxed and collaborative atmosphere.

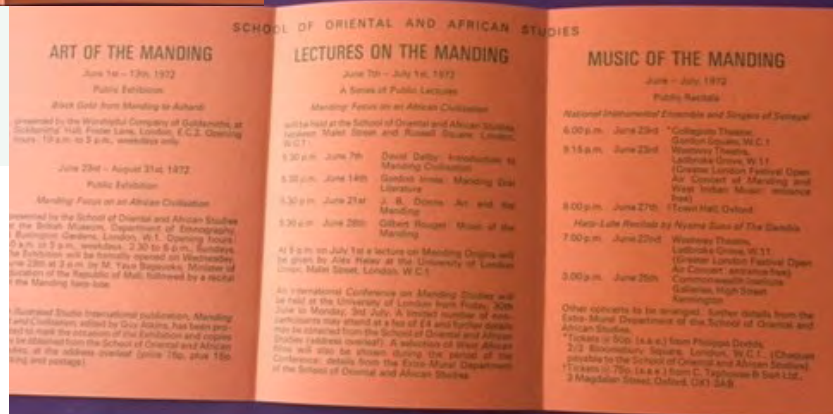
David E. Skinner

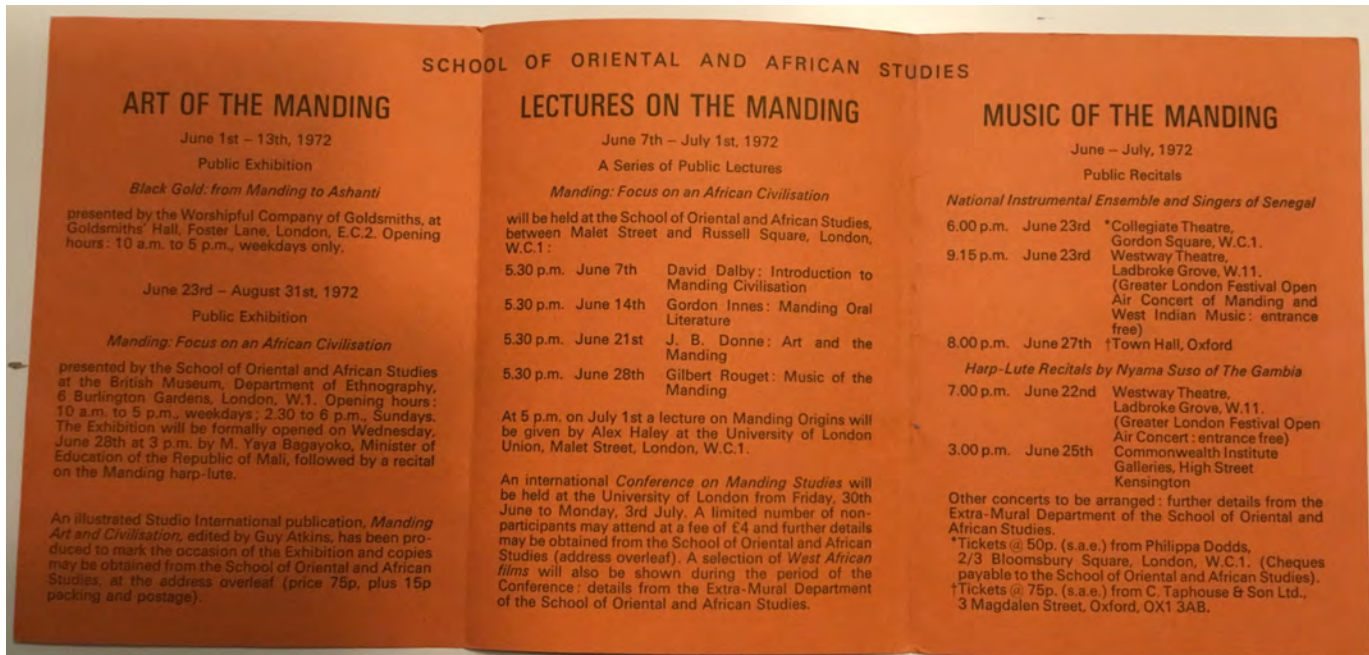
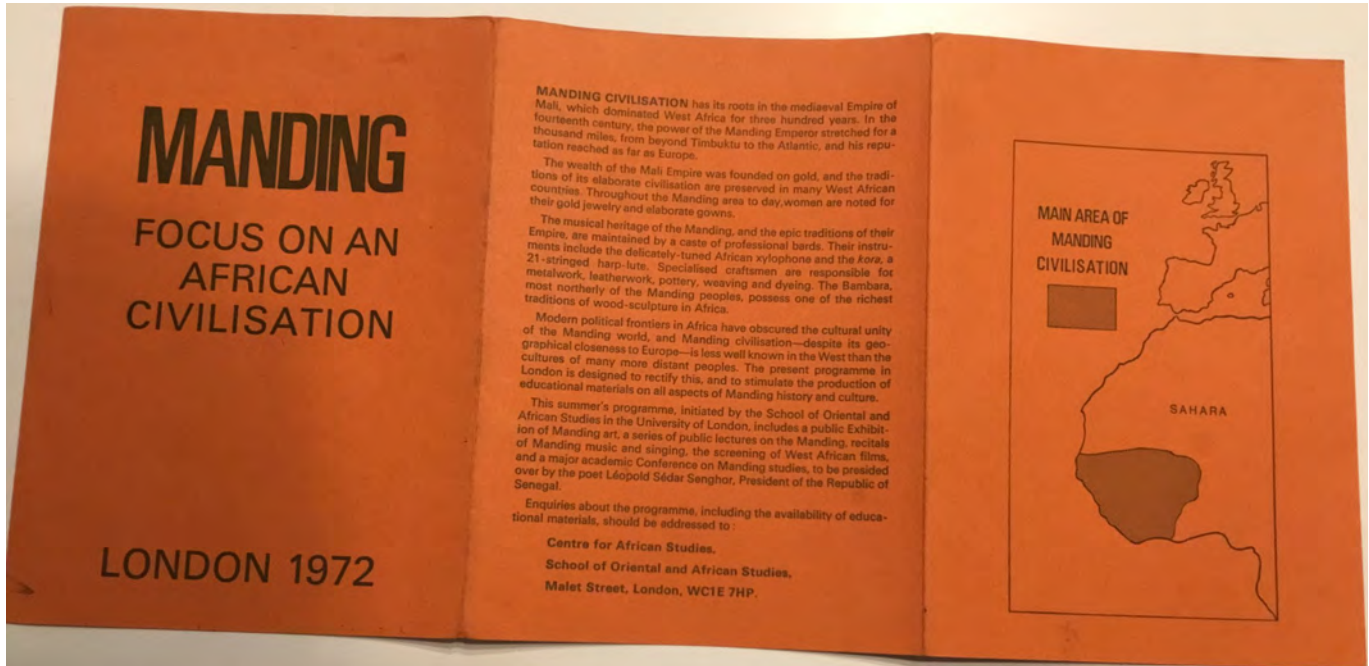
Professor Emeritus of History
Santa Clara University



Brochure of public events related to the Manding Conference and exhibition

(courtesy of Jean-Loup Amselle)





Brochure of public events related to the Manding Conference and exhibition
 (courtesy of Alison Dalby)



Report on the Manding Conference held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, June 28th to July 3rd 1972 (excerpts)

Bai T. Moore

From a copy in Bai T. Moore papers, 1919-2004, Indiana University; courtesy of Maria Grosz-Ngaté.

INTRODUCTION

Following Presidential approval to attend the conference, I left Liberia on the night of June 26th, arriving in London the following morning. The Conference did not commence until the 28th, so I spent the extra days getting settled and reading through some of the papers which had been submitted for discussion during the Conference.

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

According to the organizers the Conference aimed at bringing together as far as possible, a large number of scholars who have worked in the Manding field, as well as, create a synthesis which will do justice to a major African civilization. Another objective was to initiate programs designed to make the contributions of this civilization known and understood in the outside world. Towards this end the Conference was combined with an exhibition devoted to Manding art and civilization and recitals by Manding musicians and singers from the Gambia, Senegal and Mali.

WHO ARE THE MANDING

Manding is a generic term which covers a large number of West African peoples who speak related forms of the same language. They include the Madinka or Malinke, the Bambara or Bamana, the Dyula and Vai, together with numerous other small groups. Over ten million people speak a variety of dialects of the Manding language in nine modern African states including Upper Volta, the Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Mali, Senegal, the Gambia and Portuguese Guinea. ...

HOW THE CONFERENCE WAS ORGANIZED

The time allotted for plenary and discussions, four days, was inadequate to read the numerous papers submitted. The organizers decided to have the papers read by a small committee and summaries drawn up for contribution among the participants. These were divided into panels in keeping with subject matter. ...

PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE

During the closing session of the Conference it was proposed that a coordinating Center for Manding studies be established: a) to raise funds to maintain the center, b) sponsor and coordinate research projects, c) work towards a follow up conference in 1974, etc. Several countries were suggested for the center, including Mali, Senegal, Guinea and the University of London (School of Oriental and African Studies). It was finally agreed that a small committee decide the venue of the follow-up meeting.

Appendix A.

PANELS OF SELECTED SPEAKERS/GROUPES D'ORATEURS SELECTIONNES

Any participant who has presented a paper, but whose name is not listed under one of the following panels, should contact the secretariat as soon as possible.

Tout participant qui a soumis un communication, et dont le nom n'est pas sur cette liste, est prie de prendre contacte avec le secretariat des que possible.

MANDING CIVILISATION.

Bazin, D. Cisse, Y. Cisse, N'Diaye, Leynaud, Person.

MANDING EXPANSION.

The Manding in the East (dans l'Est): Boutillier, Dieterlen, Gingiss, Idris, Levzion, Lewis, Konate, T. da Mota.

The Manding in the South-west (dans le Sud-Ouest): Amselle, Hill, Holsoe, Kaba, Lipschutz, McCall, Moore, Riecell, Smyke.

The Manding in the West (dans l'Ouest): Boulegue, Cissoko, Curtin, Diop, Ferry, Quinn, Schaffer, B. Sidibe.

THE MANDING LANGUAGE.

Written Manding (La Langue Manding Ecrite): Dumestre, Karlik, Knappert, Ly, Stewart.

Linguistic Interaction: Ba, Calvet, Coulibaly, Ducos, Turay.

Structural and Comparative: Galtier, Houis, Parkin, Spears.

HISTORICAL SOURCES ON THE MANDING.

Oral Tradition: Diabate, Hopkins, Kesteloot, Innes, C. Seydou.

Arabic Sources: N. Bell, Mauny, Meillassoux.

ASPECTS OF MANDING CULTURE.

Art - Masks and Masquerades: Bravmann, Imperato, Phillips, Zahan.

Art - Weaving and Dyeing (Tissage et Teinture): Donne, Johnson.

Verbal Art and Music: Bird, L. Camara, S. Camara, Drameh, Knight, Ofri.

Religion: Kake, Quimby, Reichold, Samb, Sanneh, D. Skinner, Sy.

DOCUMENTATION ON THE MANDING

G. Brasseur, P. Brasseur, Surugue.



Appendix B. CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

FRIDAY 30 June

- 9:45 Opening Ceremony (Senate House, William Beveridge Hall).
 11:00 Reception of Conference participants (Senate House, Macmillan Hall).
 13:00 **Plenary Session: MANDING CIVILISATION** (Senate House, Macmillan Hall)
 18:00 Reception by the Director General, British Council, on the occasion of the Conference (Banqueting Hall, Whitehall, Westminster).

SATURDAY 1 July (all sessions at S. O. A. S.)

General sessions: MANDING EXPANSION

- 9:15 The Manding in the East (Senior Refectory).
 13:45 The Manding in the South-west (S. O. A. S. Senior Common Room).
 13:45 The Manding in the West (Senior Refectory).

Linguistic Sessions: THE MANDING LANGUAGE (4th floor Conference Room, S. O. A. S.)

- 9:15 Manding as a Written Language
 11:15 Linguistic Interaction
 13:45 Structural and Comparative
Discussion. (Rooms to be announced).
 13:45 West African Studies and the School Curriculum
 13:45 Museums and Exhibitions relating to West Africa
 17:00 Public Lecture by Alex Haley: 'Manding Origins in the New World' (University of London Union)

SUNDAY 2 JULY (all sessions at the Africa Centre, King Street, Covent Garden).

- 11:00 Film-show, followed by discussion of West African Cultural Films (main hall).

General Sessions: HISTORICAL SOURCES ON THE MANDING

- 14:00 Oral Tradition (main hall).
 16:30 Arabic Sources (Small hall).

Cultural sessions: ASPECTS OF MANDING CULTURE

- 14:00 Art - Masks and Masquerades, Weaving and Dyeing (small hall).
 16:30 Verbal Art and Music (main hall).

MONDAY 1 July

Cultural sessions (continued): ASPECTS OF MANDING CULTURE

- 9:15 Religion (Senate House, Macmillan Hall).
 9:15 Bibliographic session: DOCUMENTATION ON THE MANDING (S. O. A. S. 4th floor conference room).
 13:30 Plenary Session: IMPLICATIONS OF THE MANDING CONFERENCE (Senate House, Macmillan Hall)
 15:30 Formal close of Conference.

(It will be possible to convene additional sessions, as required, after the formal close of the Conference).



50 YEARS AFTER: REFLECTIONS ON THE MANDING CONFERENCE OF 1972

Robert Launay

Professor, Department of Anthropology
Northwestern University

I was the youngest and most junior (by far) participant in the Manding Conference. In 1971, I was a graduate student in social anthropology at Cambridge preparing to go to the field in northern Côte d'Ivoire. I took the train once a week to London to study Bamana-kan at SOAS with David Dalby. At the time, he was busy organizing the Manding Conference, and I was privy to some of the effort. For example, I met Yves Person at SOAS, and remember his quip about the "Manderings", the "Mandarings", who would all be attending the Conference. Dalby wanted a few introductory papers, the text of which was to be included in full in both English and French versions. Person was asked to submit a short overview of Manding history. I was commissioned to write a survey of social organization, focusing on clans and castes. As a first-year graduate student, I was both honored and flabbergasted to receive such an invitation, and understandably delighted to have an article that would be read by senior scholars in the field. Alas, I was unable to physically attend the conference, as I was in the field studying the Manding at the time. I did not really ask myself (much less Dalby) why the task was allotted to such a junior scholar!

Nor did I wonder why the Manding Conference was being held in the first place, and at that in London. Part of the answer, of course, lay in Dalby's drive and enthusiasm, which I was able to experience first-hand. Even so, this could not explain why the Conference resonated so widely, why it had such an impact on the field. Its significance was highlighted by the identity of the keynote speaker, none other than Léopold Senghor, President of Senegal.

In fact, within the general purview of West African studies, Manding Studies was comparatively marginal. Yoruba Studies in Nigeria, Akan Studies in Ghana, both could boast a more impressive corpus of work and a

deeper network of scholars. Part of this difference can be attributed to the differential development of the academic disciplines of anthropology and of African history in Britain and in France. Both disciplines were removed from the control of the colonial administration far earlier in Britain than in France. Academic anthropology was far more deeply entrenched in Britain between the Wars than in France. Curiously, the historiography pioneered in France by the *Annales* school, which focused on social, political, and economic factors rather than on "events" and personalities, did not seem to have much impact on the practices of African history, which remained largely "événementiel." This newer approach to history took root in African history far earlier in Britain and the United States.

Moreover, major anglophone African universities — Ibadan in Nigeria, Legon in Accra, Ghana — were situated in proximity to, if not in the midst of, Yoruba-speaking or Akan-speaking heartlands. By way of contrast, Dakar, the intellectual center of French West Africa, was much further removed from the Manding heartland. One aim, explicit or implicit, of the Manding Conference was to elevate Manding Studies to the level of Akan or Yoruba Studies. SOAS, the site of the Manding Conference, was well integrated into the networks of Ghanaian and Nigerian scholarship that provided a model for Manding Studies. For this very reason, the Manding Conference took place in London rather than, more obviously, in Paris. Paradoxically, hardly any British scholars (not even Dalby) contributed papers to the Conference.

This is not to say that the French dominated the Conference by any measure. The number of African participants is impressive, although the absence of Djibril T. Niane is remarkable. Niane's version of the Epic of Sundiata was in fact paradigm-changing, not only for Manding Studies but for the understanding of Africa in general. It established the importance, both of a deep history and of an elaborate literary oral tradition, changing the ways in which Africa was understood outside as well as inside academia. A number of the papers do discuss the oral traditions of the Mande and of other neighboring peoples, a testimony to Niane's legacy. In all fairness, I do not know whether or not he was invited and either unable or unwilling to attend. Some of the African participants — Camara Laye, Massa Maghan Diabate — were far



better known as novelists than as scholars. Of the academics, those whose careers were the most distinguished (Lamin Sanneh, Lansine Kaba) went on to teach in universities outside Africa.

The inclusion of African scholars in large numbers was only one sign that the Conference represented a changing of the guard, a shift in paradigms in Mande Studies in particular and in African Studies in general. Some of the papers embody ways of thinking about Africa that seem irrevocably dated, while others announce new approaches that were to become commonplace. Not surprisingly, given Dalby's professional identity as a linguist, there are a very substantial number of papers in linguistics, about syntax, semantics, and loans to and from different languages. Such approaches were particularly identified with the growth of "area studies" in the Cold War.

The Manding Conference itself was an exemplar of this area studies perspective, one which was increasingly marginalized after the end of the Cold War. The Conference marked a radical paradigm shift in French Africanist anthropology, that had long been dominated by the school of Marcel Griaule. Such an approach, represented at the Conference by Germaine Dieterlen and Dominique Zahan, was preoccupied with the study of supposedly pristine African cosmologies disembodied from political and economic realities and more generally from history. Such a perspective treated social organization, if at all, ideologically rather than sociologically. The fact that much of the information on Manding social organization was to be found in dated and often inadequate colonial sources helps explain the fact that I was delegated the task of summarizing it. No noted scholar at the time was preoccupied with such material, though a number of the younger anthropologists represented at the Conference were beginning to work in this domain. Needless to say, this tradition discouraged, and arguably actively prevented, the fruitful collaboration between the disciplines of history and of anthropology, at least conceived in these terms. Moreover, it sought to erase the very real and profound impact of Islam, long present in the region, from the study of Manding cosmology, much less society at large. Indeed, a few (perhaps too few) of the papers in the Conference point to, and even highlight, the

importance of Islam – Hunwick, Levtzion, Person, and Sanneh among others. This particular facet of Manding studies, only beginning to emerge from marginality, was to grow in importance exponentially.

A younger generation of French anthropologists, many trained by Georges Balandier, were represented at the Conference in greater numbers. Balandier focused on contemporary African realities, initially on the predicament of colonized subjects, and paid particular attention to political and economic forces affecting the everyday lives of Africans in historical contexts. Some of his students present at the Conference – Claude Meillassoux, Jean Bazin, Jean-Loup Amselle – considered themselves Marxists, at least at that juncture. This constituted a radical departure, in every sense of the word, from the Griaule school. But other younger French anthropologists – Jean-Louis Boutillier, Marguerite Dupire – also practiced a very different kind of anthropology from that of their predecessors.

The Conference included a very large contingent of scholars from the United States, far more than from Britain: anthropologists, linguists, art historians, but especially historians. The US government during the Cold War invested a great deal in area studies, funding student scholarships to study in Africa and elsewhere and underwriting the study of African languages. These young historians were uninfluenced by, and generally unimpressed with, French colonial historiography. Philip Curtin, another participant in the Conference, perhaps best exemplifies this focus on broad economic and social realities, writing the kind of history that was more influenced by Fernand Braudel, leading historian in the Annales school, than by other French historians of Africa.

Some years later, at one of the annual conferences of the African Studies Association, a group of scholars gathered in a crowded hotel room to found the Mande Studies Association, MANSA. The punning acronym was the brainchild of Nehemiah Levtzion, one of the participants at the Manding Conference. Other participants of the 1972 conference were in attendance, among them Lansine Kaba and myself. MANSA is unquestionably the direct descendant of the Manding Conference. We are all, arguably, Manding-denw.



MEMORIES OF THE 1972 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MANDING STUDIES

Roderic Knight

Emeritus professor of ethno-musicology, Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, Oberlin, Ohio, 2022

In June 1972 I had just completed the first year of my university teaching career, at the University of Washington. With me in Seattle that year was one of the teachers I had spent the previous year with in Gambia, the great kora virtuoso and radio personality, Jali Nyama Suso. The Manding Conference, coming at the end of this year, would be a great celebration for both of us.

For me, with only one publication to my name at that point and my dissertation not yet finished, I was pleased to be able to read a paper, titled "Manding/Fula relations as reflected in the Manding song repertoire." (I later published it in the 1982 edition of the journal *African Music*.)

I do not remember all of the details of the conference, but the highlights for me were the concerts, one by the Senegalese ensemble, the other by the Malian ensemble, and the plenary session at which the American author Alex Haley presented the research he had been doing into his own ancestry that would eventually lead to the book and TV series, "Roots."

During my year in Gambia in 1970, while I was studying kora with Jali Nyama, he had asked me whether I might know the American author named Alex Haley. I did not. About a year earlier Nyama had met and worked with Haley when he visited Gambia for his research. Now the three of us would meet in London. Conferring before Haley gave his talk, we agreed that it could be arranged, impromptu, that Jali Nyama would punctuate the end of the talk with some sung words of praise for Haley, in the true tradition of *jaliyaa*, and this is what happened. It made the event all the more memorable.



Kora players from Gambia — Lalo Keba Dramé (left) and Jali Nyama Suso (right) — at a recording session in London on the occasion of the Manding Conference, 1972.

From *Manding Conference 1972: report and recommendations*. Names provided by Lucy Durán.

As significant as the conference was for me, I have only vague memories of it. I think it was overshadowed by the next event for me that summer, which was to travel to Paris to present a recording I had made of Jali Nyama Suso while he was in residence at U. Washington to Charles Duvelle of OCORA. Duvelle agreed to release it as an LP, which was a signal event in my life.

