

african studies association of the uk

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Upcoming Africanist conferences & events

To inform the editors of the ASAUK newsletter and website about upcoming conferences and workshops, please contact Simon Heap at editor@asauk.net.

European Awareness of Sustainability in Africa: Issues of Pastoralism, Leuphana University, Lüneburg, Germany, 24-25 October 2008

The Leuphana University Lüneburg is organizing, in collaboration with the French NGO ACTED and with the support of the European Commission, an international interdisciplinary conference which forms part of the Europe-wide Karamoja campaign. In terms of Karamoja, the specific region of focus is North-Eastern Uganda, bordering Kenya and Sudan with Ethiopia nearby. The conference has two central themes of sustainable development in arid and semi-arid regions of Africa and pastoralism and sustainability. The first theme covers ecology, desertification and climate change; syndromes of unsustainable development; systems analysis of arid and semi-arid regions; the Sahel Syndrome; health and food security in arid and semi-arid regions; issues of formal and alternative education; future prospects for arid and semi-arid regions; the politics, politics and policies of sustainable development; and the Millennium Development Goals and (semi-)arid, pastoral regions. The second theme highlights such topics as past and present forms of pastoralism, social structures (e.g. generation sets); pastoralism and gender, education or agricultural history, myths and controversies on pastoralism; the "tragedy of the commons", desertification and pastoralism; viewpoints of pastoralists and viewpoints on pastoralism; clash of pastoralism vs. agriculture; resource competition; resource conservation, biodiversity and pastoralism; pastoralism and modernity; climate change and pastoralism; cattle raids in the horn of Africa; and pastoralism in East Africa, in Karamoja and in Pokot. The conference languages will be English and German. 400-word abstracts by 15 September 2008 to: karamoja.conference@gmail.com

China and Africa, Fourth International Keffi Conference, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria, 29-31 October 2008

The Department of History, Nasarawa State University, in collaboration with The Global Africa Foundation of America, seeks papers on the following themes: theoretical, conceptual and methodological Issues; intersection of Africa and Chinese indigenous science; China and Africa from the late 19th century to the present; China and Africa in the Decolonization Era, or Cold War Era, or Globalization Era; issues in Chinese Engagements in Africa; China, investment and the environment in Africa; comparative assessment of China and the West in Africa; African initiatives and responses to the Chinese and Western presence in Africa; African and/or non-African media and the constructions of the Chinese in Africa; specific Chinese projects on the continent and their effects; the implications of Chinese quest for raw materials in Africa; China and Africa's conflict in perspective; and China in Africa: Friend or Foe? 250-word abstracts by 30 June 2008 to Dr Olayemi Akinwumi: conferenceoctober@yahoo.com

African Athena: Black Athena 20 years on, University of Warwick, 6-8 November 2008

African Athena was Bernal's original title for *Black Athena*, his "infamous" work that has confronted the modern academy with some of the most challenging questions it has faced over the last twenty years. This conference seeks neither to demonise nor lionize Bernal's book, but to open dialogue on the issues it has posed: can a myth of Afrocentrism ever be a useful narrative in contemporary culture? How do Africanising and classicising cultures interface and interpenetrate in the arts and lives of Africans, Europeans, West Indian and Americans? Does Black Athena offer new possibilities for comparison between African and Jewish diasporas, cultures and struggles? How do we deal with the difficult collusion of essentialist and poststructuralist discourses in "postcolonial" thought? Scholars of African Studies, Black British Studies, African American Studies, of South Asia, of the Middle East, of classicists, philologists, anthropologists, sociologists, and any intellectual beyond these borders are welcome to participate. Confirmed keynote speakers include Martin Bernal, Paul Gilroy, Stephen Howe, Valentin Y. Mudimbe and Robert J.C. Young. Abstracts up to 500 words by 31 March 2008 to Dr Daniel Orrells: [D.Orrells\(at\)warwick.ac.uk](mailto:D.Orrells(at)warwick.ac.uk)

Keynote Speakers: Martin Bernal, Paul Gilroy, Shelley Haley, Stephen Howe, Partha Mitter, Valentin Mudimbe, Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan, Patrice Rankine and Robert J. C. Young.