Recordings made in 1972 by Roderic Knight are newly available online at the University of Washington Ethnomusicology Archives. They include:

- ◇ Talk by Alex Haley, with Gambian musicians
- ◇ Concert by the Senegal National Ensemble
- ◇ Jali Nyama Suso and Roderic Knight on BBC, broadcast on October 26, 1972

<https://soundcloud.com/uwlibraries/sets/manding-soas-1972>



Jali Nyama Suso and
Roderic Knight, London,
1972

*(courtesy of Roderic Knight;
photographer unknown)*





CENTRE FOR AFRICAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES
(University of London)
MALET STREET, LONDON, WC1E 7HP

Telegrams: SOASUL, LONDON WC1

Telephone: 01-580 9021/8

DD/APD

28 September 1971

Mr. Roderic Knight,
3941 1st Avenue N.E. Apt. 202,
Seattle,
Washington 98105,
U. S. A.

Dear Mr. Knight,

Thank you very much for your letter of 19 September, and for your very kind remarks on my paper 'Black through White'. We are most grateful for your interest in the Conference, and very much hope that you will be able to attend, and to present a paper on your own musicological research. Enclosed you will find statements on the Conference and the parallel activities we are planning. We should of course be delighted if the kora player from The Gambia could attend with you, although the problem of fares must of course be tackled. We do in fact have some funds for assisting in the cost of travel for participants who will be reading papers (or playing musical instruments, for that matter) but the interest which the Conference is arousing, both in West Africa and in North America, means that we shall need to perform a 'loaves and fishes' act with our funds. Is there any possibility at all of you and/or your kora player obtaining at least partial assistance in the cost of your travel to and from London next summer? If not, could you let me know what is likely to be the new reduced 'Early Birds' return fare between Seattle and London.

The paper topic you suggest, devoted to the relationships and attitudes of the Fulas and Mandingos as expressed in traditional Mandingo songs sounds excellent. My wife, who is working on Mandingo music at the moment with Tony King, will also look forward to meeting you. She and I will be going to Mali in November and December this year for some brief research, and also to make some of the final arrangements for the Manding Project next summer.

With very best wishes, and looking forward to the pleasure of meeting you next year,

Yours sincerely,

Dr. David Dalby,
Chairman,
Centre for Africa Studies.

P.S. What is your first name?

CENTRE FOR AFRICAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES
(University of London)
MALET STREET, LONDON, WC1E 7HP

Telegrams: SOASUL, LONDON WC1

Telephone: 01-580 9021/8

Dr. Roderic Knight,
Acting Assistant Professor,
School of Music,
Archives of Ethnic Music and Dance,
University of Washington,
Seattle,
Washington 98105
U. S. A.

22nd November 1971

Dear Dr. Knight,

We were very glad indeed to get your letter of November 10th. David Dalby will be in Mali until 22nd December. We are very happy that you and your kora teacher Nyama Suso will probably be coming to the Conference on Manding Studies next summer.

The limited resources from the School will be used in part to assure a major participation by West African scholars and we will be making a combined approach to an American foundation on the question of expenses of participants from the States. I shall keep in touch with you about this. We would be happy to offer you expenses for the four days of the Conference.

We very much appreciate your offer of a paper by February and also your having put us in touch with your kora teacher, Nyama Suso. I shall be writing to him as well.

Sincerely,

Herman Bell
Academic Secretary
Conference on Manding Studies

Correspondence to Roderic Knight from David Dalby (28 September 1971) and Herman Bell (22 November 1971).

(courtesy of Roderic Knight)

Herman Bell, at that time a recent PhD graduate from Northwestern University who became a linguistics professor at Khartoum and Oxford, served as Academic Secretary of the 1972 conference. He was contacted via Alison and Winifred Dalby, and wished to participate in this commemoration. Ill health prevented that, and he has recently died.

<https://www.altaghyeer.info/en/2023/02/12/death-eclipses-one-of-the-outstanding-linguists-specialized-in-ancient-nubian-heritage/>



Centre for African Studies
SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

University of London
Malet St, London WC1

MANDING:
Focus on an African
Civilisation

8th June, 1972

ad from: 2/3 Bloomsbury Square,
London, W.C.1A 2RN

Professor R. Knight,
School of Music,
Archives of Ethnic Music and Dance,
University of Washington,
Seattle,
Washington, 98105,
U.S.A.

Dear Professor Knight,

Dr. Herman Bell has told me that you are coming to the conference on the Manding at the end of June. Parallel with the conference, we are running a programme of films and other visual material. I believe that Nyama Suso who is now in London to attend the conference, recently made a film or videotape in your department, playing the kora. If this tape or film is available, I wonder whether it would be possible for you to bring it with you when you come to London. We would be very grateful if you could do this, and perhaps you could let us know beforehand whether the recording is a videotape or a film, so that we can have the appropriate playback machinery available.

I enclose a formal letter which may be necessary when bringing the videotape/film through the British customs.

Yours sincerely,

M. KILLINGRAY (Mrs.)
Assistant Organiser.

Enc.

* At the time it was still in production, but is now available in 2022 as a DVD.

Correspondence to Roderic Knight from Margaret Killingray (8 June 1972), and from Madeau Stewart, BBC, Sound Archive Production Unit (3 October 1972).

(courtesy of Roderic Knight)



BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

BROADCASTING HOUSE LONDON W1A 1AA

TELEPHONE 01-580 4468

CABLES BROADCASTS LONDON PS4

TELEGRAMS BROADCASTS LONDON TELEX

TELEX 22182

3rd October, 1972.

Dear Professor Knight,

You will be glad to hear that the programme on the kora, to which you contributed such valuable off-the-cuff information, is being broadcast on Radio 3 Thursday the 26th October, at 1630 hours. I only had to do the minimum of editing to reduce the programme to the 35 minutes. Those in the BBC who have listened to the programme prior to its being broadcast have received it with enthusiasm, so I feel confident that the public will do likewise.

Very many thanks to you for doing the programme at such short notice, and so skilfully.

Yours sincerely,

(Madeau Stewart)
Producer
Sound Archive Production Unit

Professor Roderic Knight,
School of Music,
University of Washington,
Seattle, Wash. 98195.



Alex
Haley
w/
Gambian
friends

GIRCA 1715 in the Mandinka tribal village of Juffure, in The Gambia, West Africa, Kairaba Kunta Kinte took his first wife, Yaisa, and begat three sons: Janneh, Saloum, Omoro.

GIRCA 1750-60, Omoro Kinte, by the wife Binta (Kebba) begat four sons: Kunta, Lamin, Suwadu, Madi.

HOSE Kinte brothers' direct descendants . . . two centuries later . . . here are gathered in Juffure village—blood sixth cousins. Alex "Haley" (the one wearing the necktie) is the seventh-generation seed of Kunta. Kunta was among the 140 stolen Mandinkas sailed from the Gambia River July 5, 1767, in the hold of the new slaveship Lord Ligonier—arriving September 29, 1767, in Colonial Annapolis, Maryland, where Kunta remained among the voyage's 98 black survivors, sold at Meig's Wharf by auction.

Card from Alex Haley to Roderic Knight, received in conjunction with a talk that Knight organized at the University of Washington after the London conference.

(courtesy of Roderic Knight)

For my brother Rod Knight,
and Sister Gisela, and
Jennifer —
Alex Haley Kinte

ALEX HALEY P.O. BOX 2907, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94126

Link to an article by Alex Haley, *My Furthest-Back Person — 'The African'* — published very shortly after the Manding Conference (*New York Times*, July 16, 1972).

Source: Alex Haley website

<https://alexhaley.com/2018/08/14/my-furthest-back-person-the-african/>



International Conference on Manding Studies, London 1972

Photos by Roderic Knight.

With additional caption details thanks to Lucy Durán, 2022.

- ◇ A gold necklace, on display for the conference (*right*).
- ◇ A museum instrument, on display for the conference (*below right*).
This might be called a "proto-harp," a multi-stringed bow with resonator.



CONCERT AT THE AFRICA CENTER, COVENT GARDEN

(as announced in the introduction to Alex Haley's talk)

- ◇ *Gambia 1*. From R to L: Jali Nyama Suso (in gold), Fabala Kanuteh, Lalo Kebba Dramé, Balabo Jeng. Two jalimusolu standing, L-R: Rohia Jeng and Nano Sakiliba.
- ◇ *Gambia 2*. From L to R: Balabo Jeng with kontingo, Lalo, Fabala, Nyama. The singer standing behind Lalo is his wife, Rohia Jeng, and to her left is Nano Sakiliba.
- ◇ *Gambia 3*. Lalo and his wife, standing. Audience in view.
- ◇ *Mali 1*. L-R: Batourou Sékou Kouyaté, Djelimady Sissoko, Sidiki Diabaté, a fourth player out of view. Singers L-R: Nantenegue Kamissoko, Fanta Damba ("Chini"), Mogontafe Sacko.
- ◇ *Mali 2*. Same people as in Mali 1. Singers L-R: Nantenegue, Fanta. There were two others, not visible, Mogontafe Sacko and Mariam Kouyaté, later to become 3rd wife of Sidiki.
- ◇ *Mali 3*. Two men in suits [Lansiné Kaba and Sékéné Mody Cissoko] being acknowledged by a jalikeo praising them. (*See Mali 4, 5, 6 below.*)
- ◇ *Senegal 1*. Banna Kanuteh (standing in front of his balo) introducing a song. In the background, a bolon and kontingo; in foreground, five koras, two jalimusolu. There was also a tamo player in this group, not seen in the photo. Without identifying them one-by-one, four of the kora players were Soundioulou Sissoko, Fodé Dramé, Bakary Cissoko, and Banna Sissoko. One of the singers is Mahawa Kouyaté, wife of Soundioulou Sissoko.
- ◇ *Senegal 2*. Two of the kora players in the group.

CONCERT BY THE MALI ENSEMBLE AT THE MUSEUM OF MANKIND

- ◇ *Mali 4*. Four singers (*see names in Mali 2 caption*), three kora players (Batourou Sékou Kouyaté, Djelimady Sissoko, Sidiki Diabaté), and balo player Beren Kouyaté.
- ◇ *Mali 5*. Same group as in Mali 4.
- ◇ *Mali 6*. Same group as in Mali 4.





Photos by Roderic Knight



Gambia 1



Gambia 2



Gambia 3



Photos by Roderic Knight



Mali 1



Mali 2



Mali 3

Lansiné Kaba and Sékéné Mody Cissoko at center

(identified by Fanta Traoré, wife of Lansiné Kaba)



Photos by Roderic Knight



Mali 5



Mali 4



Mali 6



Photos by Roderic Knight



Senegal 1



Senegal 2



RECOLLECTIONS

Pascal James Imperato

I attended the 1972 Manding Conference that was held between 29 June - 3 July in London and organized by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. There were actually four components to this event—a conference at which research papers were presented, an exhibition of Manding art at the British Museum's then annex, the Museum of Mankind at 6 Burlington Gardens, a musical program, and a film exhibition program. I was, to varying degrees, involved in all four aspects of this event. I have always thought of this as more a multi-faceted event than strictly as a conference, since the latter term usually implies a series of verbal interactions between those in attendance.

I was initially contacted by David Dalby, who arrived in Dakar a week after I had just left. He organized all of the components of this event, and in a remarkably short period of time. He, Guy Atkins who served as the Curator of the exhibition, and Herman Bell, Academic Secretary to the Manding Conference, were familiar with my early field research among the Bamana of Mali. I submitted a paper for the conference, titled "Contemporary Masked Dances and Masquerades of the Bamana Age Sets from the Cercle of Bamako, Mali," and presented it at a session on Culture where my French colleagues and friends, Dominique Zahan, Solange de Ganay, Viviana Paques, and Germaine Dieterlen were also present. I spent much time with them at the conference and with Malian colleagues and friends.

There were films exhibited over four days of the event, in three different locations, two of which were off-site from SOAS. I brought two 16-mm films to London which were shown on Sunday, July 3rd at The Africa Centre in Covent Garden. The first of these was *The Ballad of the Vaccinators (La Chanson des vaccinateurs)*, 1970, produced by USIA, that presented the smallpox/measles vaccination program in Mali in which I worked for close to six years. It is a 15-minute sound color film that features the famous Malian bard, Batrou Sekou Kouyate and his wife Diontan. The second film was *The Niger Bend*, 1972, produced and directed by Eliot Elisofon,

distributed by Westinghouse Broadcasting and part of their Black African Heritage series. It is a 30-minute color film. The cinematographer for both of these films was Georges Bracher, who was based in Dakar. I worked closely with Eliot Elisofon when he was in West Africa, and we became close friends. He was an eminent *Time-Life* photographer and film maker. In arranging for these film showings I worked with Mrs. Margaret Killingray, Assistant Organizer of the conference, and Dr. Peter Mitchell of the Center of West African Studies in Birmingham.

I was able to arrange for SOAS to invite Batrou Sekou Kouyate and his wife to the conference as part of the Malian group of musicians. He performed at a number of musical presentations.

The greater part of my involvement in the event was with Guy Atkins who organized the exhibition, *Manding. Focus on an African Civilisation*, and edited the catalogue for it, *Manding Art and Civilisation*. He also edited a booklet abridged from the catalogue, with the same title as the exhibition. Herman Bell, Academic Secretary of the Manding Conference, worked closely with Guy and handled many of the logistics of the exhibition and the catalogue. Both Guy and Herman were familiar with my work in Mali, and in early 1972 asked me if I could lend a number of Bamana sculptures for the exhibition. As I recall, there were a total of twelve or so. They requested that I obtain better photographs of them, which I did, which were then shown to Bill Fagg, who approved them.

However, shortly afterwards, David Dalby was in Dakar and met with the director of the IFAN Museum, who offered to send a number of objects from their collection to London, accompanied by their curator, Bodiél Thiam, who remained there until the exhibition closed. In the end Guy and Bill Fagg needed only two objects from me, a twin statue and a Jo Society N'Tokofa Jonyeleni statue. I sent these over to Guy at SOAS and they were exhibited.



Production of a *bogolanfini* cloth (collection P. J. Imperato). Photos: Marli Shamir.

(From *Manding Art and Civilisation*, p. 18)

Before the conference and the creation of the catalogue, Guy asked for my help with photographs both for the booklet, *Manding. Focus on an African Civilisation*, and the art exhibition catalogue. I lent him some for both and put him into contact with Marli Shamir, an Israeli photographer who had photographed the creation of mud cloth (*bogolanfini*) during my field research. She also provided photographs of the Mopti and Djenne mosques. Herman Bell asked if they could take a 1500-word extract from my paper and include it as an essay in the catalogue, to which I was happy to agree. Both he and Guy asked Dominique Zahan and me to be present at the art exhibition to answer questions when President Senghor visited it one afternoon. He asked some very insightful questions which led to brief but interesting discussions.

The Manding Conference of 1972 was far more than a conference. It was an extraordinary and unique multi-component event that brought together the many diverse aspects of Manding life and civilization and those who had done much to contribute to our knowledge of them. I still marvel at the genius of David Dalby and his colleagues who in a short period of time created this wonderful and unique cultural event.

Pascal James Imperato, MD

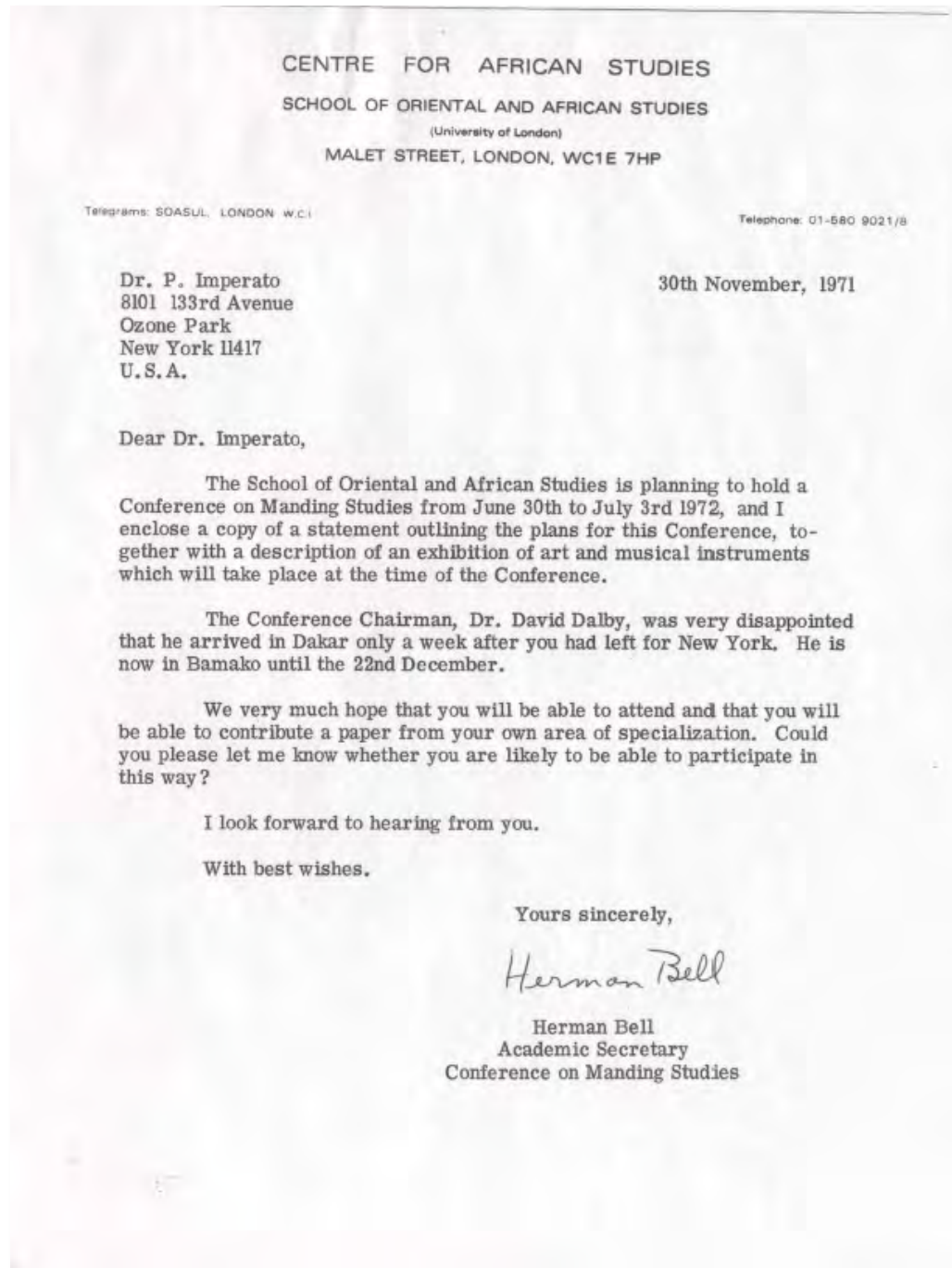
Distinguished Service Professor and Founding Dean

School of Public Health

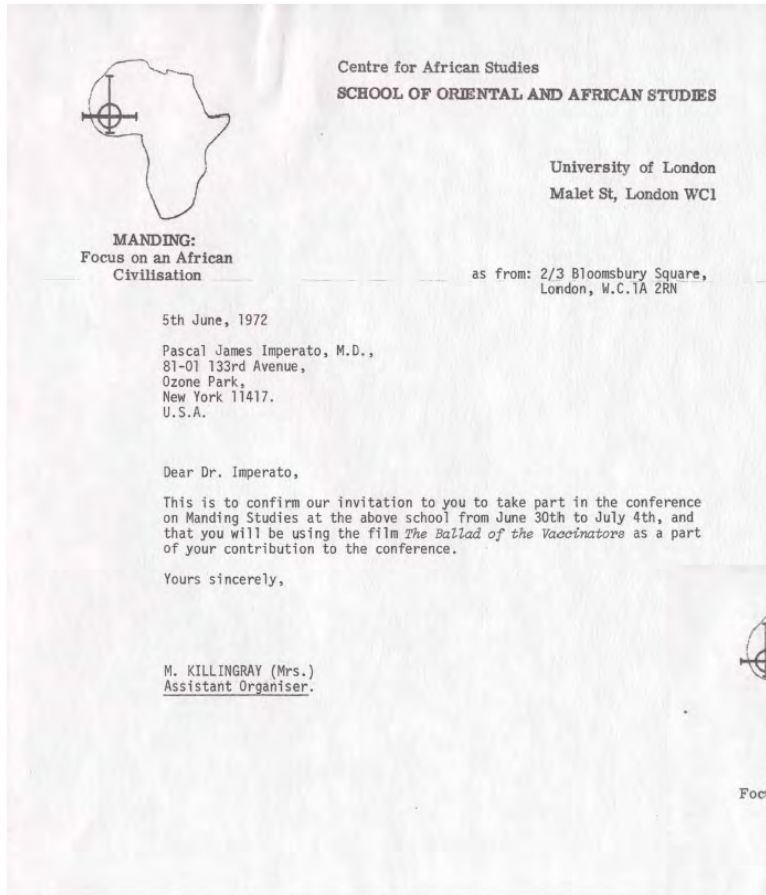
SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University

October 5, 2022





Letter of invitation from Herman Bell, 30 November, 1971.
(courtesy of Pascal James Imperato)



Letters from Margaret Killingray re: bringing films to the conference, 5 June and 15 June, 1972.

(courtesy of Pascal James Imperato)



Thursday, 29th June.

17.00 ^{Baronet}
The Sapphire Theatre, Wardour Street.
MALI, CARREFOUR DES CIVILISATIONS.
A new film produced for the Mali government, introducing the country and its regions.

Friday, 30th June.

14.00 Room 326, S.O.A.S.
SAISON SÈCHE, MANINKA VILLAGE LIFE, DEMAIN À RANGUILA, VILLAGE LIFE IN MALI - BUILDING A HOUSE, VILLAGE LIFE IN MALI - DAILY LIFE OF THE BOZO, KAMPFSPIELE DER RINGER IN DROUZIALI, BOOM TOWN, NEW RICE CULTIVATION.

Saturday, 1st July.

10.00 Room 326, S.O.A.S.
TRADE AND MARKETS IN WEST AFRICA, BOBO OUELE, VILLAGE LIFE IN MALI - FISHING ON THE RIVER, LUMIÈRE AU VILLAGE, FULBE-DOROWA, N'DEOP.

Sunday, 2nd July.

11.00-13.00 The Africa Centre, Covent Garden (Main hall).
Film available for the West African region runs the whole gamut from material used as advertising propaganda, wherein the regional background is largely incidental, to detailed ethnographic recording of a particular technique or ritual. Here, we have selected, from what was available to us, a representative cross-section intended to help stimulate discussion in the afternoon session.

AFRICAN STONEHENGE, BALLAD OF THE VACCINATORS, VILLAGE LIFE IN MALI - BUILDING A BOAT, TANZMASKE "DJAKA" IN GLEKPLEPLE, N'DIOGANE, CIMETIÈRE DANS LA PALAISE.

14.00 The Africa Centre, Covent Garden (Basement).
A discussion on West African cultural films will be prefaced by a presentation by Dan Schafer of his film: *THE BAMBARA OF MALI: A STUDY IN ETHNIC IDENTITY*. Following the discussion, there will be a showing of the satirical film: *MAIS OÙ SONT LES NÈGRES D'ANTAN?*

Monday, 3rd July.

10.00-12.00 Room 326, S.O.A.S.
The stock of film, projector and projectionist will be available. Participants are invited to request film, or parts of film which they would like to see.

Film schedule.

(courtesy of Pascal James Imperato)



Photo on invitation:

Mamadi Dyoubaté, jouant de la harpe à dix-neuf cordes (*soron*), avec sa femme et sa fille, toutes d'eux jouant d'un racléur (*karinya*). Kankan, 14 décembre 1952. Photo by Gilbert Rouget.

Caption from booklet accompanying CD recording, *Guinée, musique des Malinké / Guinea, music of the Mandinka* (Collection CNRS—Musée de l'Homme). Paris: Le Chant du Monde, 1999.

(information provided by Lucy Durán)



Manding: Focus on an African Civilisation

An Exhibition of Manding Art, Musical Instruments and Crafts

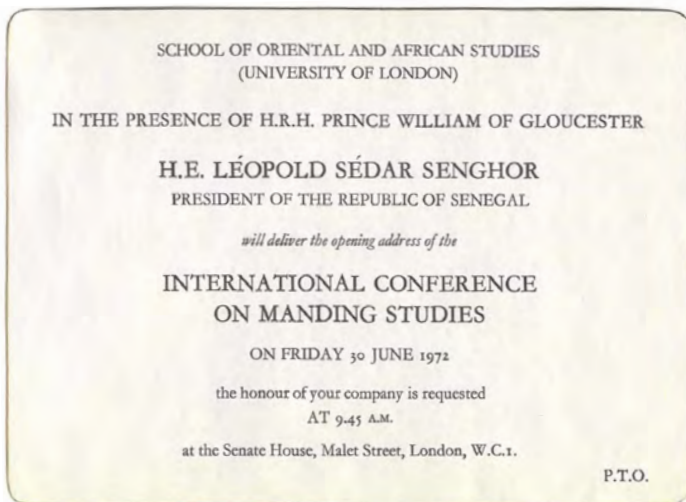
at the
**Department of Ethnography of the
BRITISH MUSEUM**

6 Burlington Gardens
23 June — 31 August 1972

An invitation to
**A short recital on the
Manding harp-lute**
at 3 pm
Wednesday 28 June

The exhibition has been organised by
The School of Oriental and African Studies
University of London

ADMIT TWO



SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES
(UNIVERSITY OF LONDON)

IN THE PRESENCE OF H.R.H. PRINCE WILLIAM OF GLOUCESTER

H.E. LÉOPOLD SÉDAR SENGHOR
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL

will deliver the opening address of the

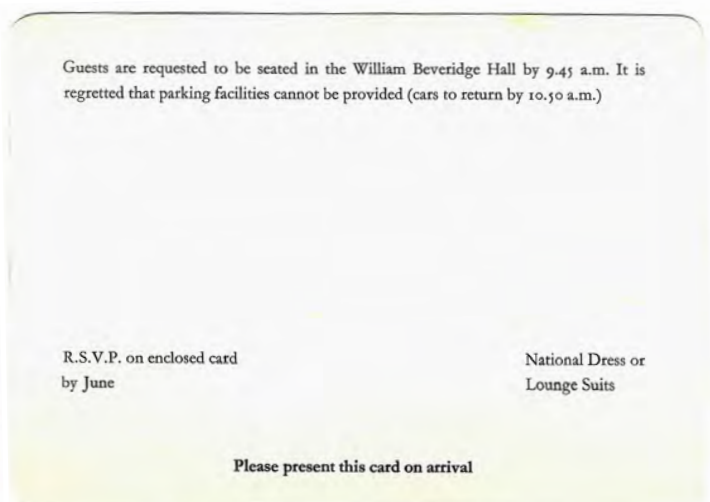
**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON MANDING STUDIES**

ON FRIDAY 30 JUNE 1972

the honour of your company is requested
AT 9.45 A.M.

at the Senate House, Malet Street, London, W.C.1.

P.T.O.



Guests are requested to be seated in the William Beveridge Hall by 9.45 a.m. It is regretted that parking facilities cannot be provided (cars to return by 10.50 a.m.)

R.S.V.P. on enclosed card
by June

National Dress or
Lounge Suits

Please present this card on arrival

Conference invitations.

(courtesy of Pascal James Imperato)



Centre for African Studies
SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

University of London
Malet St, London WC1

MANDING:
Focus on an African
Civilisation

2.8.72

Dr P.J. Imperato,
81-01 133rd Avenue,
Ozone Park,
New York 11417

Dear Pat,

Please excuse the delay in answering. I'm still suffering from bureaucratic after-effects of the manding events, in finding buyers of the catalogue book and now in negotiating as to whether the show can be extended until the end of the year. Bill Fagg is quite keen for this to happen.

The address is Prof. D. Zahan, 13 Rue de Verneuil, Paris 7e. I remember something about a Symphonie de Verneuil in Proust -- a theme from same that cropped up significantly.

I'm hoping to get along to the exhibition of European-non-European cross influences at the Haus der Kunst in Munich some time during the second half of September (when the games are over). Otherwise I'll most likely be here throughout the summer holiday. Perhaps you could get along to the Munich exhibition?

With best wishes,

Yours,

Guy

P.S. Please let me know whether you would be willing for your loans to the exhibition to remain until December 31st, if my current negotiations go through successfully.

The exhibition will not be extended.

Letter from Guy Atkins to Pascal James Imperato
re: return of exhibition loans, 2 August 1972.

(courtesy of Pascal James Imperato)



Letter from Guy Atkins to Pascal James Imperato
re: return of exhibition loans, 27 September 1972.

(courtesy of Pascal James Imperato)

Near right: 'Twin' figure. Bambara, Mali. P. J. Imperato
collection, New York. Photo: Marli Shamir. Centre right:
Figure. Bambara, Mopti, Mali. Musée de l'Homme, Paris.
Far right: Seated figure. Maninka, Mali/Guinea. Cowries
and beads on wood. Kjersmeier collection, National Mu-
seum, Copenhagen.

(From *Mande art and civilisation* (1972), p. 35)





Je me rappelle bien la plupart des noms qui sont mentionnés dans votre gentil courriel, les Dalby, Alex Haley, John Henry Clarke et d'autres noirs de la diaspora qui avaient assisté eux aussi à la conférence de 1972 et avec lesquels j'ai gardé un moment des rapports... Je me souviens aussi du contingent de Paris et de Dakar avec Germaine Dieterlen, ou avec les historiens Raymond Mauny, Yves Person, Ibrahima Baba Kaké, Sékéné-Mody Cissoko, Tamsir Niane,* Laye Camara, qui sont devenus de vrais amis, jusqu'à leur mort respective, Youssouf Tata Cissé de l'équipe de Madame Dieterlen, Claude Meillassoux... Je ne me rappelle pas tous ceux que j'ai rencontrés, je me souviens de l'ensemble instrumental du Mali dont certains artistes sont devenus au fil des visites de vrais amis à Bamako... Je me souviens aussi de Lamine Sanneh.

J'ai eu l'occasion de discuter avec Alex Haley et John Henry Clarke un soir à leur hôtel de Londres. En 1972, Haley n'était pas encore bien connu; mais, il s'interrogeait déjà sur l'origine de sa famille. Après Londres, à tout hasard, nous nous sommes revus à Dakar: je revenais de Bamako et lui, il revenait de Banjul en Gambie. Nous avons longuement parlé, avant de nous séparer à JFK New York, moi pour Minneapolis et lui pour sa destination, je me rappelle. Il m'invita à Milwaukee pour parler de Roots et du Mandé quand son récit de Roots fit sa célébrité.

Quelle grande rencontre, malgré la présence plutôt modeste des Britanniques de Soas ou d'autres écoles célèbres. Mais la Reine a envoyé ses salutations par un émissaire, et je crois qu'elle reçut Senghor. Paris aurait été la place idéale, je pense pour cette rencontre, si Dr Dalby n'avait pas mis tant d'efforts personnels. Néanmoins, tant de souvenirs pour le Mandé en Europe en 1972 ... ce passé unique, lointain et spécial.

Lansiné Kaba

Professeur émérite d'Histoire
Carnegie-Mellon University in Qatar

(rédigé de plusieurs courriels par l'éditeur)

* L'assistance de D.T. Niane au congrès n'est pas documentée.

J'étais à Londres en 1972, mais je n'en garde qu'un souvenir très lointain, très flou. Hélas oui, la plupart des participants sont décédés, et j'ai recherché en vain des documents pertinents dans ma bibliothèque. Je me souviens d'un concert de koras, et aussi, ce qui m'avait attristé, que les musiciens avaient vendu leurs instruments à la fin du colloque... le détail m'est resté gravé en mémoire : 15 pounds pour une kora !!!!! Et je me souviens de la gentillesse de Camara Laye, avec qui j'ai commencé alors une relation très amicale.

Gérard Dumestre

Professeur émérite, INALCO



Camara Laye, speaking at the School of Oriental and African Studies. Photo: Central Office of Information.
(From *Manding Conference 1972: report and recommendations*)



MEMORIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MANDING STUDIES, LONDON, JUNE 30-JULY 3, 1972

Peter Weil

Emeritus Associate Professor
Department of Anthropology, University of Delaware

My memories of the Conference are bound up with all the excitement I felt as a young scholar a half century ago attending such an event. The participating scholars, their papers, and our conversations strongly influenced the focus of my research in Senegambia and on West Africa as a whole and, indeed, could be said to have changed my life.

My clearest memory is of the first day; I think it was called the "Plenary Session," held at Banqueting House in the Whitehall complex. When I entered the majestic venue, I was met by the resounding music of koras and singers. To me, this was a clear signal that the colonial dominance of anthropology had ended, as had other scholarship which had ignored Mande and African history. No longer would the divisions of Mande studies be guided by European and British concepts of political space first and culture second. The music and words of the songs were metaphorically reinforced for me because they were occurring where Charles 1st, the foundational part of British power at a major point in the export slave trade, had been executed in the 17th century. I thought it to be the perfect setting for the ending of this colonial conceptualization, or, at least, that this was what I hoped the Conference itself meant. My exhilaration grew even stronger on hearing President Senghor's presentation and his enthusiasm about Mande history.

With all of this as a springboard, I felt lucky to meet scholars whose work I knew and the many in my own generation from within and outside Africa who, like myself, were just beginning to publish their work. The first group included David Dalby, who had published the first of my articles, "Language Distribution in The Gambia," in the *African Language Review*; Germaine Dieterlen, the "Grande Dame" of the French school, who strongly encouraged my digging deeper into Mande art history; and Dominique Zahan and Nehemia Levtzion. The newer scholars included Laye Camara, Lansine Kaba, and Bakari Sidibe.

Attendees Alex Haley and David Gamble invited me to join them for supper at an Indian restaurant near the SOAS facility to discuss aspects of Senegambian history and culture. We had a vigorous, exciting three-hour discussion of the historical accuracy of the first chapters, primarily set in 18th century Mandinko communities of Gambia, of what later became his earth-shattering book *Roots*. David had read the whole draft, and I had read the first six chapters or so. The issues Alex wanted me to specifically explain were the history of ritual, local religious concepts, and the spread of Islam. During that evening, we also examined historical phenomena and processes of caste, family and political organization, and architecture.

The papers presented at the Conference and conversations with these and other scholars intensified a shift in my research from the study of the role of Mande village political cultures in national political life in Senegambia to a primary focus on the culture and history of Mande ritual and art. Additionally, the meeting was also the stimulus in the U.S. for the creation of MANSAs, in which I participated. Though I attended many conferences over the succeeding years, the Manding Conference in 1972 had the greatest impact on my life as a scholar.

Additional background by Peter Weil on Haley's *Roots*:

The importance of Alex Haley's *Roots* in the history of 20th-century America is not debatable: The book has had an immense positive impact on our culture and many aspects of society. However, the problems with Haley's *Roots* as a work of history go beyond the information in such recent discussions as that in *The Guardian* in 2017.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2017/feb/09/alex-haley-roots-reputation-authenticity>

Here is a little bit of the history of the book's development that might clarify some of the concerns about its historical content, that in no way detracts from its impact. By early 1971, Alex Haley had written a complete manuscript of *Roots* that he began to circulate to scholars and others. He sent a copy to David Gamble, who was a senior ethnographic researcher who had worked many years researching Wolof and Mandinko communities on the North Bank of the lower Gambia River, the location of the village, Jufureh, to which Haley had traced his ancestry. David read the complete text, as I understand it, and Alex Haley flew to meet David in San Francisco for a thorough discussion. I do not know the details of that discussion, but I do know from telephone conversations with David at the time that David had some reservations, which were not shared with me, about the chapters that take place in Gambia. He also informed me that he was positively excited about the book.



Soon after that meeting, I was contacted by the Reader's Digest Corporation. They requested that I vet under contract the first five chapters of a manuscript written by Alex Haley. They specifically asked that I examine all of the content concerning Mandinko life in Gambia in the 18th century. They requested a full critique and a summary opinion of whether the Gambian-related chapters were historically accurate and the extent to which they supported the labeling of the book as a non-fiction publication or an historical novel. I called the office of *Reader's Digest* and talked to the sender of the letter to me. I asked them to clarify their requests in the letter and what genre Haley and they thought the book should be assigned to.

The RD representative explained that Alex Haley began researching the book just before World War 2. I was told that in about 1940, he went to, I think, Nigeria and boarded a freighter headed for a port in the U.S. (I do not remember which one). He and the captain arranged for him to make the whole voyage in the steerage of the steamer. Throughout the trip, he was on his back, emulating to some extent the Passage and thinking about what it might have been like when his ancestor was forcibly transported to America. On arrival in the U.S., perhaps in early 1941, he wrote an article about his experience. This was the beginning of his research for *Roots*. The problem with the RD representative's story is that Alex Haley was enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard in 1939 and served continuously until 1959. I assume there is a kernel of truth in the story, but I would guess that the steerage component was either on a Coast Guard ship or after his military service.

After the war, Haley continued to submit articles to *Reader's Digest* and, then, became an associate editor of the publication. More importantly, RD paid for much of his research for *Roots* and owned the rights to the resulting book. (See this *Washington Post* story for some of this.)
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2022/02/05/alex-haley-readers-digest-roots-malcolm/>

I agreed to vet the Gambia chapters and produced a report. I did so with mixed feelings. Vetting the chapters meant I had to evaluate them as professionally, objectively as I could, based on my own ethnographic and historical research in Gambia and documentary research in libraries that had begun in 1965. I also was intensely aware of the promise that an African-American family history that began before enslavement held for African Americans and the achievement of goals of the Civil Rights movement.

I informed RD that it was my professional judgement that the chapters were significantly inaccurate concerning initiation and related rituals, Islam and its spread in Senegambia, castes (including *jaliibaaluu*), family and political organization, and even architecture. Moreover, as Donald Wright also was to

later point out, there was no isolation from Europeans in the lower Gambia River, and communities in the area would have been important, even vital, in meeting needs of the Europeans, including crops and, in some cases, slave captives. At the time, I did ***not*** know that a single fake *jaalii* had been Haley's primary or, possibly, only informant in Jufureh. However, what I did know was that, at best, the descriptions of Mandinko life in the book were ahistorical ones and, at worst, even inaccurate for the 1960's.

My answer to the question of genre was that the book should be published as an historical novel and that it would be an important one in the context of civil rights and African-American culture in the 1970's. That said, I thought that more research might clear up the problems in the Gambia chapters and that, as is always the case in research on history, the closer in time one gets to the researcher, the greater probability of more accurate data being revealed became. Thus, what I was saying about the Gambian data in the book was in no way a reflection of the accuracy of later chapters. However, I told RD that if the Gambia chapters were not rewritten to as accurately as possible represent life in Jufureh in the 18th century, the book should definitely not be categorized as "history."

The supper with Alex Haley and David Gamble during the 1972 Conference was a detailed discussion of my report to RD. As we went through it, point by point, I was asked by Alex to explain and justify each critique. After each explanation and further questions from Alex, he turned to David to ask what he thought of my answers. He agreed with virtually all that I had said, with a few demurs about some small details. Before we left the table, I told Alex how important I thought the book would be based on the chapters I had read (including at least two that were not on Gambia) as an historical novel. Given problems with the Gambia chapters that I saw as a scholar, not as a book critic or representative of the market for the book, I urged him to consider doing more research and to modify the Gambia chapters to make them as accurate as possible. If that was not possible or acceptable to him, I asked him if calling it a history book was worth the inevitable attacks on it as history that would undercut what appeared to me to be the veracity it otherwise had in later chapters that were grounded historically.

As is known from post-publication interviews with Alex Haley and from his responses to critiques about the quality of the Gambian material, Haley insisted that the book was a family history, not an historical novel. Yes, at some point he accepted that there may have been some problems with his informant in Jufureh. — Peter Weil



Philip D. Curtin, history professor at the University of Wisconsin—Madison, presented (or at least contributed) a paper at the SOAS conference, “The Western Juula in the 18th Century.” In his memoir, *On the Fringes of History* (Athens : Ohio University Press, 2005), he does not mention the SOAS conference. Instead he describes 1972 as “an active time of preparation for the third International Congress of African Studies, scheduled for Addis Ababa in 1973” (p. 174). He does give an account there about Alex Haley, as follows:

In March 1970, Jan Vansina called me with some interesting news. He had with him a man named Alex Haley, who was able to trace his ancestry back to Africa on the basis of oral tradition. Because I had done research on Gambian history, I was invited to come over to hear what Haley had to say. It was most interesting. The African ancestor had identified a wide river as Kamby Bolongo. Present-day maps still show the Gambia River as Kambi Bolong, its name in Malinke. The African also passed down his surname, Kante, which I identified as probably belonging to a caste of blacksmiths. There were a few additional clues, such as the word *ko* for a banjo[-]like musical instrument, no doubt from *kora*, a common instrument in the Gambia region.

Haley was overjoyed with our identifications. He was especially complimentary that two men in Wisconsin should know so much about Africa. He insisted in using both our names to authenticate his account, both in the *Playboy* article that preceded *Roots* and in the novel itself, when it was finally published in 1976. Meanwhile, I began to be suspicious, partly alerted by other suspicions that began to appear in the press, partly on account of inconsistencies that began to appear in Haley’s account. After talking with us, Haley went to the Gambia. Still later, I asked him if he had been able to locate the Kante family. He explained that he had been mistaken at first, that the family name was actually Kinte, and that he had located them in Jufure, a village on the banks of the Gambia. I hastened to explain that, in that case, his ancestors could not have belonged to the caste of blacksmiths. As it turned out, the Kinte family were commercial, which in eighteenth-century Gambia would almost certainly have meant that they were involved in the slave trade. Haley, however, continued to describe them as blacksmiths.

In 1991 [i.e. 1992], after Haley’s death, journalist Philip Nobile, of the *Village Voice*, bought Haley’s papers. He discovered, among other things, that Haley had actually visited the Gambia before he talked to Vansina and me. He had therefore had an opportunity to set up the evidence he presented to us. His account of Kunta Kinte and his trip to America had been an elaborate hoax. (pp. 170-171)



In the early 1990s the controversy over my estimates of numbers involved in the slave trade kept recurring. The one instance involved the island of Gorée in the harbor of Dakar. An individual with no particular academic qualifications was put in charge of one of the most elaborate of the eighteenth-century mansions on the island. He proceeded to rename it “the house of slaves” and made it into a major tourist attraction. ...

By that time, other ports along the African coast had entered their own claim. The Gambia simply ignored the fact that Alex Haley’s deception had been exposed and built a small museum near Jufure, where the alleged ancestor had been captured. In 1994, UNESCO sponsored a very large and elaborate conference at Ouidah, in Bénin, on the subject of *la route de l’esclave*. I attended and chaired one session. Here, at least, was a conference held at one of the principal points of departure for the New World. (p. 186)

A response to Curtin’s excerpts on Haley from Peter Weil:

Real African folks for almost 400 years were ripped out of their families, communities, and polities and forced into a kind of social and, often, early actual death in America and elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere. Historically-specific and accurate exemplars of that reality would be a great aid to American society and to historians. Sadly, Alex Haley’s work on the African roots of his ancestry does not work as history. However, his *Roots* does represent the best substitute available and, *de facto*, is, for many people, the only real exemplar of an African-American family’s roots in a specific family and community in Africa.



MEMORIES OF THE MANDING CONFERENCE 1972

Winifred Dalby

Music coordinator for the Conference

I was tasked by David who organised the Conference, with looking after the Manding musicians at the Conference. I was tasked because I had been learning more about West African music from tutorials with Tony King in the African Department at SOAS and I had always been interested in music.

The musicians gave a concert in Oxford University, and some also at one of the Embassies, and I also took some of the musicians to TV studios to appear on an episode of the children's television show *Magpie*.

I remember having to escort them to SOAS on the tube, all in their robes and everyone turning to look at them, and as I bought about 17 tickets they all filed past in their costumes. They brought their instruments, including the kora of course.

President Senghor opened the Conference and the musicians were there to add to the excitement, as West African music was an important part of the culture. I had met Senghor before the conference. We (David and I) were in Mali, and someone told us Senghor was there on a visit.* Somehow or other I knew he was interested in music, so we decided to go and see him, it was my idea to ask him if he'd like to lend his name to the Conference. We sat and had tea with him in a garden and I asked if he'd be a patron of the conference, thinking he might be happy with his name on the programme. He was immediately interested and said yes and that he would come to it as well. Because he was the President we had a bit of a kerfuffle with the Foreign Office when they found out he was coming as he was supposed, as a Head of State, to be officially invited.