To register click [here](#)

Africa's Response: Face the Facts, 15th International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA), Dakar, Senegal, 3-7 December 2008

For more than two decades, the African continent has participated in the fight against AIDS and provided potential solutions to the numerous challenges posed by this epidemic. However, even as the fight continues, it is important to stop and evaluate these many initiatives, in order to recognize their contributions, successes and ambitions, as well as to acknowledge their weaknesses and shortfalls. It is time to take stock of political commitments, unfulfilled promises and actions and practices employed in the fight against HIV and AIDS. At the conference, International and African experts will evaluate the current state of the HIV and STI epidemics with regard to science, communities and leadership. In addition, the conference will broach topics concerning other, equally important infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria and hepatitis. Abstracts in English or French by 15 May 2008 via: http://www.icasadakar2008.org/en/index_7.php

Historical Constructions of 'Race' and Social Hierarchy in Muslim West and North Africa, Dakar, Senegal, 10-12 December 2008

The various systems of social hierarchy that have existed historically in Muslim West and North Africa have generated a distinct set of ideological justifications for inequality. The meanings ascribed to positions of social inferiority, including that of slaves, or to wider issues of difference more broadly, appear at times to be "racial" in nature. Ideas of social hierarchy and "racial" difference were often developed within a larger Muslim semantic framework. The region's history of European colonial conquest has also shaped these concepts.

In order to generate discussion of these understudied topics, the Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa (ISITA) at Northwestern University (USA), the Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on the Global Migrations of African Peoples, York University (Canada), and Le Pôle d'Excellence Régional sur les Esclavages et les Traités – Université Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD) de Dakar (Senegal) invite papers focusing on a specific historical and geographic context and use specific and concrete primary sources to explore the relationship between at least two of the following three themes: "race" (notions and practices that invoke innate human difference in some way); social hierarchy (slavery, servility, dependence, clientage, "caste"); and religion (Islam). Possible topics include the ways in which West and North Africans have historically defined social inferiority (servility, "caste", slavery) in terms of "racial" difference; the historical meanings of such colour-coded binary terms in local languages such as *bidan/sudan*, *wodeebe/baleebe*, or *korey/bibi*; Muslim scholarly discourse about racial or ethnic difference; Muslim scholarly discourse about slavery and/or emancipation; the religious experiences of Muslim slaves; and the racial or ethnic identities of slaves and former slaves and/or masters and former masters. Papers should be based on original research focused on specific and concrete primary sources from the region. These sources may be oral or written; they may be in African (including Arabic) or European languages. Selected participants will be asked to provide both papers (in French or English) and selected primary source material (with translation or synopsis in French or English), so that they can be circulated to all participants before the workshop. Abstracts up one page by 31 July 2008 to Bruce Hall: ouagadoo@yahoo.com

Science, Technology and the Environment in Africa, The University of Texas at Austin, USA, 28-30 March 2009

In the past few centuries, many foreigners have brought to the continent their notions of science and technology to harness both the African environment and often also its people. How have these schemes changed the landscape of Africa? How have locals resisted the imposition of these changes? While local knowledge has often been derided as the antithesis of science and technology, how has Africans' knowledge of their land changed over time, and how has it changed their environments?

Scholars of Africa must frame the reality and rhetoric of the current environmental crisis within the larger historical context of how Africa has often mistakenly been seen by outsiders as both an Eden and a wasteland. Science and technology have been brought to bear in both of these extremes as a way of engineering abundance and avoiding disaster, to varying success. This conference aims to consider these events and topics within an historical, global and local context. The organisers are also interested in papers examining citizen reaction and perception to these topics through the lens of popular culture, literature, art, and music. As global climate change continues to gain worldwide attention and concern, the role of Africa and the role of the world in Africa will only become an increasingly timely topic for investigation. Potential topics include: the role of science and technology in development schemes; environmental impact of resource conflict; pre-colonial environment, science and technology; environmental devastation from wars; environmental impact of refugees and displaced populations; urban environmental problems such as sanitation and slums; the history of science, health and disease in Africa; the environment and health; and the role of foreign investment and aid. 250-word abstracts by 1 November 2008 to Toyin Falola: toyin.falola@mail.utexas and Emily