* Senghor arrived in Bamako on December 2, 1971 for an official 3-day visit. Here is a British Pathé film clip of his arrival (<https://www.britishpathe.com/asset/225315/>). The Dalbys met with him on the morning of December 4, according to David Dalby's journal. [Editor]

With Senghor in London for the Conference, we (David and I) went to a dinner for him at Downing Street, hosted by PM Edward Heath, and lunch at Buckingham Palace hosted by The Queen. When he came to England he brought a bracelet for me as a present, and gave David a copy of a book he had written.

As part of the Conference there was an Exhibition at the British Museum and some of our own West African artefacts we had normally at home were loaned... including masks.



I'm not sure how we first came to meet Alex Haley, but I have here a fairly hefty hardback copy of 'ROOTS - The Saga of an American Family,' which he gave us when he came to our house for dinner one evening. Inside the front cover he wrote:

April 12, 1977

David and Winifred Dalby - warmest wishes to you and your family from the family of Kunta Kinte!

Alex Haley



The Dalby family heading to Sierra Leone in 1964.
(Harpenden Free Press; courtesy of Alison Dalby)



FROM BAMAKO TO BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Winifred Dalby

Written in 2016 as part of a local writing project, published as Times Past: Young at Heart, edited by Victoria Villaseñor and Nicci Robinson (Nottingham : Global Words Press, 2016). (Courtesy of Alison Dalby)

In early November, 1971, David and I left our two daughters in the care of family and friends while we went on a short study leave to Bamako, the capital of Mali, where we would spend seven weeks. David was doing research into the local languages and I had a grant to do some work on the music of Mali, especially with the kora players (the kora is a large harp-lute with 21 strings). The musicians played an important part in preserving the unwritten history of the Manding people of West Africa, and a young kora player would spend seven years learning the complete repertoire.

All this was partly in preparation for a conference the following June on the history and culture of the Manding. It was going to be a relatively small event, with perhaps fifty or so delegates, possibly two or three traditional musicians and a small exhibition of carvings.

One day David heard that Leopold Senghor, President of Senegal (the country neighbouring Mali) was in Bamako on a private visit. He knew that Senghor was also a scholar and poet, and thought it would be good if Senghor would agree to be Patron of the forthcoming conference. His name could then go on the letterhead. David asked if we could have a brief interview with him and the request was granted. We found President Senghor sitting in a deck chair in the garden of his host. David told him about plans for the conference and the President readily agreed to be Patron. "In fact," said Senghor, "I shall come to the conference myself."

So far, so good. We continued with our research and returned home in time for Christmas. In the new year plans went ahead, and interest from potential delegates grew. Instead of an anticipated fifty or so participants the total

was eventually over 250, including scholars from Europe and the USA [and Africa]. The original idea to have a few carvings on display blossomed into a full exhibition on Manding at the Museum of Mankind, and the two or three musicians to play traditional music developed into ensembles from the Gambia, Senegal and Mali, a total of 31 musicians, plus a 3-month old baby on his mother's back. Concerts were arranged for them in various venues in London and one in Oxford, and I travelled with one of the kora players, Nyama Suso, to the ITV studios where he played during a broadcast of the children's programme, 'Magpie' (the ITV equivalent of the BBC's 'Blue Peter').

A month or so before the conference was to begin David had a phone call at his office. A rather cross voice said, 'I'm speaking from the Foreign Office. We understand that you have invited the President of Senegal to the UK. You do realise, don't you, that this has implications for the Queen's diary?' Well no, of course he didn't and anyway the President had sort of invited himself! The reason for the flurry at the FO was that this was the President's first visit to the UK, and therefore he must be given the full royal treatment, and the Prime Minister would also be involved. You live and learn!

About three weeks before the conference another phone call came through to David's office. A polite voice said, "Good morning, this is the Master of the Queen's Household, speaking from Buckingham Palace. Would you and your wife be free to come to lunch at the Palace on July 1st?" Would we be free!!! We were hardly likely to say sorry, that's our day for shopping at Sainsbury's! Of course we'd be free!

And that is how an innocent request in Bamako had developed into an invitation to lunch at Buckingham Palace, on Friday July 1st 1972. Not only that, we were also invited to dinner the previous evening at No.10 Downing Street. Edward Heath was then the Prime Minister, and because we knew he was interested in music, two kora players were invited to give some after dinner entertainment.

These two invitations coming at fairly short notice meant that I had to do some emergency shopping to find something to wear. A visit to Moss Bros, the costume hire company in Covent Garden, provided an evening dress for No.10: and a shopping trip to Bond Street yielded a day dress, hat and gloves for lunch on the following day at Buckingham Palace. Phew!



**From the travel journal of David Dalby —
Senegal/Mali, 1971** (2 volumes)

(journal images courtesy of Alison Dalby)

Dakar, November 8-10, 1971

Mon. 8th Nov. Arr. Dakar by Swissair 5:45 am. ...

4:30 [pm] Visit to IFAN : met OUMAR BA (hopes to attend Conf. to present paper on Manding loans in Fula in Senegal valley : have promised fare from Paris, & he hopes to be there at that time in connection with his doctoral thesis under Yves Person); also MICHEL SCHMITT (completing thesis on Fula-French phonological interference).

5:15 at IFAN : met SÉKÉNE MODY CISSOKO (Malian chef du départ. d'histoire, author of Hist. de l'Afr. Occid.) : he had been passed our letter addressed in June/July to Fougeyrolas, & is very keen to attend the Conf. He will present a paper, & since he would be representing IFAN we need to pay his fare from Dakar if necessary. He has provided names of Malian scholars & officials to contact & feels that Mali should be involved more than any other state in the Conf./Exhib. ...

Tue 9th Nov. 10:30 Visit to Ecole des Arts du Sénégal, Route de la Corniche Ouest > saw MAMADOU KOUYATÉ, concerned with teaching the kora to blind men (regardless of family) : is himself Senghor's 'griot' & Sec. Gen. of the griot's 'union' in Dakar (he should attend the Conf.); also met BANA KANOUTÉ, teaching the bala to the blind : was himself a former assistant at SOAS (Father Jones) & worked in Gambia with Tony King — speaks Engl. better than French ... ; unable to see the Director, SOULEYMANE SIDIBÉ. ...

Wed 10th Nov. 8:30 at IFAN : AMAR SAMB (Directeur provisoire, IFAN) > who recommended M'BAYE GUËYE (historian) of Faculté des Lettres, as person who could contribute paper on Wolof-Manding relations.

First page of David Dalby's *Senegal / Mali* journal, on initial meetings in Dakar.

Opposite page: Meeting with Malian Minister of Tourism Mamadou Sy.

9:00 at IFAN : DOMINIQUE ZIDOUEMBA (chef du département de documentation et de publications de l'IFAN, BP 206 Dakar) > who introduced me to a member of his staff, M. DJIBRIL FATY (Manding, i/c of archives photo.) > very import. black & white archives, all photos. (or copies of negatives) obtainable at cost.



Mandinka *bolon* players from Eastern Senegal. Photos: IFAN. (From *Manding art and civilisation*, p. 15)

10:30 ROUSSET DE PINA (Conservateur, Bibl. de l'Univ., whom [Ronald] Long & I met in 1968). Also two of his assistants : Mr N'Diaye & Mille Perraud (the latter an archaeologist by training, who showed interest in the suggestion that there was a need for more archaeology in the Manding field). Afterwards to M. de Pina's house for an aperitif

Meanwhile Winifred to see M. Mamadou Kouyaté at the Ecole des Arts.

Mon. 8th NOV. arr. Dakar by Swissair 5:45 am : met by Brit. Ambassador's car, but luggage did not arrive on flight. Staying at Ambassador's Residence (I.F. PORTER, * C.M.G., O.B.E. - Govt) : Mrs Porter as host, Ambassador at Conf. in London.
3:0 visit to (koraist-guessed) dancing display at Antenn Women's Club
4:30 visit to IFAN : met OUMAR BA (hopes to attend Conf. to present paper on Manding loans in Fula in Senegal valley : have promised fare from Paris, & he hopes to be there at that time in connection with his doctoral thesis under Yves Person); also MICHEL SCHMITT (completing thesis on Fula-French phonological interference)
5:15 at IFAN : met SÉKÉNE MODY CISSOKO (Malian chef du départ. d'histoire, author of Hist. de l'Afr. Occid.) : he had been passed our letter addressed in June/July to Fougeyrolas, & is very keen to attend



Bamako, November 17, 1971

8:30 Called at Office Malien de Tourisme (BP 222) : obtained tourist cards.

9:00-11:00 Long & useful discussion with John GARNER, US Info Service Director, at US Embassy.

11:15 Called at Service de Sécurité, obtained permission to photograph immediately & without difficulty (despite hair-raising stories from other foreigners) : met Martin SHIRLEY at the Service (UNA volunteer who heard a lecture of mine in 1969 & who is on way home from Togo), also M. HAÏDARA, apparently there to arrange prolongation of our visas.

15:30 Visited Office Malien de Tourisme to talk with M. MAMADOU SY, Directeur > an excellent man, of Toucouleur origin, who is most excited by the prospect of the Congress & Exhibition : he has promised full cooperation, knows a great deal about the history & culture of the Western Soudan, is anxious to stimulate "le tourisme culturel" (is organizing a Manding festival at Kangaba in early 1972, to be repeated if successful in future years), agrees with me that culture is as important as (or even more important than) economic matters in development of a country; we shall have further talk next week. ...

15:30 Visited Office Malien de Tourisme to talk with M. MAMADOU SY, Directeur > an excellent man, of Toucouleur origin, who is most excited by the prospect of the Congress & Exhibition : he has promised full cooperation. Knows a great deal about the history & culture of the Western Soudan, is anxious to stimulate le tourisme culturel (is organizing a Manding festival at Kangaba in early 1972, to be repeated if

successful in future years), agrees with me that culture is as important as (or even more important than) economic matters in development of a country; we shall have further talk next week [Sy ...]

16:30 Visited Fakoney LY who summarized progress of UNESCO alphabetization programme since 1968; said he hoped to invite [Charles] Bird & myself to Bamako for annual alphabetization meeting next summer (to be mid-July?, to avoid clash with Congress); he was very interested to hear of Amadou [Traoré]'s novel; I told Ly that we shall hope to discuss written development of Manding (texts & lexicography) at the Congress, prob. on 3rd day; the Lexique Bambara is apparently to be revised in near future & to be published commercially.

Bamako, November 19, 1971

14:30 Drove in the car to the village of Keyla (taking with us Martin Shirley, who had travelled to Kangaba in the tourist bus) : met Numu Koulibali, the chief blacksmith, Lamin Haydara, the dugutigi (very old), and Lansana Djabaté, the chief griot at Keyla (& the man in charge of the reroofing of the kamablon). These appeared — in ascending order of 'rank' — to be the three most prominent men in the village : I took photos with Djabaté (in black) in the centre, & with Haydara on his right (in white) & Koulibali on his left ...

Evening at Bamako : discussed Manding conf. with Martin Shirley, who will represent our interests in The Gambia (where he will spend next week) & who will deliver a letter from me to Mr Ramage, the UK High Commissioner.

Bamako, November 21, 1971

11:30 Visited Kolessiro Cisse at Radio Mali : heard tapes of two programmes he has produced, one on Kangaba (he has given us script, & has promised a tape-copy) & one on Kàñibonzon, the first Dogon village to have been established by the Dogon after trad. departure from the Manding heartland (they appear to trace their ancestry in the 'male' line from Manding, but their language from a local 'female' line). Had valuable discussions on ways in which Radio Mali may collaborate in Conf. &/or with BBC : I proposed need for a 'common pool' of tape-recordings between Bamako, London, Paris, Indiana (etc ?), insuring that we all know what is available elsewhere & wherever poss. ensuring that all import. tapes are stored in 2 diff. places. As far as BBC film is concerned, we (& the BBC) need to contact Capt. Youssouf Traoré, Min. of Inform. Met at Radio Mali M. Yadi SANGARÉ, producer, who has promised (with Mr Cissé) to arrange contacts with griots during our stay in Bamako. We need to meet also TIEMOKO MACALOU, chef de l'Animation Rurale at Radio Mali, at present 'on tour' upcountry, who is much concerned with oral traditions & their recording, & who will prob. be based in Paris next year.



Bamako, November 26, 1971

9:00 Appointment with Yaya Bagayoko, Min. of Educ., who is very positive about the Conf. & Exhib : the subject was discussed by Malian Cabinet (Conseil des Ministres) yesterday, & was regarded as one of very great importance for Mali. They have directed that Mali should give the Exhib & Conf its full official support, & the Minister has asked me to discuss with Mr Daba Haïdara, Directeur de l'Enseignement Sup. et de la Recherche Scientifique, the ways in & extent to which we wish Mali to contribute. He also expressed the opinion that Mali 'a beaucoup perdu' as a result of British withdrawal from Mali (in Modibo Keita's time) & hoped that next year's collaboration would lead to closer relations betw. Mali & UK. Britain's commitment to African studies is recognised & appreciated by the Malian government, & Bakayogo expressed the hope that there will be close (& even formal) links betw. Univ. of London (i.e. SOAS) & the Malian Ecole Normale Supérieure in the future. Mali is 'realistic' & cannot

afford the luxury of a university at the present stage of its development (either in terms of cost or in terms of the 'liberté' of studies which a university must imply). Nevertheless, it is his hope that the education of Malians vis-à-vis their own cultures can be enhanced by contact with London & that there can be a two-way exchange not only in terms of exchange of 'documentation' but also in terms of exchange of personnel : he hopes that members of SOAS (perhaps two or three times a year) can visit Bamako to give 'conférences' on Afr. Studies at the Ecole Normale Supérieure (I have alr. offered my services in this respect while I am here) & that students & staff from the Ecole will from time to time have the opportunity of studying with us in London (implying of course British grants). I mentioned our interest, for example, in the written development of Manding (& other Afr. langs.) & the fact that this — together with an internat. Manding dictionary project — would be discussed in London next year, & also the fact that we aimed to discuss next summer the setting up of an internat. documentation project to list all recordings of Manding oral traditions available at diff. Institutions & to stimulate the exchange of tape-recordings betw. institutions. The Minister mentioned the fact that Mali had applied to UK for 6 Landrovers for the teaching of English & emphasised fact that Mali was the most 'anglophone' country of the former AOF, with a heavy commitment to Engl. lang. study (DD: need to obtain comparative figures on this, which would be useful in raising British funds).

Fri 26th Nov 9:00 Appointment with Yaya Bagayoko,
Min. of Educ, who is very positive about
the Conf. & Exhib: the subject was discussed
by the Malian Cabinet (Conseil des Ministres)
yesterday, & was regarded as one of
very great importance for Mali. They
have directed that Mali should give
the Exhib & Conf its full official

support, & the Minister has asked me
to discuss with Mr Daba Haïdara, Directeur
de l'Enseignement Sup. et de la Recherche
Scientifique, the ways in & extent to which
we wish Mali to contribute. He also
expressed the opinion that Mali 'a
beaucoup perdu' as a result of British
withdrawal from Mali [in Modibo Keita's
time] & hoped that the next year's
collaboration would lead to closer
relations betw. Mali & UK. Britain's

Excerpts from David Dalby's journal, on meeting with Malian Minister of Education, Yaya Bagayoko.



Bamako, December 3-4, 1971

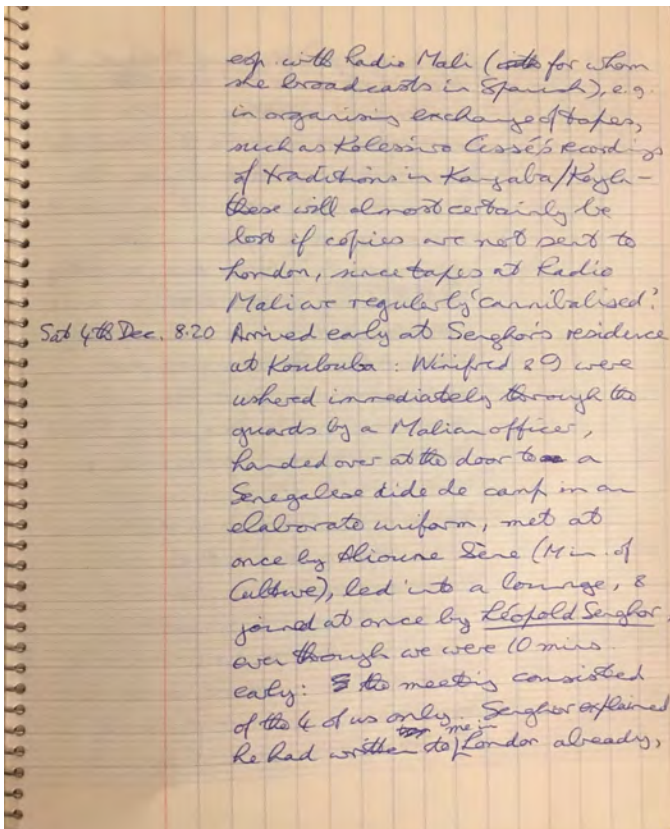
Fri. 3rd Dec. 16:00 Winifred & I to the Min. of Ed., where Haydara had said we were to meet Bagayoko (Min. of Ed. of Mali) & Sène (Min. of Culture of Senegal), who wished to discuss joint contribution of their countries to the Manding Conf/Exhib. Only Bagayoko was there in fact (seeming rather 'distracted'), but he arranged for us to be taken up to Koulouba in an official but rather battered Citroen DS, accompanied by Youssouf Traoré, his Chef du Cabinet.

16:40 Arrived at Koulouba, & waited for about 20 mins. in the forecourt of the Presidential Palace while Y. Traoré went in to discover that the Senegalese Min. of Culture was not there.

17:00 Drove to a subsidiary residence, where Senghor & his delegation are installed: waited outside for half an hour while Traoré went inside to discover what was intended. When he returned, we were ushered into a little ornamental garden, with a fountain & two swinging seats with coloured awnings : one was occupied by a soldier in camouflage battle-dress [& a tommy-gun — *written in a different hand*] & we were asked to sit & wait on the other. After a while, Minister Sène appeared & said we would be received by Senghor tomorrow morning at 8:30. ...

20:00 To Café Berry, with Susan [Raven, journalist for the *Sunday Times*], Guy Martin [political scientist, recent SOAS graduate], & Carmen [Torrijos, Spanish teacher in Bamako], to meet Amadou Traoré (ex-SOAS) who arrived to-day from Abidjan. Delighted to see him again & to exchange news: he agrees to circulation of two chapters of his novel Maran at the Conf (in Engl, Fr & Bambara), & has also promised to finish the Bambara text. Carmen has agreed to act as liaison for SOAS in Bamako, esp. with Radio Mali (for whom she broadcasts in Spanish), e.g. in organising exchange of tapes, such as Kolessiro Cissé's recordings of traditions in Kanga-ba / Keyla — these will almost certainly be lost if copies are not sent to London, since tapes at Radio Mali are regularly 'cannibalised.'

Sat. 4th Dec. 8:20 Arrived early at Senghor's residence at Koulouba. Winifred & I were ushered immediately through the guards by a Malian officer, handed over at the door to a Senegalese aide de camp in an elaborate uniform, met at once by Alioune Sène (Min. of Culture), led into a lounge, & joined at once by Léopold Senghor, even though we were 10 mins early : the meeting consisted of the 4 of us only. Senghor explained he had written to me in London already, to accept position of Président d'Honneur: he hopes to attend himself, provided an OAU meeting (on Middle East?), scheduled for end June, does not prevent this — he will let us know about this as soon as poss. He outlined his own Manding ancestry (the Senghors being ultimately from Port. Guinea), & the Anglo-Norman ancestry of his wife. He expressed great pleasure at Britain's interest in Manding, the 'most important' civilisation of W. Africa, & at the prospect of closer Anglo-French participation in the Africanist field. He remarked on my own publications in field of Manding/W. Afr. survivals in Bl. Amer. Engl., & said he had read other of my articles. He mentioned that his visit to Oxford to talk on négritude (scheduled for October) will have to be postponed to 1973. When I mentioned we hoped to pass thru' Dakar on way home, he asked Sène to arrange official accommodation for us.



Page from David Dalby's journal, on meeting with Senghor in Bamako.



Dakar, December 15, 1971

17:30 Amadou [Traoré?], Winifred & I to the Guinean Embassy, where Mr Lamah was most apologetic about the broken appointment this morning. We were all settled with a drink of pineapple-juice while we waited to see Ambassador. I had to leave before he was free, but Winifred & Amadou stayed on to see him, to explain the Conf/Exhibit plans, to leave the documentation, & to ask for Guinean support. The response was positive & immediate & I have to call in to see Mr Lamah tomorrow. Keita implied that Kamori Traoré (formerly head of alphabétisation) is no longer in that post — i.e. dead or in prison? * — we should write on the subject of alphabétisation to Secretariat d'Etat et de [i.e., à?] l'Enseignement at Conakry. When it was mentioned that an invitation had been extended personally to Djibril Tamsir Niane, it was emphasised that all invitations should be directed thru' the Guinean government, who reserve the right to select who may attend. The Ambassador mentioned, as a person who would be directly interested in the Conf., M. Nenekale Kendito ** (écrivain, au musée) = Le Secrétaire d'Etat aux Choses Scientifiques.

tomorrow. Keita implied that Kamori Traoré (formerly head of alphabétisation) is no longer in that post — i.e. dead or in prison? — we should write on that the subject of alphabétisation to Secretariat d'Etat et de l'Enseignement at Conakry. When it was mentioned that an invitation had been extended personally to Djibril Tamsir

Niane, it was emphasised that all invitations should be directed thru' the Guinean government, who reserve the right to select who may attend. The Ambassador mentioned, as a person who would be directly interested in the Conf., M. Nenekale Kendito (écrivain, au musée) = Le Secrétaire d'Etat aux Choses Scientifiques

Excerpts from David Dalby's journal, on meeting at the Guinean Embassy in Dakar.

Bathurst, December 20, 1971

13:15 Lunch with Michael Collins at Palm Grove [Hotel], where he informed us that Senghor (via British Embassy, Dakar) has called me to see him at Dakar at 4:15 tomorrow afternoon. Fortunately this does not clash with an application (via M'Bye & Collins) to see President Jawara here in Bathurst. Jawara has expressed great interest in the Manding project, but cannot manage to see us to day or tomorrow : he hopes to see me when I return (end March?) to Gambia But Senghor's call has necessitated cancelling arrangements to see films & photos at Info. Office tomorrow, together with an appointment to see A.A. Gaye, MBE, Acting Chief Posts & Telecommunications Office, Pat. Dept., Bathurst, tomorrow morning (have arranged by phone to write to him from UK regarding special stamps to commemorate Manding programme).

* As of 1974 Kamori Traoré was secretary general of the Commission nationale guinéenne pour l'Unesco, Secrétariat d'Etat à la Recherche Scientifique, Conakry.

** This is apparently Néné Kalé Kondoto Camara.

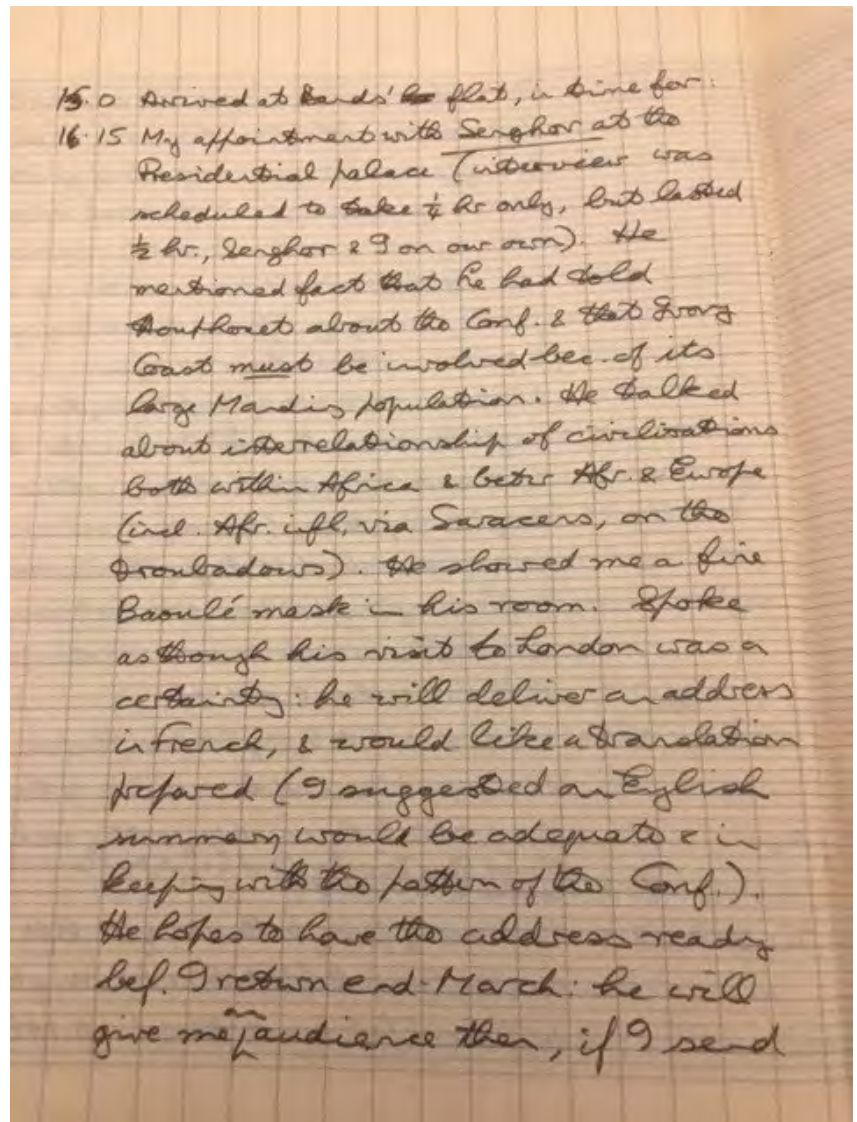


Commemorative stamps issued by The Gambia, 1972.



Dakar, December 21, 1971

16:15 My appointment with Senghor at the Presidential palace (interview was scheduled to take 1/4 hr. only, but lasted 1/2 hr., Senghor & I on our own). He mentioned fact that he had told Houphouet about the Conf. & that Ivory Coast must be involved bec. of its large Manding population. He talked about interrelationship of civilisations both within Africa & betw. Afr. & Europe (incl. Afr. infl. via Saracens, on the troubadours). He showed me a fine Baoulé mask in his room. Spoke as though his visit to London was a certainty : he will deliver an address in French, & would like a translation prepared (I suggested an English summary would be adequate & in keeping with the pattern of the Conf.). He hopes to have the address ready bef. I return end March : he will give me an audience then, if I send telegram (not letter) 2 weeks in advance, i.e. presumably to avoid Protocol. His chief of protocol (in tails) entered after 25 mins. to inform him he had 'depassé votre quart d'heure, M le Président'! He gave me copies of 2 of his recent speeches on Négritude. I was greatly impressed with the meeting & the man.



Page from David Dalby's journal, on second meeting with Senghor.

A 50-minute broadcast about the 1972 Manding conference, in Mandinka, was posted on Facebook in 2022 on the page of the Gambian community of Pakalinding, credited to GRTS (Gambian Radio and Television Services). It discusses the presence of Gambia's national kora troupe at the conference, including Lalo Kebba Dramé.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=537735274465978>



LE MANDINGUE DANS LA CIVILISATION SOUDANO-SAHÉLIENNE

Léopold Sédar Senghor

Si le Professeur Dalby m'a invité à ouvrir ce Congrès d'Études mandingue, c'est moins, sans doute, en ma qualité de chef d'Etat africain que d'ancien professeur. Et aussi, je le suppose, en ma qualité de rejeton des Mandingue en terre sérère. Aussi bien, mes ancêtres paternels étaient-ils des Malinké venus de la Guinée maintenant « portugaise ».

Telle étant ma situation, c'est en homme politique africain que je vous parlerai, mais au sens de la *politikè* : en homme solidairement responsable du destin de l'Afrique, chargé de contribuer, pour sa part, à faire vivre les Africains, bien sûr, « avec aisance et abondance », mais surtout, pour continuer de parler comme les philosophes grecs, à les rendre « plus heureux et moralement meilleurs ».

Or donc, je parle d'une *politikè* qui, à l'action, se révèle humanisme. Car toute entreprise humaine est phénomène de civilisation, qui met en jeu des groupes humains. C'était le cas, hier, avec la colonisation, qui était confrontation des civilisations, où les effets négatifs l'emportaient sur les positifs ; c'est le cas, aujourd'hui, de la décolonisation, qui devrait être dialogue de civilisations, symbiose de leurs vertus complémentaires.

Ayons le courage de le reconnaître, la décolonisation ne s'est pas toujours présentée sous la forme fécondante du dialogue. Elle a revêtu, trop souvent, la même camisole de force que la colonisation. Elle a provoqué, d'une part, la peur, qui engendre la violence, l'ignorance d'autre part, qui développe haine et mépris de l'Autre. Voyez donc ce qui se passe en Afrique du Sud et en Rhodésie, en Angola et au Mozambique, enfin, plus près de nous, en Guinée-Bissao.

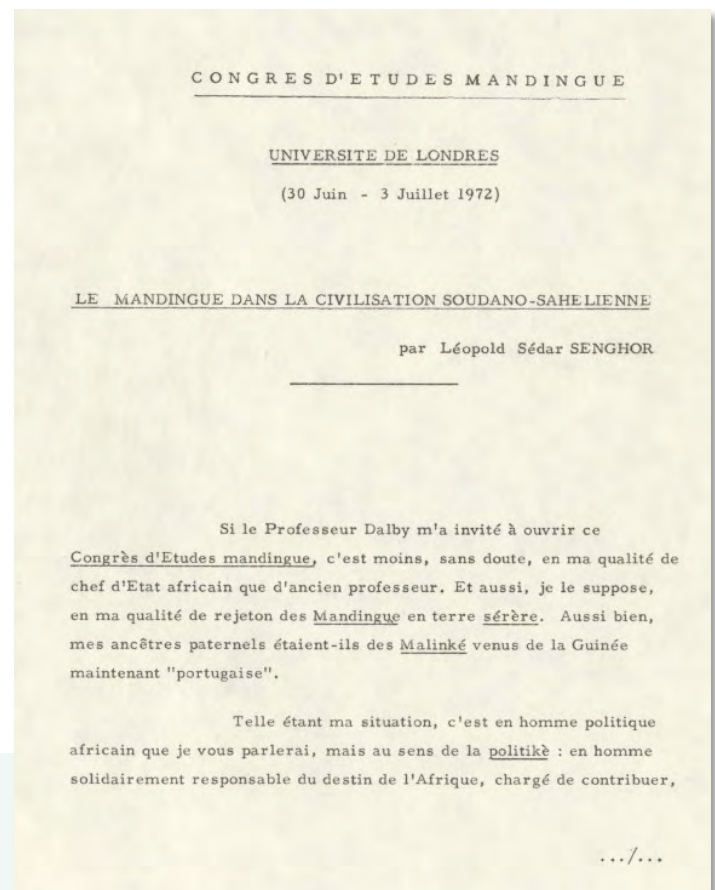
Même dans les pays d'Afrique où la décolonisation s'accomplit en amitié et coopération avec l'ancienne Métropole—et ils sont, heureusement, la majorité—, celle-ci ne se fait pas toujours dans le dialogue des civilisations. Ou elle se fait mal. Les *businessmen* se réunissent plus souvent que les hommes de culture ; entre gouvernements, on parle plus volontiers économie et finances, enseignement et formation dans les meilleurs cas, qu'art et littérature ou, simplement, éducation. Allez donc, comme je l'ai fait, demander des crédits aux organisations internationales pour édifier un « musée d'art

nègre » ou un « conservatoire de musique, de danse et d'art dramatique ». L'UNESCO, sans doute, y applaudira ; il n'empêche que c'est surtout auprès des fondations culturelles que vous trouverez crédit—dans tous les sens.

C'est pourquoi, j'ai, en son temps, attiré l'attention des gouvernements européens amis, avant le fameux ouvrage sur « les limites de la croissance », sur les déviations que voilà et que la pollution des esprits, encore plus des âmes, étaient pire que celle des plages, voir des villes ; que la solution du problème culturel était la condition *sine qua non* du développement, et même de toute croissance. J'ai eu l'occasion de souligner, à mes amis français et européens, le recul, chez eux, des études africanistes depuis le cyclone des indépendances de 1960, au moment même que les *African studies centers* s'allumaient, l'un après l'autre, dans la nuit étoilée des universités américaines.

Voilà pourquoi ce Congrès d'Études mandingue vient à son heure, et qu'il est réconfortant. Il prouve que, si les opinions publiques des pays européens ne se sont pas encore tout à fait réveillées de leur indifférence culturelle—car le pétrole, entre autres, les passionne—, il n'en est pas de même des gouvernements, encore moins des universités et de leurs jeunesses, singulièrement en Grande-Bretagne.

J'ai souvent eu l'occasion de dire quelles étaient, dans ce domaine, les responsabilités écrasantes de la Grande-Bretagne et de la France, qui avaient, en 1959, les empires coloniaux les plus vastes. C'est l'occasion de saluer la



Première page du discours d'ouverture de Senghor.

(Source: Northwestern University Libraries, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies)



prochaine entrée de la Grande-Bretagne dans le Marché commun européen. Je l'ai, toujours et publiquement, appelée de mes vœux. Toute entreprise organisée de coopération entre les peuples contribue, en effet, à la convergence pan-humaine. Je salue donc l'Europe en marche vers son unité, mais aussi notre Afrique, car, je l'espère bien, nos frères, les Anglophones du continent noir, vont nous rejoindre dans l'Association à la Communauté européenne—pour édifier l'Eurafrrique de la complémentarité, dont les vertus, si l'on y réfléchit, ont été les ressorts du miracle grec. D'autant que, bien sûr, les apports de l'Asie antérieure ne seront pas rejetés, tout au contraire.

Tout cela pour vous dire que l'esprit de Fachoda me semble définitivement enterré. Cet esprit de rivalité, non d'émulation, qui, si longtemps, opposa la Grande-Bretagne et la France, au grand dam de l'Europe, de l'Afrique et du monde. Parce qu'elles sont de vertus différentes sinon d'ethnies, tout commande à ces deux grandes nations de l'Occident de s'unir, en tout cas, de coopérer étroitement pour le plus grand épanouissement de l'Europe, de l'Afrique et du monde.

+
+ +

Loin de m'en éloigner, je suis au plein cœur du problème fondamental que pose ce Congrès d'Études mandingue. Au temps où, jeune professeur de lycée, je préparais une thèse de doctorat sur *Les Formes verbales dans les Langues du Groupe sénégaloguinéen*, thèse demeurée inachevée pour « entrée en politique », la linguistique, l'ethnologie en général, n'était pour moi qu'un moyen privilégié pour saisir la civilisation dans sa substance la plus originaire et comme la plus substantielle : dans son esprit, que l'on appelle maintenant, Culture. C'est cet esprit que, dans notre cas d'Afrique noire, nous désignons sous le mot de Négritude, et nos frères, les Anglophones, sous l'expression d'*African personality*.

Avant d'aller plus avant, je voudrais m'arrêter sur cette notion de Civilisation, qui est, certes, comme vous le savez, fille de la race, le plus souvent mêlée, mais d'abord de la géographie, de l'histoire, voire de la préhistoire. Car celle-ci est, en Afrique, essentielle puisque s'étendant, dans l'état actuel de nos connaissances, sur quelque 5.500.000 ans. Je définirai la « civilisation » d'une nation, au sens ici de l'ethnie, comme un double réseau de structures, c'est-à-dire de rapports et, partant, de valeurs. Rapports extérieurs de la nation avec son environnement géographique et humain, cosmique : région, continent, planète, univers. Rapports intérieurs de la nation avec elle-même : avec ses éléments composants, ses groupes socio-professionnels, et dans tous les domaines—

économique, social, politique, linguistique, artistique—, mais en réaction avec son sol, son climat, son histoire et sa préhistoire. C'est, au fond, dans cette double direction que nous devons pousser nos études pour analyser et définir, non point une quelconque « œuvre civilisatrice » des Mandingue, mais leur rôle dans l'élaboration, bien sûr de la civilisation nord-soudanienne ou soudano-sahélienne, mais aussi de la Civilisation africaine au sens, que lui donnait Leo Frobenius, d'un « accord conciliant ». Par quoi se définissent toutes les grandes civilisations.

C'est à caractériser les structures et valeurs intérieures de la civilisation mandingue que s'est attachée l'équipe du Professeur Dalby dans une brochure intitulée *Manding: Focus on an African civilization* et présentée, à juste titre, comme introduction au congrès d'aujourd'hui. Il y est question de l'ethnie mandingue au sens étroit, mais propre, du terme, des peuples qui parlent les trois dialectes majeurs de la langue mandingue : les Malinké ou Mandinka, les Bambara ou Bamana, enfin les Dyoula ou Dyoura. Le Professeur Dalby y a ajouté les Vay et d'autres petits groupes ethniques. Outre les questions que pose la définition des structures et valeurs mandingues dans les divers domaines abordés—langue, organisation sociale, histoire et religion, art et artisanal, musique, littérature—, l'un des problèmes les plus importants me semble être les rapports de la langue des Mandingues avec les langues ou dialectes des petits groupes ethniques les plus proches. Il faut reconnaître qu'ici, beaucoup reste encore à faire. Je songe, plus spécialement, à ceux qui sont désignés—ou se sont désignés—par des noms à syllabe final -ké : Dyallonké, Dyahanké, Nyominké, devenu Nyominka.

Cependant, pour si importante que soit l'analyse de la civilisation mandingue *in se et per se*, elle ne peut suffire aux militants de la Négritude ou, en d'autres termes de l'*African personality*. Et, d'abord, pour des raisons scientifiques. Aussi bien, la civilisation mandingue ne procède-t-elle pas d'une génération spontanée. Encore une fois, elle est fille de la race, de la géographie, de l'histoire et de la préhistoire. Depuis la préhistoire notamment, les Mandingue ont eu des rapports avec leurs voisins « guinéens » de la forêt, mais d'abord avec leurs frères « soudanais » de la savane. C'est si vrai que plusieurs communications portent sur ces rapports.

Je commencerai par les rapports entre Mandingue et peuples sylvestres du Sud, qui, pour être moins importants, n'en sont pas moins significatifs. Au cœur même de la Côte d'Ivoire, jusque dans les groupes « éburnéo-libérien » et « éburnéodahoméen », pour parler comme Maurice Delafosse—je sais qu'on a tenté d'amender sa classification—, j'ai senti l'influence mandingue : à tel vêtement, à telle coiffure, à tel trait de style. Et l'on a dit que le dyoula était une des langues principales d'Abidjan. Il y a, là, une vaste champ de recherches. D'autant que, franchie la Gambie, on sent déjà l'influence de la Forêt : à la taille des hommes et, plus caractéristique, à leur façon de danser.



Il reste que c'est avec les Soudano-Sahéliens que les Mandingue présentent le plus grand nombre d'affinités et les plus caractéristiques. Et c'est ici que l'on note le plus d'influences réciproques, où les Mandingue semblent avoir donné plus qu'ils n'ont reçu, comme le montreront maintes communications.

Outre les petits mais proches peuples frères, auxquels fait allusion le Professeur Dalby, il y a, à l'intérieur du groupe « nigéro-sénégalais », les relations entre les Mandingue et, d'abord, les nations qui ont fondé les autres « empires soudanais » de fameuse mémoire: les Sarakolé ou Soninké de l'ancien Ghana, les Songhay de l'ancien Songhoy, et aussi les Zerma ou Dyerma. A peine moins importantes sont les relations qui ont uni les Mandingue aux trois autres groupes de l'Occident soudano-sahélien: aux « Sénégal-Guinéens » (Peul, Wolof, Sérère, Dyola), aux « Voltaïques » (Mossi, Sénoufo, Gourma, Lobi, Bobo) et aux « Nigéro-Tchadiens » (Haoussa).

Ces dernières relations sont les plus significatives, qui témoignent de l'influence qu'exerça, plus que tout autre, l'Empire du Mali, et sur le plan culturel plus que sur le politique. Pour prendre l'exemple du Sénégal, je ne citerai que les deux communications que vous allez entendre : l'une par Abdoulaye Sokhna Diop sur *L'Impact de la Civilisation mandingue au Sénégal*, et l'autre par Oumar Bâ sur le *Glossaire des Mots mandé passés en Poular*. Chez les Sérère, l'influence mandingue se retrouve partout : dans les tam-tams royaux de la cour du Sine, les *dyoung-dyounge* (*doung-doung* en malinké), dans le vêtement des circoncis, dans le vocabulaire des éléments-clefs de la société. Ainsi dans le mot *saté*, qui signifie « village », et, surtout dans *saligé*, qui vient de l'expression malinké *saté-tigi*, « chef de village », mais qui, chez les Sérère, implique des fonctions plus religieuses qu'administratives. Et l'on rencontre des *saligé* (1) jusque chez les Lébou wolofophones de la commune du Grand-Dakar. Il y a mieux, dans tout le Sénégal, les marabouts malinké sont les plus réputés, qui ont, parmi leurs clients, aussi bien des Chrétiens et des Animistes que des Musulmans. Ce qui me fait dire, dans ce pays d'expérience multiraciale et multireligieuse, que « la seule religion qui fait l'unité des Sénégalais est le maraboutisme malinké ». Mais l'on sait qu'il participe beaucoup plus de la Négritude, très précisément de l'Africanité, que de l'Islam.

(1) J'emploie, ici, la transcription phonétique officielle du Sénégal, inspirée des conclusions de la Conférence de Bamako, tenue sous l'égide de l'UNESCO.

Voilà qui m'amène à ce que je considère comme l'essentiel : le rôle des Soudano-Sahéliens, notamment des Nigéro-Sénégalais, plus particulièrement des Mandingue, dans l'élaboration de la Civilisation africaine, qui, de nouveau, est la symbiose des vertus complémentaires des Hamitiques, aujourd'hui Arabo-Berbères, et des Ethiopiens ou Négro-Africains.

Depuis la Renaissance et le Discours de la Méthode, on a trop pensé par catégories et dichotomie. Mais les progrès des sciences humaines au XX^e siècle—histoire, surtout préhistorique et linguistique—, qui usent, enfin, de la dialectique, voire de l'esprit africain de multivalence et de participation, rendent de plus en plus manifeste ce phénomène que toute civilisation est métissage, comme le furent, d'une façon exemplaire, les trois premières civilisations historiques du Nil, de la Mésopotamie et de l'Indus. Je parle du métissage culturel, l'autre se faisant tout seul, malgré les haines et les guerres « tribales ».

C'est dans ce contexte de la « Civilisation africaine » et, par-delà, d'une civilisation afro-méditerranéenne qu'il nous faudrait achever et comme couronner nos études mandingue. J'entends, ici, l'expression dans son sens le plus général. Car il s'agit du rôle que jouèrent et continuent de jouer, entre la Forêt tropicale et la Méditerranée, entre Arabo-Berbères et Négro-Africains, les Soudano-Sahéliens, dont les Mandingue ne sont, encore une fois, que l'ensemble des peuples les plus exemplaires. De ce rôle je ne donnerai que quelques exemples, qui seront plutôt des interrogations.

Au Maroc, comme me le faisait remarquer mon ami Moulay Ahmed Alaoui, les Noirs charmeurs et bateleurs, musiciens et chanteurs et batteurs de tam-tam sont appelés Ganaw. N'est-ce pas par référence à l'Empire du Ghana? D'autant qu'en pleine Mauritanie, au milieu des Maures, l'on a découvert des métis parlant une langue proche du Sarakolé.

Toujours en Mauritanie, l'artisanat, avec ses techniques, est aux mains des Berbères, tandis que les instruments de musique semblent provenir des Noirs, et que les chants des uns et des autres, tout en se distinguant, se ressemblent comme des frères.

Je me rappelle la réponse d'Herbert Pepper, l'un des meilleurs spécialistes européens de musique africaine, à qui j'avais demandé de m'analyser la musique (malinké) de la fameuse épopée de Soundyata Keita. « C'est curieux », me dit-il, « c'est entre la musique bantou de la forêt et la musique arabo-berbère ». Il est vrai que les Bénédictins de Keur-Moussa, au Sénégal, ont noté des affinités entre la musique sérère et le grégorien, présenté comme musique de métissage entre l'Europe, l'Afrique et l'Asie.



Pour finir, on n'a pas assez souligné le rôle des Soudano-Sahéliens dans l'aventure guerrière des Almoravides, partant, dans les influences culturelles que ceux-ci exercèrent sur la péninsule ibérique et le Sud de la France. Beaucoup parmi ceux-ci étaient des Noirs, et tels les ont vus les peuples conquis et les faiseurs d'épopée : comme des Sarrasins, c'est-à-dire des hommes de peau noire, couleur de la fameuse céréale. L'on a beaucoup parlé de l'influence « arabe » sur la naissance de la poésie lyrique dans le Sud-Ouest de l'Europe : sur le chant et la poésie des Troubadours. Ne faudrait-il pas plutôt parler d'une influence soudanaïenne et, pour tout dire, « négro-berbère » ? Ce qui m'a toujours frappé, c'est ce même sens du rythme, cette même façon de chanter, à la *bel canto*, qui se perçoit des rives du Niger et du Sénégal jusqu'aux rives de la Loire, qui, si l'on en croit les militants de l'Occitanie, coupent la France en deux cultures sinon en deux ethnies.

Le phénomène des Almoravides n'est qu'un épisode, mais combien fécond, parmi d'autres. Au moment qu'aux États-Unis d'Amérique, en Europe, en Afrique et même en Asie,



se multiplient, en s'approfondissant, les études sur le rôle des Noirs dans l'Antiquité méditerranéenne, mais aussi sud-asiatique, les Études mandingue peuvent nous aider à répondre au problème fondamental des rapports entre Arabo-Berbères et Négro-Africains : à nous dire quand et comment a commencé, s'est poursuivi, se développe le long processus de fécondation réciproque, d'accord conciliant, entre Blancs et Noirs, par quoi se définit l'Africanité, qui doit être, qui est un humanisme, et moderne.

+
+ +

Je reviens, pour conclure, à la civilisation mandingue. Si elle a été présentée comme majeure, c'est qu'au moment de sa splendeur, elle se présentait comme exemplaire pour l'époque : féodale et guerrière, lyrique et artiste, urbaine et commerçante. Je l'ai définie : « Un cheval et un fusil, une femme et une kora, une noix de kola ». Pas complète, il est vrai : il lui manquait la poudre, qui ruina le Songhoï à Tondibi, en 1951 [*i.e.*, 1591]. Mais est-ce, sur le plan de la civilisation, une infériorité que de ne pas avoir la bombe atomique ?

Telle fut, en tout cas, la splendeur—et la plénitude—de cette civilisation qu'en Afrique soudano-sahélienne, on s'en réclame de partout. Comme mon père, qui, parlant, au demeurant, le bambara et le malinké, en plus du wolof et du sérère naturellement, ne ratait aucune occasion de citer ses « Ancêtres mandingue », venus du Gabou. Mais, linguiste en herbe, je lui fis remarquer un jour, un an avant sa mort—c'est, peut-être, ce qui l'acheva—, avec un sourire respectueux, que le Gabou était situé en Guinée portugaise et que le nom de Senghor ou Senhor me semblait plus portugais que malinké : sans doute un sobriquet donné à un mercenaire!

De tout cela, je voudrais tirer une leçon de prudence, et de modestie en même temps. Vous l'aurez remarqué, j'ai posé plus d'interrogations, avancé plus d'hypothèses que je n'ai résolu de problèmes. J'ai voulu rester dans l'esprit du Centre for African Studies de l'Université de Londres, ayant, jadis, été confronté avec la complexité des problèmes : du Problème.

Car le seul problème, en définitive, est celui de l'Homme africain à mieux connaître. Parce qu'ayant beaucoup reçu de l'Europe depuis quatre siècles, il est temps que, de nouveau, il apporte sa contribution à cette Eurafrique qui cherche à renaître. La Civilisation de l'Universel est à ce prix.

H.E. Léopold Sédar Senghor's presidential address at the Conference. Photo: Central Office of Information.

(From *Manding Conference 1972 : report and recommendations*)



ETHIOPIQUES, no 28, numéro spécial, octobre 1981. *Les traditions orales du Gabou : actes du Colloque international sur les traditions orales du Gabou, organisé, à Dakar, du 19 au 24 mai 1980 par la Fondation Léopold Sédar Senghor.*
Extraits:

La Fondation Léopold Sédar Senghor, fidèle ... à l'enseignement de l'illustre fils de l'Afrique dont elle port le nom, fait de la culture, le fondement essentiel de l'unité de notre continent.

... Notre vœu le plus ardent est de contribuer à l'instauration d'un élément de compréhension et de coopération inter-africaine, en aidant les chercheurs et hommes de culture à mieux se connaître afin d'échanger leurs idées et leurs expériences.

Dès lors, le thème de réflexion que nous nous sommes proposé n'est pas le fait du hasard. Il découle d'un postulat senghorien, aujourd'hui bien établi, selon lequel « les grandes civilisations sont filles du métissage » : Elles tirent leurs richesses de leurs variétés et de leur diversité.

Qu'il me suffise de rappeler que l'événement se place dans le sillage du Premier Congrès d'Etudes Mandingue, tenu à Londres, en juillet 1972. Plus de deux cents spécialistes avaient participé à cette importante rencontre ; ils avaient abordé, alors, tous les aspects de la civilisation mandingue depuis l'histoire, la géographie jusqu'à la mythologie, en passant par l'art, la religion, la linguistique, la langue, la musique, etc.

Un deuxième congrès est prévu à Dakar, qui veut cerner le monde mandingue dans l'ensemble soudano-sahélien, et qui envisagera la civilisation mandingue dans ses rapports avec les cultures voisines.

Amadou Cissé Dia, Président du Conseil d'Administration de la Fondation Léopold Sédar Senghor. Introduction, pp. 5-6.

... [L]e thème civilisation et culture n'a pas fait l'objet d'un important développement [en ce colloque], alors qu'il devait servir de transition entre le présent Colloque et le deuxième Congrès sur la Civilisation Mandinko. Cependant, quelques communications très intéressantes sur la musique, la littérature et l'initiation des adolescents au Gaabu, ont permis de poser les jalons d'études ultérieures. ...

Compte tenu de l'importance de la pensée religieuse et de certains mythes, comme celui du serpent sacré, il faut souhaiter que lors du deuxième Congrès Mandingue, des études comparatives de théologie mandinko et de plusieurs théologies sénégalaises, notamment sérère et diola, montrent la place des cosmogonies et de la spiritualité « mandé » dans les systèmes religieux rencontrés par les Mandé.

R. P. Mveng, Rapporteur général. Considérations générales sur le colloque, pp. 15, 17.

Le thème de ce colloque au IIe Congrès mandingue sur les « Traditions orales du Gabou » intéresse, tout particulièrement, notre sous-région. ...

Je souhaite donc plein succès à vos travaux, en déclarant ouvert le Pré-Colloque sur les Traditions orales du Gabou.

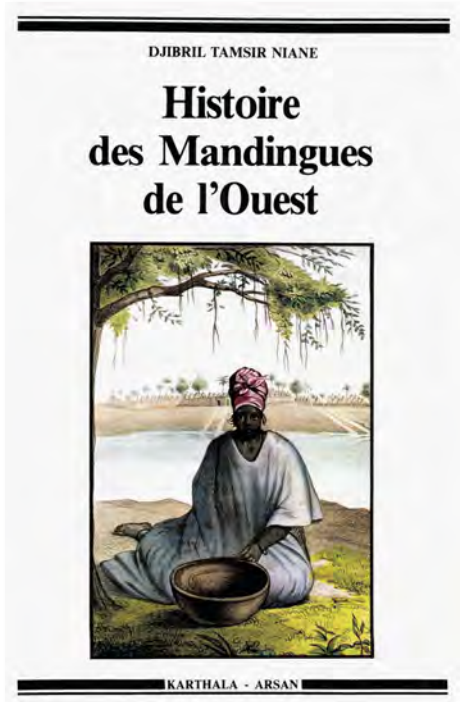
Léopold Sédar Senghor. Discours d'ouverture, pp. 18, 21.

Fanta Traoré, alors assistante au ministère de la Culture, fut déléguée par le ministre pour accueillir et s'occuper des participants. C'est lors de ce colloque qu'elle rencontra son futur mari, Lansiné Kaba. Elle confirme que le « IIe Congrès mandingue » n'a jamais eu lieu. —Editeur.

Il y a à peine une décennie que les chercheurs et les historiens ont pris conscience de l'importance de l'histoire du Gabou. Le Congrès d'études mandingues tenu à Londres en 1972 ne compte pas moins d'une demi-dizaine de communications axées sur l'histoire et la civilisation du Gabou. Sékéné Mody Cissoko, pionnier en la matière, dans son introduction à l'histoire des Mandingues de l'Ouest, souleva les principaux problèmes auxquels se heurtent l'historien, dont le moindre n'est pas la rareté des sources écrites. Le chercheur gambien Bakari Sidibé posa le problème des rapports entre le Gabou et les royaumes gambiens. ...

Depuis le congrès mandingue, la recherche a été stimulée; elle s'est orientée tout à la fois vers la publication des sources écrites et la prospection sur le terrain. Comme tout pays mandingue, le Gabou s'avéra riche en traditions orales.

Djibril Tamsir Niane, *Histoire des Mandingues de l'ouest : le royaume du Gabou* (Paris : Éditions Karthala, Association ARSAN, 1989), p. 5.



D. T. Niane reprenant les travaux du Congrès d'études mandingues (Londres 1972), ceux du Colloque de Dakar (19-24 mai 1980) sur le Kaabu, et l'ensemble des sources orales collectées depuis une quinzaine d'années, notamment en Gambie et au Sénégal, nous livre cette *Histoire des Mandingues de l'ouest*, c'est-à-dire une histoire du Kaabu du XIII^e au XIX^e siècle, pour l'essentiel.

Roger Botte, « Niane, Djibril Tamsir. Histoire des Mandingues de l'ouest. Le royaume du Gabou (compte-rendu). » *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 111-112, 1988, Manding, p. 553.



Message from David Dalby

Director of the Linguasphere Observatory, Hebron SA34 0XT Wales

Sent for distribution at the 4th International Conference on Mande Studies, Banjul (Serekunda), Gambia, 1998, via Lucy Durán. Included here courtesy of Lucy Durán.

It is with disappointment that I have to miss the pleasure of attending the meeting in The Gambia this month, which continues the tradition we established on the occasion of the first Manding Conference in July 1972 at SOAS.

I send my warm greetings and wishes for success to all of you now meeting in Banjul, and especially to the faithful group of those who were with us at the London School of Oriental and African Studies twenty-six years ago.

You may be interested to know that the ambition to organize the first Manding Conference began when I was working in Sierra Leone during the 1960's. It seemed remarkable that Manding language and civilization should have influenced such a wide area of West Africa, but that its appreciation and study should have become so obscured by the fragmentation of the Manding-influenced area into eight or more states belonging formerly to three different colonial empires. So the idea developed of inviting writers and scholars and griots from all the countries involved, to a gathering in London which would pay tribute to a great African civilization, and contribute to the international recognition which it so rightly deserves.

We were fortunate in being able to achieve this objective, and in bringing together a unique assembly of over two hundred participants from West Africa and around the world. The Museum of Mankind in London hosted an exhibition of Manding art and the Africa Centre hosted concerts of Manding music. London heard the kora played by leading griots from Mali, The Gambia and Senegal, and due honour was paid to the spirit of Sunjata when the British Prime Minister Edward Heath invited a number of griots to a banquet at his official residence at 10 Downing Street, where they played beneath a series of portraits by Gainsborough, in a remarkable meeting of cultures.

The Queen hosted lunch at Buckingham Palace on the opening day of the Manding Conference, to which she invited President Leopold Sedar Senghor, visiting London for the occasion as the honorary President of the Conference, and several other of the key participants.

The Manding Exhibition was subsequently visited by Gambian President Sir Dawda Jawara, and a commemorative set of postage-stamps was issued by The Gambia to mark the occasion of this first International Manding Conference. Public lectures were given by Camara Laye, speaking about the cultural importance of Manding civilisation, and by Alex Haley, who presented a preview of his research which led later to "Roots".

From David Conrad's history of MANSÁ, re: the 4th International Conference of Mande Studies, 1998:

"The formal sessions concluded with an open forum moderated by Nehemia Levtzion, "The 1972 Manding Conference at SOAS and Mande Studies Today: 26 Years On." Highlighting our banquet on the final evening was a concert of Mandinka kora music by the two famous Gambian musicians Dembo Konté and Kausu Kouyaté. The music was organized by Lucy Duran in commemoration of the 1972 SOAS Conference on Manding Studies."



In thanking the organizers of this year's conference for continuing the initiative of 26 years ago, may I express the hope that we shall all be able to meet together - ni Allah sonna - for a 5th International Manding Conference in 2002, on the thirtieth anniversary of our first meeting. For a variety of reasons, including their bulk, the totality of the 108 papers presented in 1972 were never published as a complete collection. It might be therefore interesting — if a sponsoring institution could be found — to publish them as a commemorative volume (or volumes) in 2002, alongside commentaries and new contributions on the same subjects, with a new selection of musical recordings and with an annotated photographic collection of works of art from the Manding area. If the distance were not too great, the fifth conference might conclude with a cultural pilgrimage to Kangaba!

May I also express an opinion on the name of our conferences. "Manding" (for Manden) is an appropriate term to denote the cultural focus of Manding civilisation, in the Manding heartland, but the variant spelling of "Mande", as used for so long in expatriate writings, is better avoided. Mande is now ambiguous, as a result of its use not only in the original sense of Manding, but also as a cover-term to describe a whole variety of related languages, extending as far east as Nigeria. Relationships among these so-called Mande languages are more complex than often realized, and the importance of this extended language-family in West Africa has long been obscured by its wrongful inclusion in an even larger African language-family, known as "Niger-Congo". The languages of the Niger-Congo, or preferably "Trans-African" family, show remarkable resemblances extending from Wolof to Zulu, but are distinct from the so-called Mande family.

The reason preventing my attendance at Banjul this month has been work on the final editing of the Linguasphere Register, the first complete classification of the world's languages and linguistic communities, which will be published at the beginning of September 1998. The Register presents a coded sequence of over 10,000 languages spoken in the world to-day, and its geographical organisation is such that it begins in West Africa, with the first language being Manding!

Manden te banna!

David Dalby
Chairman of the first International Conference on Manding Studies, 1972

June, 1998

Article announcing completion of the Linguasphere register of the world's languages and speech communities, 1998. David Dalby with languages map at SOAS.
(The Guardian; courtesy of Alison Dalby)





MANDING STUDIES CONFERENCE, SOAS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, 1972 :

Some reflections from Lucy Durán

My reflections on the 1st International Manding Conference held at SOAS in 1972 are not from personal encounter. I wasn't there, sadly. But I have heard a lot about it from fellow SOAS academics who were, and I am happy to share some of those insights and to reflect on the legacy of that momentous and arguably unparalleled event.

I have now been at SOAS since 1992, first as a lecturer in the Africa department, and now as professor in the Music department. We are the only university in the UK that teaches Mande music and the kora, and that is in no small part due to that 1st Manding Conference, which laid the ground for my own endeavours to maintain the profile of Mande studies as an integral part of African scholarship at SOAS and in the UK.

My history at SOAS in fact dates back to the late 1960s, when my musical focus at the time was very different. Whilst doing a BMus at Kings College London, I was allowed to take one course at neighbouring SOAS. The atmosphere at SOAS was much more cosmopolitan and diverse than at KCL. In those days it did not have a music department, but there were several lecturers who taught different musical traditions particularly from South Asia. And so to complement my western classical music studies, I chose the only music course available at SOAS at the time: Indian music. But I was not aware of the existence of the kora, not yet anyway.

My first exposure to the kora was entirely by chance, and not until 1974. After completing my MMus degree, I started working for *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 6th edition as a sub-editor; I had to build up a network of regional experts, seeking advice on the music of different parts of the world. One of those experts was Dr Anthony King, based in SOAS's Africa Department. In those days I had little knowledge of music from Africa, although I had been to Libya in 1970, where I recorded Tuareg music in the Libyan desert (those recordings along with my whole archive are housed in the British Library World and Traditional Sound Archive).

One day in 1974, Grove's sent me to SOAS to deliver some papers to Dr King for editing. It was meant to be a quick visit. I knocked on his office door, he ushered me in, and... I heard the music of the spheres. Dr King was playing a recording he had made in the Gambia in 1970, featuring the wonderful kora player Jali Nyama Suso – one of the musicians who had performed at that 1st International Manding Studies Conference. In fact it was Jali Nyama who accompanied the author Alex Haley on the kora at the conference, playing the tune of the Kinte lineage, which Haley asserted he was descended from. I later worked with Jali Nyama and brought him to the UK for concerts and workshops. He was an outstanding player and singer.

The recording I heard that day in King's office was entirely new to me but it sounded uncannily familiar – those strings were so melodic, intricate, polyphonic, rhythmically complex, and enchanting. That was it, I immediately fell in love with the kora. I knew I had to learn it.

From that moment on, I immersed myself in Mande studies, and SOAS became my unofficial second home. I pestered both King and another notable scholar in the Africa department, Professor Gordon Innes, whose book *Sunjata: Three Mandinka Versions*, I devoured. Both King and Innes had participated in that 1st International Conference on Manding Studies. King graciously taught me the rudiments of kora, and let me listen to his hundreds of superb recordings of kora players mostly from Gambia (now housed in the British Library); and Innes taught me Mandinka grammar, in exchange for which I later wrote an analysis of the music of Kelefa for his publication *Kelefa Saane: His Career Recounted by Two Mandinka Bards* (SOAS, London, 1978).

During our sessions together, King and Innes occasionally commented on aspects of the Manding conference. They were impressed by the sheer number of participants at a time when African studies were in infancy in the UK. Dr David Dalby's *Report and Recommendations* (Dalby was chair and organiser of the event) lists 243 participants, and they were a veritable *who's who* of the Mande scholarship world. But there were also 31 musicians from Gambia, Senegal and Mali, making a grand total of 274 participants, of whom 105 were African or of African heritage, over one-third of the total count. In addition there were, apparently, some guests and onlookers from the African community in London. Word had got round that Senegal's president Leopold Sedar Senghor would be opening the conference, and that many other official dignitaries would be there.



Another unusual and impressive aspect of the conference was its outreach beyond academia, with an exhibition at the Museum of Mankind, and musical performances at the Africa Centre and beyond. The multi-disciplinary aspect of the conference was exemplary.

King told me about Alex Haley, who in a dramatic voice, had presented his compelling story of locating his ancestral roots in Juffure on the north bank of the Gambia. Members of MANSAs who were at the conference in 1998 in the Gambia will recall visiting Juffure and St James' Island, which because of ROOTS had become popular destinations for African American tourists. King was skeptical about the veracity of Haley's claims, but acknowledged the power and potential of the narrative. King also pointed out to me that the BBC had turned down Haley's pitch for a TV series (there was at least one BBC producer at the conference). As everyone knows, ROOTS became one of the best-selling TV series of all time. What a missed chance by the BBC! In 2015 a new edition of ROOTS was made by the same production company, with the idea of making it more "authentic," and I was hired as the expert on Mandinka language and music.

Both King and Innes told me about the three very impressive national ensembles from Gambia, Senegal and Mali. Sadly, there are no extant recordings that I have been able to find, although in the *Report and Recommendations* there are photos of the Gambian and Senegalese musicians being recorded for the record label Argos Decca, which has long since folded. Fortunately Professor Roderic Knight from Oberlin College USA attended the conference. He was with Jali Nyama Suso. They were both on their way back to the Gambia. Knight was then completing his studies for his brilliant UCLA PhD thesis, *Mandinka jaliya: professional music of the Gambia* [1973], and he not only recorded Haley presenting his story with Jali Nyama's accompaniment on kora, but also took photos of the musicians performing at the Africa Centre, so we have at least some record of that performance. [Knight also recorded the Senegal National Ensemble's concert, which he has just made available online along with Haley's talk and a BBC interview on the kora—link below. — Editor]

<https://soundcloud.com/uwlibraries/sets/manding-soas-1972>

Another significant outcome of the conference was when Senegal's President Leopold Sedar Senghor was invited to a dinner at No 10 Downing Street by Prime Minister Edward Heath – who was an amateur musician. Senghor, apparently, invited the two most virtuosic kora players to accompany him – Sidiki Diabaté and Djelimady Sissoko. They were both members of the National Ensemble of Mali. (Though in fact, they were both born in Gambia, during colonial rule). That was, it seems, the only time that the kora has ever been played at No 10 Downing Street.

Those two were the fathers of the two greatest kora players of our time, Toumani Diabaté and Ballaké Sissoko, whom I later recorded (in 1997) at the Palais de Congrès in Bamako, for the album *New Ancient Strings*, released in 1999. One of the tunes on the album, a version of *Bambuguci*, became the signature tune for Mali's TV and Radio station, ORTM, for a decade. The album is about to be re-released by Chrysalis Records in the UK.

With guidance from both King and Innes, I finally went to the Gambia in 1977 to study kora with one of its most respected kora players, Amadu Bansang Jobarteh. This was the first of many trips to the Mande region, first Gambia and Senegal, then in 1986 to Mali where Amadu introduced me to his famous kora-playing nephew Sidiki Diabaté. The other kora player at No 10 Downing Street, Djelimady Sissoko, had passed away in 1981, so regrettably I never met him. He had been replaced in the Ensemble Instrumental National du Mali by his eldest son, Ballaké, then barely 13 years old. On that first trip to Mali in 1986, it was Djelimady Sissoko's family who kindly invited me to stay with them in Ntomikoro-bougou, Bamako, and where I made the first recording of Ballaké, then 19 years old and clearly already a prodigy. Ballaké of course has a copy of that informal recording, and it is also housed along with all my original audio recordings in the British Library's World and Traditional Music Sound Archive.

It was clear we had to mark the 50th anniversary of the Manding conference at SOAS in some way. Rather than an academic conference, we chose to hold a series of concerts, workshops and talks to showcase the kora and its music. Although we called our event "Fifty Years of Mande Studies at SOAS" [November 30, 2022], it really focused on the kora and music performance. It featured a number of special guests, including South African guitarist Derek Gripper (who plays kora music on guitar and came over from South Africa



specially for the event), plus our own kora teacher, Kadialy Kouyate, who has been teaching kora at SOAS for over fifteen years – and he is the first cousin of Ballaké, although they have only met twice, both times in London! Ballaké's younger brother, Sirifo Sissoko, who lives in Connecticut, USA joined us via Zoom for an in-depth conversation about changing kora techniques and aesthetics. An indication of the diasporas of kora players, just within one direct family.

As headliner, we featured a tour de force concert by Ballaké himself, whom I consider the greatest living kora player of today. Ballaké joined us from Paris, where he is based, when not in Bamako. He agreed to perform at our modest concert hall in the Brunei Gallery – to a heavily sold out audience, full of celebrities – because he was proud to honour the fact that his father Djelimady had graced our university with his presence and his kora half a century ago.

At this event, we wanted to reflect on the remarkable journey that the kora has made in the fifty years since that 1st Manding Conference. Back in 1972, the kora was little-known outside its native region. Now it is well-established on the international concert circuit. In no small part, this

is due to changes in construction. Most kora players no longer use the old traditional system of “konso” leather tuning rings, instead they use machine heads borrowed from the guitar and levers borrowed from the harp, that enable instantaneous changing of keys. There are also new brilliant methods of amplification which avoid the feedback that once plagued the kora because of its calabash. Of course, it can be argued that with these changes, the original aesthetic and tunings of the kora are in danger of disappearing. But not altogether, as can be seen in a film documentary about Ballaké and the kora for TV5Monde, produced by Oléo Films and Madminutemusic.com, for which I am researcher. We filmed in Mali, Casamance and Gambia in January 2022, and the film will be screened in 2023.*

In conclusion, this piece is just a brief reflection on some of the pathways that the kora has taken since 1972, and the truly pioneering role that the 1st International Manding Studies Conference at SOAS played in the development, diffusion and understanding of one of the world's greatest musical instruments.

You can see a film of the whole concert including my presentation and a screening of Dr King's Super 8 film shot in the Gambia in 1970, documenting the construction of the kora by Jali Nyama Suso, restored and with a new sound track mostly from King's own recordings, here.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0vNeMCS5_4

[The film begins playing at about minute 4.]

CONCERT SERIES 2022

SOAS
University of London

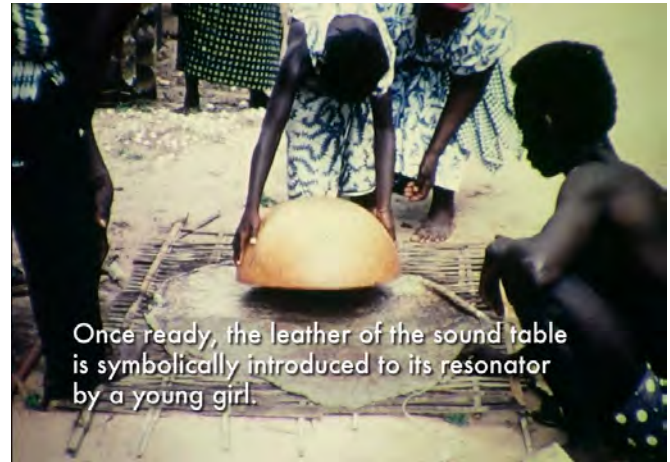
Ballaké Sissoko
Fifty Years of Mande
Studies at SOAS

Wednesday 30 November
6pm GMT
Brunei Gallery

*Ballaké Sissoko, *Kora Tales / Une histoire de kora* (Oléo Films and Mad Minute Music, 2023, 53 min.). Directed by Lucy Durán and Laurent Benhamou. In French and Bamanankan with French and English subtitles.



Stills from Anthony King's short film, *The Making of a Kora* (1970). Shown as part of "50 Years of Mande Studies at SOAS."





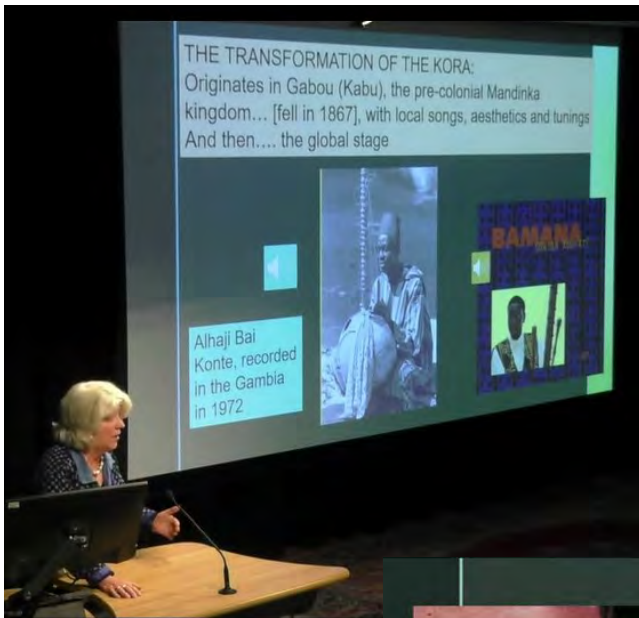
Jali Nyama Suso, Dr King's kora teacher, Gambia, 1970



Dr Anthony King, left, with Lucy 1976, SOAS



Lucy with her teacher Amadu Bansang Jobarteh, 1978



THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE KORA:
Originates in Gabou (Kabou), the pre-colonial Mandinka kingdom... [fell in 1867], with local songs, aesthetics and tunings
And then... the global stage

Alhaji Bai Konte, recorded in the Gambia in 1972



Julien Cooper showing his newest kora.

Excerpts from Lucy Durán's presentation for "50 Years of Mande Studies at SOAS."



TRANSFORMATIONS in construction & amplification
left: Amadu Bansang Jobarteh, Gambia, 1978
right: MIDI designed by Julien Cooper (Enkore Arts)



Kadialy Kouyate, kora instructor at SOAS, performing and translating for his cousin Ballaké Sissoko.



Concert images from "50 Years of Mande Studies at SOAS."



Ballaké Sissoko and South African guitarist Derek Gripper in an improvisational finale.





International Conference on Manding Studies / Congrès international d'études Manding
(University of London, SOAS, 1972) : papers presented

- Amselle, Jean-Loup. Histoire et structure sociale du Wasulu avant Samori. 10, [4] pages.
- Ba, Oumar. Glossaire des mots mandé passés en poular du Fouta Toro. 11 pages.
- Bazin, Jean. Commerce et prédation : l'état bambara de Ségou et ses communautés marka. 23, [3] pages.
- Bell, Nawal. The age of Mansa Musa of Mali : problems in succession, chronology and Islamization. 16 pages.
- Bird, Charles S. Aspects of prosody in West African poetry. 10 pages.
- _____. The syntax and semantics of possession in Bambara. 13 pages.
- Boulègue, Jean. Aux confins du monde malinke : le royaume du Kasa (Casamance). 13 leaves.
- Boutillier, Jean-Louis. Politique et commerce : l'insertion des communautés Mande/Diula dans le royaume de Bouna à l'époque précoloniale. 18 pages.
- Brasseur, Gérard. Existe-t-il un type d'habitat spécifiquement mandé? 10 leaves.
- _____. Les cartes ethnodémographiques de l'Afrique Occidentale. 9 leaves.
- Brasseur, Paule. Documentation concernant les Manding. 57 pages.
- Bravmann, René A. Masquerades among the urban Dyula of the Voltaic basin. 14, [2] leaves.
- Calvet, Louis-Jean. La palatale sourde intervocalique dans certains parlers mandingues. 4 pages.
- _____. Les emprunts du bambara à l'arabe. 12 leaves.
- Camara, Laye. Le rêve dans la société traditionnelle malinké. 19 pages.
- Camara, Sory. L'histoire pour les Mandenka. 18, 6 pages.
- _____. Introduction à l'étude des 'tali mandenka'. 14, 06, 07, 06, 06 pages.
- Cissé, Diango. Éléments de culture et de structures malinké. 23 pages.
- Cissoko, Sékéné Mody. Introduction à l'histoire des Mandingues de l'Ouest : l'empire de Kabou (XVI^e-XIX^e siècle). 20 leaves.
- Coulibaly, Bakary. Lois phonologiques des emprunts français du manding. 14 pages.
- Curtin, Philip D. The western Juula in the eighteenth century. 20, [1] pages.
- Darbo, Seni. A griot's self-portrait : the origins and role of the griot in Mandinka society as seen from stories told by Gambian griots. 14 pages.
- Diabaté, Massa Maghan. Tradition orale et littérature malienne. 26 pages.
- _____. Le héros dans la tradition orale du Mande. 22 pages.
- Diagne, Pathé. La mandinguophonie nord soudanienne comme facteur d'unification ouest-africaine. 9 pages.
- Diarrassouba, Marcelle. Le mariage traditionnel chez les Malinké. 8 pages.
- Dieterlen, Germaine. Contribution à l'étude des relations historiques entre le Mandé et l'actuel Ghana. 15 pages.
- Diop, Abdoulaye Sokhna. La genèse de la royauté Gueleware au Siin et au Saalum. 38, [2] pages.
- Donne, J. B. (John Brian). Bogolafini : a mud-painted cloth. 3, [1] pages.
- Drame, Buly. Communication sur : l'histoire d'une ethnie, son organisation sociale, sa philosophie et sa littérature. 6 pages.
- Ducos, Gisèle. Apports malinké au lexique badiaranké. 14 leaves.
- Dumestre, Georges. Syntagmes complétif, qualificatif et attributif en bambara. 12 pages.
- Dupire, Marguerite. Serer, Peul, Manding : le mariage croisé matrilatéral et ses interprétations en fonction du mode de filiation. 8 pages.
- Ferry, Marie Paule. Rapports historiques et culturels entre bedik et malinké au Sénégal oriental. 4 leaves.
- Galtier, Gérard. Correspondances phonétiques et lexicales dans les langues mandé-nord. 22 leaves.
- Gingiss, Peter. Dyula : a sociolinguistic perspective. 17, [1] pages.



- Gueye, M'Baye. Les Mandingues et le Sine. 12 pages.
- Hill, Matthew H. Speculations on linguistic and cultural history in Sierra Leone. 14, [6] pages.
- Holsoe, Svend E. The Manding in western Liberia : an overview. 28 pages.
- Hopkins, Nicholas S. A Maninka mythical charter. 23 pages.
- Houis, Maurice. L'identité typologique du bambara. 13 leaves.
- Hunwick, John O. An Andalusian in Mali : a contribution to the biography of Abū Ishāq al-Sāhilī c.1290-1346. 9, 4 pages.
- _____. The mid-fourteenth century capital of Mali. 9 leaves.
- Idris, Musa Baba. The role of the Wangara in the formation of the trading diaspora in Borgu. 12, [3] pages.
- Imperato, Pascal James. Contemporary masked dances and masquerades of the Bamana age sets from the Cercle of Bamako, Mali. 25, [1] pages.
- Innes, Gordon. The kingdom of Kaabu in Gambian Mandianka oral tradition. 4, [20] pages.
- Johnson, Marion. Manding weaving. 12, 4 pages, errata slip.
- Kaba, Lansiné. The Maninka-Mori of Baté, Guinea : a preliminary survey for research in ethno-history. 31, [1] pages.
- Kaké, Ibrahima Baba. Touba, un haut lieu de culture islamique des Diakhanké de Guinée. 19 pages.
- Karlik, Jan. Orthography problems in Manjako : (an examination of problems of linguistic diversity in the Manding area). 9 pages.
- Karlik, Jillian Nevillie. Literacy and the linguist : with reference to a minority group of the Manding area. 7 pages.
- Kesteloot, Lilyan. Introduction pour un épisode de l'épopée bambara de Ségou : la prise de Djonkoloni. 28 leaves.
- Knappert, Jan. The Arabic script and the Manding language. 6 pages.
- Knight, Roderic C. Relations between the Manding and the Fula as expressed in the Manding song repertoire. 11, [2] pages.
- Konaté, Moulouk Souleymane. Les Mandingues et pays gouro. 8 pages.
- Launay, Robert. Manding "clans" and "castes". 17, [3] leaves.
- Leary, Frances Anne. Gabu in the 19th century : a study of Futa Jalon-Firdu-French relations. 31 leaves.
- Levtzion, Nehemia. The differential impact of Islam among the Soninke and the Manding. 21, [5] pages.
- _____. The Wangara in Hausaland. 9 pages.
- Lewis, Barbara C. The Dioula diaspora in the Ivoirian south. 22 pages.
- Leynaud, Emile. Clans, lignages et cantons. 36, [4] pages.
- Leynaud, Emile, and Youssouf Tata Cissé. Note sur l'histoire de la Haute Vallée du Niger (Mandé). 33 leaves. (*Cissé given as first author in typed conference papers list*)
- Lipschutz, Mark. An outline of the history of Sulima. 15 pages.
- Long, Ronald W. The Northern Mande languages : a statistical pretesting of 22 idiolects. 23 pages.
- Long, Ronald and Ellen. Mande bibliography. 67 pages.
- Luneau, René. Plaisanteries rituelles lors du décès des grand-parents en pays bambara (1). 10 leaves.
- Ly, Fokoney. Contribution du bambara aux activités culturelles et au programme d'alphabétisation fonctionnelle au Mali. 10, [5] leaves.
- Mauny, Raymond. L'expédition maritime d'un sultan du Mali vers 1310. 8 pages.
- McCall, Daniel F. The southward movements of Manding peoples, speech and influence. 13, [3] pages.
- _____. Who was the Xarife on the Costa da Mina in the 16th century? 12 pages.
- _____. A note and some queries on a possible early export trade in Maleguetta pepper. 15 pages.
- _____. Reflections on the Mani. 6, 9 pages.



- Meillassoux, Claude. Réexamen de l'itinéraire d'Ibn Battuta entre Walata et Malli. 20 pages, [2] leaves.
- Moore, Bai T. Problems of Vai identity in terms of my own. 6 pages.
- Munson, Patrick J. Archaeology and the prehistoric origins of the Ghana empire. 13 pages.
- N'Diaye, Bokar. Les structures politico-sociales de l'ancienne société mandingue. 23 pages.
- Ofri, Dorith. Sowolo 1969 : an ethnomusicological case study of the Vai people in Liberia : progress report : May 1972. 20 leaves.
- Pageard, Robert. Le pays mandingue dans la littérature africaine d'expression française. 7, [2] leaves.
- Parkin, R. E. The past tense in Gambian Mandinka and its correlation with time sequence. 12, [1] leaves.
- Person, Yves. The Dyula and the Manding world. 19 pages.
- _____. Nyani Mansa Mamadu et la fin de l'empire du Mali. 41, 4, 10 pages.
- _____. Les Manding dans l'histoire. 8 pages.
- Phillips, Ruth B. The Vai women's society mask. 20 leaves.
- Quimby, Lucy G. The psychology of magic among the Dyula. 22, [2] pages.
- Quinn, Charlotte A. Relations between Mandingo rulers and 'stranger' groups along the Gambia River during the nineteenth century. 15, [1] pages.
- Riddell, James C. A brief review of Mano economic history. 23 leaves.
- Reichold, Walter. La cosmologie bambara à la lumière d'un usage des voituriers. 10 leaves.
- Samb, Amar. Les Mandingue et l'islam. 14, [1] pages.
- Sanneh, Lamin. The origin and dispersion of the Diakhanke : an introductory study. 14, [2] pages.
- _____. The Diakhanke and the Ummah al-Muhammadiyah : a preliminary study of the clerical and educational role of the Diakhanke. 22 pages.
- _____. The Muslim education of an African child : stresses and tensions. 21 leaves.
- Schaffer, Matt. A sketch of the modern cultural activities in Dakar with special reference to some implications of Manding civilization. 21, [2] leaves.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. Le Mandingue dans la civilisation soudano-sahélienne [*opening address*]. 16 leaves.
- Seydou, Christi[a]ne. L'épopée peule au Mali et ses rapports avec la culture mandingue. 17 leaves.
- Sidibe, B. K. (Bakari I.). The story of Kaabu : Kaabu's relationship with the Gambia states. 16 pages.
- _____. The story of Kaabu : its extent. 21 pages.
- _____. The story of Kaabu : the fall of Kaabu. 17, 2, [1] pages.
- Sidibé, Mamby. Observations sur l'histoire manding. 68 pages.
- Skinner, David E. The role of Mandingos and Susus in the Islamization of Sierra Leone. 17, [1] pages.
- Skinner, Neil. Lexical evidence of Manding-Hausa connections. 15, [1] leaves.
- Smyke, Raymond J. Manding biography : the Massaquois of Liberia. 29 leaves.
- Spears, Richard A. A typology of locative structures in Manding languages. 24 leaves.
- Stewart, Gail. The early Vai script as found in the Book of Ndole. 29 leaves.
- Surugue, Bernard. Discographie mandingue. 26 leaves.
- Sy, Moussa Oumar. L'esprit et la matière dans la métaphysique Manding. 17 leaves.
- Teixeira da Mota, Avelino. The Mande trade in Costa da Mina according to Portuguese documents until the mid-sixteenth century. 24 pages.
- Traoré, Amadou. African games. 3 pages.
- Turay, A. K. (Abdul Karim). Manding and Susu loanwords in Temne. 27 pages.
- Weil, Peter M. Mande age grade systems : social persistence and cultural flexibility in history. 27 pages.
- Zahan, Dominique. Modèle et 'objet d'Art' chez les Bambara (Mali). 14 leaves.



Libraries that hold the 1972 Manding Conference papers *(Source: OCLC Connexion)*

Canada

University of Toronto Group
University of Toronto Robarts Library

France

Campus Condorcet, Aubervilliers *(some papers at least)*
Université Paris 1, Bibliothèque de recherches africaines
(some papers at least)

Germany

BibliotheksVerbund Bayern
Verbundzentrale des Gemeinsamen Bibliotheksverbundes

Great Britain

University of Liverpool *(selection of papers, under title "Manding: focus on an African civilization")*
University of London, SOAS Library
University of Oxford, Bodleian Libraries

South Africa

University of Cape Town Libraries
University of the Witwatersrand *(some papers at least)*

United States

Cleveland State University, Michael Schwartz Library
Duke University Library
Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington
University of Michigan Library
University of Minnesota Libraries
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill Libraries
Northwestern University, Herskovits Library of African Studies
Smithsonian, National Museum of African Art, Warren M. Robbins Library *(some papers, gift of Pascal James Imperato)*
Stanford University Library *(under the title "Manding: focus on an African civilization")*
Syracuse University Libraries
University of Wisconsin—Madison Libraries
Yale University Library

Digital: (limited view, search only)

HathiTrust Digital Library

Microfilm:

Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York)
University of Iowa Libraries
West Virginia University Library

And, other unidentified libraries/institutions in Africa.

An introductory booklet, 'Manding: Focus on an African Civilisation', was published before the Conference. ... An illustrated book of 48 pages, 'Manding Art and Civilisation', accompanied by a catalogue of exhibits, was published on the occasion of the Exhibition at Burlington Gardens. ...

A selection of the papers presented to the Conference is being prepared for publication ... *[not realized]*. In the meantime, complete sets of papers are available for reference in a number of relevant libraries in Africa, Europe and North America.



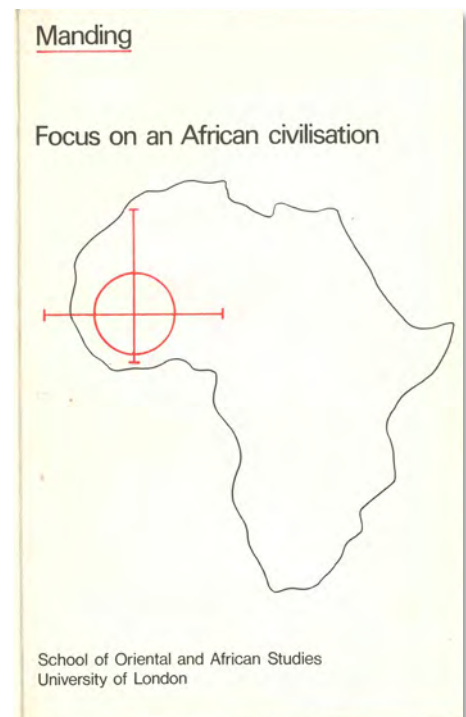
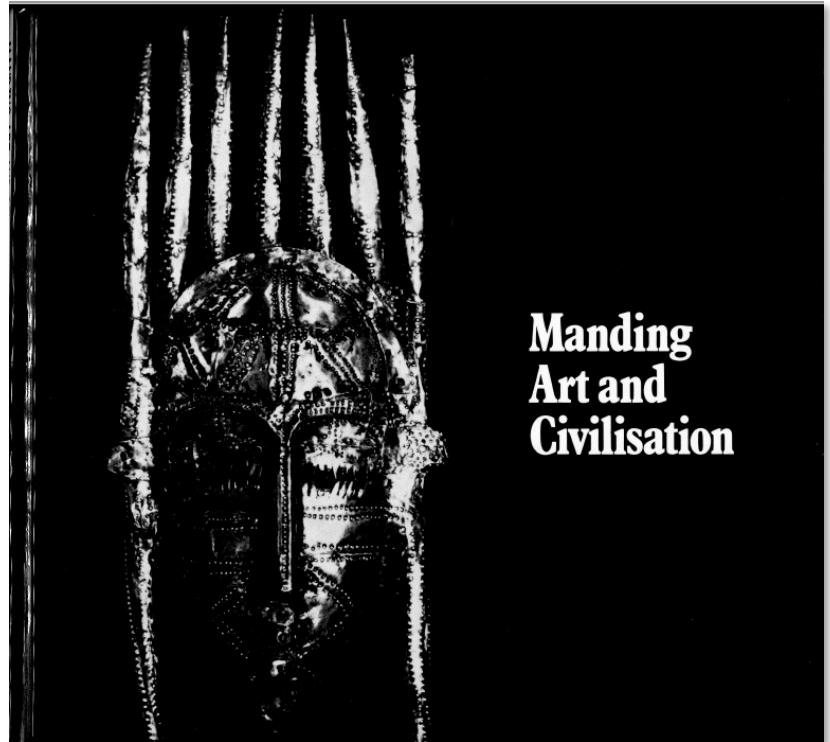
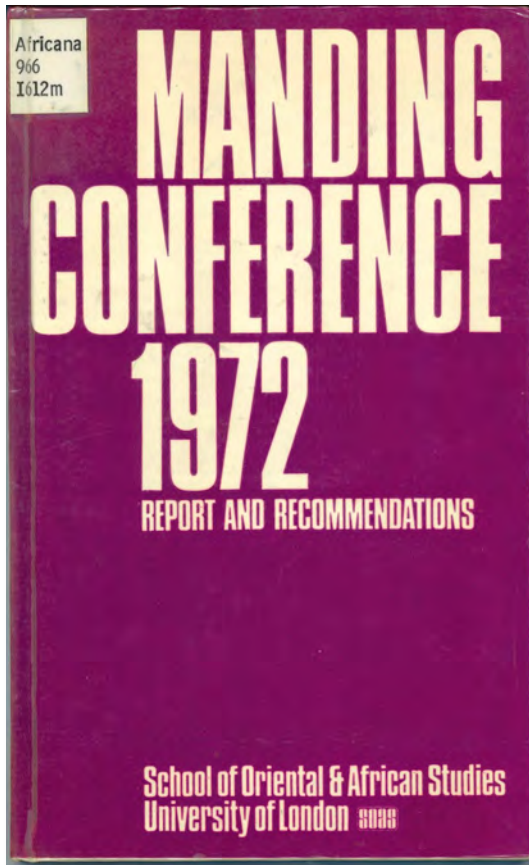
Un livret d'introduction, 'Manding: Focus on an African Civilisation', fut publié avant le Congrès. ... Un livre illustré de 48 pages, 'Manding Art and Civilisation', accompagné d'un catalogue des objets exposés, fut publié à l'occasion de l'Exposition. ...

Une sélection des communications présentées au Congrès est en cours de préparation pour la presse ... *[pas réalisée]*. En attendant, on peut consulter la collection complète des communications du Congrès dans les bibliothèques de plusieurs centres d'études africaines en Afrique, en Europe et en Amérique du Nord.

Manding Conference 1972 : Report and Recommendations (London : Centre for African Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1972), pages 12, 20.



Conference publications



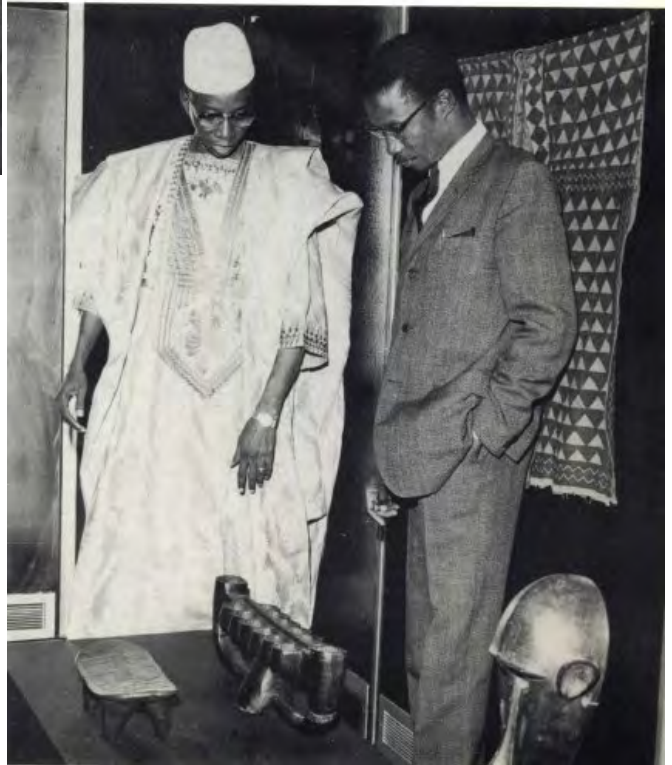
- ◇ *Manding Conference 1972 : report and recommendations* / [David Dalby] (London : Centre for African Studies, SOAS, 1972). In English and French. 39 pages, 12 leaves of plates.
- ◇ *Manding art and civilisation* / edited by Guy Atkins (London : Studio International, 1972). 47 pages. Exhibition catalog; checklist (6 pages) inserted later and also sold separately.
- ◇ *Manding : focus on an African civilisation* / edited by Guy Atkins (London : SOAS, Centre for African Studies, 1972). 33 pages. Thematic booklet.

(Collection of Northwestern University Libraries, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies)



H. E. Sir Dauda Jawara, President of The Gambia, and Lady Jawara are welcomed to the Manding Exhibition by Dr. Guy Atkins. Photo: Central Office of Information.

(From *Manding Conference 1972: report and recommendations*)



At the opening of the Exhibition: from left, above, M. Yaya Bagayoko, Minister of Education, Mali, who formally opened the Exhibition, with M. Bodié Thiam, I.F.A.N., Dakar; below, M. Bokar N'Diaye, Directeur de Cabinet, Ministry of Information, Mali, and Dr. Diango Cissé. Photos: Vanessa Stamford and Central Office of Information.

(From *Manding Conference 1972: report and recommendations*)



Horned mask. Bambara, Mali. Musée des Arts Africains et Océaniens, Paris. A six-pronged *ntòmò* mask. Bambara, San region, Mali. Copper on wood. Léonce-Pierre Guerre collection, Marseilles.

(From *Manding art and civilisation*, p. 39)



Right: Singer Konde Kuyate. Kankan, Guinea.
Photo: Gilbert Rouget.

(From *Manding art and civilisation*, p. 40)

Below: Traditional musical instruments
against a background of photographic panels.
Photo: British Museum.

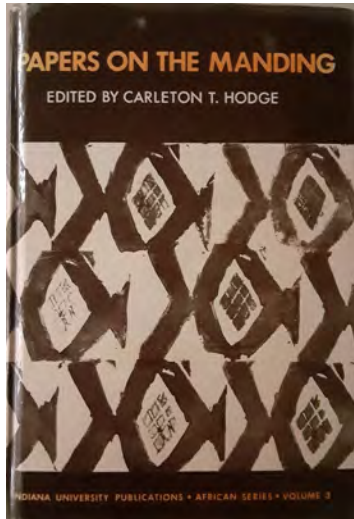
(From *Manding Conference 1972 : report and
recommendations*)





Related publication

Papers on the Manding / Carleton T. Hodge, editor. Bloomington : Indiana University, 1971. New York : Humanities Press (distributor). (Indiana University publications. African series ; v. 3.) 307 pp.



Introduction

The Manding peoples of West Africa have a cultural and linguistic unity which has been insufficiently stressed. In the spring of 1969, under the guidance of Professor George Brooks, The African Seminar of the African Studies Program of Indiana University was devoted to a series of papers on this important group.

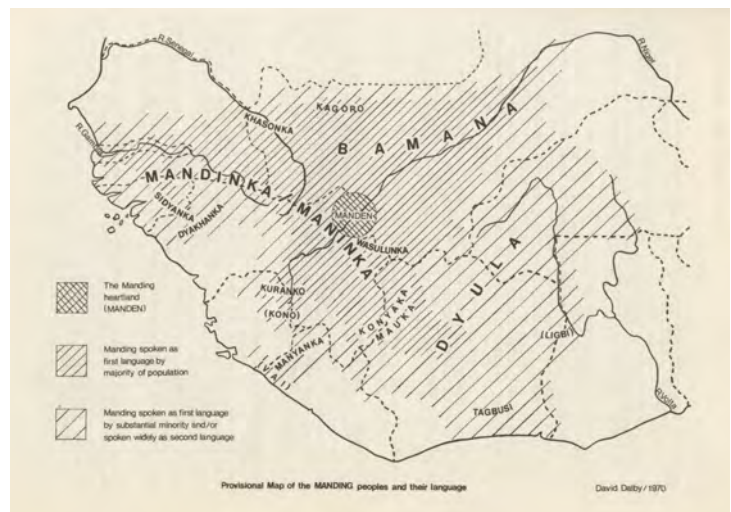
One of the reasons for scheduling this topic was the visit to Indiana University of a specialist in the Manding field, Dr. David Dalby of the School of Oriental and African Studies, as a Visiting Professor of Linguistics in Honor of Hans Wolff.

Nearly all of the seminar lectures are included in this volume, many in revised form. It is hoped that these will serve at least an interim need in the continuing study of these peoples.

J. Gus Liebenow, Director, African Studies Program, Indiana University

- ◇ Introduction : Distribution and nomenclature of the Manding people and their language / David Dalby
- ◇ Oral art in the Mande / Charles S. Bird *
- ◇ The cultural map and time-profile of the Mande speaking peoples / Daniel F. McCall *
- ◇ Mandinka social organization / Nicholas S. Hopkins *
- ◇ Sudanese architecture and the Mande / Labelle Prussin
- ◇ Al-Hajj 'Umar Tall, Samori Ture, and their fore-runners / Bradford Martin
- ◇ The Dyula impact on the peoples of the West Volta region / Robert R. Griffith
- ◇ The French Colonial Service in French West Africa / William B. Cohen
- ◇ Mandingo states in nineteenth century Gambia / Charlotte A. Quinn *
- ◇ The role of the Mandinka in the Islamization of the Casamance, 1850-1901 / Frances Anne Leary *
- ◇ Political structure and process among the Gambia Mandinka : the village parapolitical system / Peter M. Weil *
- ◇ The Dioula in the Ivory Coast / Barbara Lewis *

* participant in SOAS conference, 1972



Provisional map of the Manding peoples and their language, by David Dalby. (*Papers on the Manding*, 1971, p. 9)

David Dalby's Hans Wolff memorial lecture, ***Black through White : Patterns of Communication*** (Bloomington : African Studies Program, Indiana University, 1970; ii, 28 pages) discusses Black versions of Portuguese, Dutch and French languages in trade/slavery contexts, Black American English, and African influences on American English — e.g., *uh-huh* (yes), *uh-uh* (no). "There is ... evidence to suggest that the development of O.K. may have owed something to an earlier Black English—and ultimately African—form, with parallels in the Caribbean and in a number of West African languages, including both Wolof and Mandingo." (p. 23)



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was the work of many. I want first to again thank all of those who contributed their valuable memories, artifacts, and perspectives — particularly Robert Launay, Pascal James Imperato, Roderic Knight, Peter Weil, and Lucy Durán. Alison Dalby's support in locating relevant material from her father's papers greatly enriched the outcome, and she valued the experience as a way to honor his legacy. Winifred Dalby's accounts are another window into the conference's organization. Maria Grosz-Ngaté's suggestions helped to improve the content. The concept began with my meeting with the late Lansiné Kaba; and his wife Fanta Traoré's recent input has made it possible to add a couple of new final touches.

The MANSÁ community's response to the original special feature on the 1972 SOAS conference in the 2022 newsletter was enthusiastic. MANSÁ President Sten Hagberg had the idea to produce a published version of this feature, and to contribute a preface for it. At first I intended to reproduce a simple copy of the original; but soon I realized that there was opportunity and room for improvement. And I have since found some new materials to add.

My library colleagues at Northwestern, especially my teammates in Metadata Services, have tolerated my year-long obsession with (finally) getting this done. Liz Hamilton, Copyright Librarian, offered advice and referred me to Dino Robinson, Production Manager at Northwestern University Press, who fielded my novice questions about getting things published, and offered an idea for cover design that I followed up on. Anne Egger, Director of Publications for Northwestern's Global Marketing and Communications, provided vital guidance on printing production and costs.

Esmeralda Kale, George and Mary LeCron Foster Curator, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, gave this project her blessing and support, and the Herskovits Library itself yielded the conference proceedings as well as related publications. Chris Abani, Director of Northwestern's Program of African Studies (PAS), gave sponsoring support for this publication. Other PAS staff, including Associate Director Meagan Keefe, offered encouragement and advice.

Marcia Tiede, Editor

REMERCIEMENTS

Ce projet a été l'œuvre de plusieurs personnes. Je tiens tout d'abord à remercier à nouveau tous ceux qui ont apporté leurs précieux souvenirs, artefacts et perspectives — en particulier Robert Launay, Pascal James Imperato, Roderic Knight, Peter Weil et Lucy Durán. Le soutien d'Alison Dalby dans la recherche d'éléments pertinents dans les papiers de son père a vivement enrichi le résultat, et elle a apprécié l'expérience comme un moyen d'honorer son héritage. Les récits de Winifred Dalby sont une autre fenêtre sur l'organisation de la conférence. Les suggestions de Maria Grosz-Ngaté ont contribué à améliorer le contenu. Le concept est né de ma rencontre avec feu Lansiné Kaba ; et le récent apport de son épouse Fanta Traoré a permis d'ajouter quelques nouvelles touches finales.

La réponse de la communauté MANSÁ au dossier spécial original sur le Congrès SOAS de 1972 au bulletin de 2022 a été enthousiaste. Le président de MANSÁ, Sten Hagberg, a eu l'idée de produire une version publiée de ce dossier, et d'en rédiger une préface. Au début, j'avais l'intention de reproduire une copie simple de l'original; mais j'ai vite réalisé qu'il y avait des opportunités et des possibilités d'amélioration. Et depuis, j'ai trouvé de nouveaux matériaux à ajouter.

Mes collègues de la bibliothèque à Northwestern, en particulier mes collègues de travail à Metadata Services, ont toléré mon obsession d'un an à vouloir (enfin) y parvenir. Liz Hamilton, bibliothécaire du droit d'auteur, a offert des conseils et m'a orienté vers Dino Robinson, directeur de production chez Northwestern University Press, qui a répondu à mes questions de novice sur la publication des choses et m'a proposé une idée de conception de couverture que j'ai suivie. Anne Egger, directrice des publications pour Global Marketing and Communications à Northwestern, m'a fourni des conseils essentiels sur la production et coûts d'impression.

Esmeralda Kale, Conservatrice George et Mary LeCron Foster, Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, a donné sa benediction et son soutien à ce projet, et la Bibliothèque Herskovits elle-même a fourni les actes du Congrès ainsi que des publications connexes. Chris Abani, directeur du Program of African Studies (PAS) de Northwestern, a apporté un soutien financier pour cette publication. D'autres membres du personnel du PAS, dont la directrice associée Meagan Keefe, ont offert des encouragements et des conseils.



The Mandé Studies Association (MANSNA) was founded in 1986 during a meeting of the African Studies Association (ASA) in Madison, Wisconsin. The Mandé term *mansa* (king, ruler) was adopted as an appropriate acronym. MANSNA promotes research, both within and outside Africa, in all fields and academic disciplines, relevant to the Mandé regions, languages and peoples of West Africa, their neighbors and diaspora around the world, as well as nation-states, other institutions, and historical and contemporary dynamics that shape the existence of these peoples, all of which are integral parts of Mandé Studies.

In 1993, MANSNA convened the “Second” International Conference on Mandé Studies in Bamako, Mali, thus claiming the legacy of the 1972 International Conference on Manding Studies held in London. Since then MANSNA has organized its conferences in Leiden (1995), Serekunda (1998), Leiden (2002), Conakry and Kankan (2005), Lisbon (2008), Bamako (2011), Bobo-Dioulasso (2014), Grand-Bassam (2017), and Uppsala (held virtually online in 2021). The next conference is scheduled for Bamako, hosted by the Institut des Sciences Humaines, in late June 2024.

MANSNA’s membership is spread generally across the U.S./ North America, West Africa, and Europe. MANSNA has developed ties with several institutes in West Africa, and now has focal points in Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Senegal, and a coordinator for West Africa (an officer position).

MANSNA’s journal, *Mandé Studies*, is published annually by Indiana University Press, and is now available electronically on Project MUSE. The journal is distributed to members and is also available directly from the Press. A member newsletter, *MANSNA Kibaru*, is also issued on an annual basis. More information, including how to become a member, is available on the MANSNA website, www.mandestudies.org.

Join / Adhérez à MANSNA !

L’Association des Études Mandé (MANSNA) a été fondée en 1986 lors d’une réunion de African Studies Association (ASA) à Madison, Wisconsin. Le terme mandé de *mansa* (roi, souverain) a été adopté comme acronyme approprié. MANSNA promeut la recherche, tant à l’intérieur qu’à l’extérieur de l’Afrique, dans tous les domaines et disciplines académiques, pertinents pour les régions mandé, les langues et les peuples d’Afrique de l’Ouest, leurs voisins et la diaspora à travers le monde, ainsi que les États-nations, d’autres institutions, et les dynamiques historiques et contemporaines qui façonnent l’existence de ces peuples, qui font toutes partie intégrante des études mandé.

En 1993, MANSNA a convoqué le « Deuxième » Congrès international des études mandé à Bamako, Mali, revendiquant ainsi l’héritage du Congrès international d’études Manding de 1972 tenu à Londres. Depuis, MANSNA a organisé ses colloques à Leiden (1995), Serekunda (1998), Leiden (2002), Conakry et Kankan (2005), Lisbonne (2008), Bamako (2011), Bobo-Dioulasso (2014), Grand-Bassam (2017), et Uppsala (tenu virtuellement en ligne en 2021). Le prochain colloque est prévu à Bamako, accueilli par l’Institut des Sciences Humaines, fin juin 2024.

Les membres de MANSNA sont généralement répartis aux États-Unis/Amérique du Nord, en Afrique de l’Ouest, et en l’Europe. MANSNA a développé des liens avec plusieurs instituts en Afrique de l’Ouest et compte désormais des points focaux en Côte d’Ivoire, au Mali, au Burkina Faso, en Guinée et au Sénégal, ainsi qu’un coordinateur pour l’Afrique de l’Ouest (une poste d’officier).

La revue de MANSNA, *Mandé Studies*, est publiée chaque année par Indiana University Press, et elle est désormais disponible sous forme électronique sur Project MUSE. La revue est distribuée aux membres et est aussi disponible directement auprès de la presse. Un bulletin d’information pour les membres, *MANSNA Kibaru*, est également émis sur une base annuelle. Plus d’informations, y compris comment devenir un membre, sont disponibles sur le site Web de MANSNA, www.mandestudies.org.

MANDING CIVILISATION has its roots in the mediaeval Empire of Mali, which dominated West Africa for three hundred years. In the fourteenth century, the power of the Manding Emperor stretched for a thousand miles, from beyond Timbuktu to the Atlantic, and his reputation reached as far as Europe.

The wealth of the Mali Empire was founded on gold, and the traditions of its elaborate civilisation are preserved in many West African countries. Throughout the Manding area to day, women are noted for their gold jewelry and elaborate gowns.

The musical heritage of the Manding, and the epic traditions of their Empire, are maintained by a caste of professional bards. Their instruments include the delicately-tuned African xylophone and the *kora*, a 21-stringed harp-lute. Specialised craftsmen are responsible for metalwork, leatherwork, pottery, weaving and dyeing. The Bambara, most northerly of the Manding peoples, possess one of the richest traditions of wood-sculpture in Africa.

Modern political frontiers in Africa have obscured the cultural unity of the Manding world, and Manding civilisation—despite its geographical closeness to Europe—is less well known in the West than the cultures of many more distant peoples. The present programme in London is designed to rectify this, and to stimulate the production of educational materials on all aspects of Manding history and culture.

This summer's programme, initiated by the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London, includes a public Exhibition of Manding art, a series of public lectures on the Manding, recitals of Manding music and singing, the screening of West African films, and a major academic Conference on Manding studies, to be presided over by the poet Léopold Sédar Senghor, President of the Republic of Senegal.

Enquiries about the programme, including the availability of educational materials, should be addressed to :

**Centre for African Studies,
School of Oriental and African Studies,
Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HP.**

Brochure of public events related to the Manding Conference and exhibition—
detail, from photocopy

(courtesy of Pascal James Imperato)

The Mande Studies Association (MANSA) looks back fifty years later at its 'ancestor' event, the International Conference on Manding Studies, held at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, June 30th – July 3rd, 1972. Gathered here are recollections from participants (including founding MANSA members, historian Lansiné Kaba and anthropologist Robert Launay), excerpts from the travel journal of the organizer David Dalby, linguist at SOAS, and the opening address by Senegalese president Léopold Sédar Senghor, as well as photographs and other memorabilia from the conference. Several accounts about Alex Haley, who was a public speaker in conjunction with the conference, and his "Roots" project are included. Rounding out the commemoration is the celebration of "Fifty Years of Mande Studies at SOAS" organized by ethnomusicologist Lucy Durán, devoted to the history of the kora at SOAS, which concluded with a concert by master kora musician Ballaké Sissoko.

L'Association des Études Mande (MANSA) revient cinquante ans plus tard sur son événement « ancêtre », le Congrès international d'études Manding, tenu à l'École des études orientales et africaines (SOAS), Université de Londres, le 30 juin – 3 juillet 1972. Sont réunis ici des souvenirs des participants (y compris membres fondateurs de MANSA, l'historien Lansiné Kaba et l'anthropologue Robert Launay), des extraits du journal de voyage de l'organisateur David Dalby, linguiste à SOAS, et le discours d'ouverture du président sénégalais Léopold Sédar Senghor, ainsi que des photographies et autres souvenirs du colloque. Plusieurs récits sur Alex Haley, qui était conférencier lors du colloque, et sur son projet « Roots » sont inclus. Pour compléter la commémoration, il y a la célébration des « Cinquante ans d'études Mandé à SOAS » organisée par l'ethnomusicologue Lucy Durán, consacrée à l'histoire de la kora à SOAS, qui s'est terminée par un concert du maître de la kora Ballaké Sissoko.



© 2023 The Mande Studies Association

Printed for the Mande Studies Association (MANSA) by
The Graphic Arts Studio, Inc., Barrington, Illinois
November 2023

ISBN 979-8-218-32417-9