Brownell: ebrownell@mail.utexas.edu

Africa and Blackness in World Literature and Visual Arts, African Literature Association 35th Annual Conference, University of Vermont, USA, 15-19 April 2009

The past two ALA conferences focused on various ways African and African Diaspora literature has functioned as a cultural catalyst that nurtures black people's subjectivity in the age of globalization. As a conclusion to the series, this conference will focus on the ways creative writers and artists from other cultural traditions imagined Africa and blackness in the past as well as the extent to which that imagining has evolved and can be said to foster inter-subjective dialogue in the age of globalization. The conference organizers would welcome papers on the following themes: Africa and Blackness in classical, modern or contemporary literature and visual arts; Africa in African immigrant writers' literature and visual arts; Africa in African-American and African-Caribbean literature and visual arts; Black artists and reconstitution of Black people's subjectivity; cosmopolitanism in African and African diaspora literature; African and African diaspora literary criticism and global cultural dynamisms; postcolonialism and postcoloniality in relation to Africa and Blackness; and approaches to teaching African and African diaspora literature. Plenary speakers include Wole Soyinka, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Maryse Conde, Michael Echeruo, V.Y. Mudimbe and Zakes Mda. Abstracts by 30 October 2008 to: ALA.conference@uvm.edu

Creating Knowledge in Sub-Saharan Africa: Players, Sites and Uses over Time, Université Paris 7-Diderot, Paris, France, 13-15 May 2009

Using as a starting point a certain number of perspectives opened up by Christian Jacob in *Les Lieux de savoirs* (2007), this conference would like to consider the construction, forms of appropriation, handling and uses of knowledge in Africa over the long term. The organisers are interested in studying the incorporation and the context setting by players of a corpus of knowledge and specific practices in varying historical, political, social, and cultural contexts. The notion of knowledge is not limited to the written word, the world of the learned and of scientists. It is considered here in a much broader scope integrating skills, which determine the modes of belonging to a community as soon as these skills constitute a cultural, political and social capital perceived and transmitted as such.

The conference seeks to examine how Africans incorporate and mobilize, simultaneously and alternatively, different levels of knowledge (intellectual, ritual, corporal) towards specific ends. The focus will be on the following three themes. First, a social approach of knowledge producers. Taking into account the diversity of knowledge (trade, agricultural, religious, craft), papers should identify different producers and/or mediators with an analysis of the way in which they are integrated or not into networks or communities in their broadest definition (families, circles, schools, universities, administrations, companies, diasporas). Without excluding the learned, papers should privilege less visible players: migrants, minorities, craftspeople, delinquents, shop keepers, traditional practitioners, musicians and warriors. A series of papers could deal with the way in which individual "knowledge" is legitimized, constructed and perpetuated. Second, spatialization, bases and modes of circulation of knowledge: places that encourage the elaboration and transmission of knowledge in Africa: schools, but also local radios, urban and village social spaces, political or festive meeting grounds. Thought will be given to the way historical transformations have pushed aside previously central place of knowledge and allowed others to emerge. Different levels and scales must also be taken into account: in what measure does locally produced knowledge attain or not a "universal" or "global" dimension? Thought may also be given to the transmission, the circulation and axes of diffusion as well as how knowledge is incorporated. Third, the uses and functions of knowledge. By questioning the status, the legitimacy and the opportunities that the acquisition and mastery of knowledge offers to individuals, to groups, to organizations or States, we will question how these knowledge economies are created. We will also question notions of "norms" and "official" knowledge, their variability, the forms of resistance or, on the contrary, of adhesion of social actors. The analysis of uses and functions of knowledge will allow reflection on the production and manipulation of social, political, geographical or gender identities and to return to the ancient yet central question of the links between knowledge and power through a multi-level exploration.

This conference is open to all approaches and all periods. Papers must be in either French or English. Abstracts up to 2,500 characters, and accompanied by a short biography, by 30 August 2008 to: colloque-savoirs-afrique.sedet@univ-paris-diderot.fr

Dambudzo Marechera: A Celebration, University of Oxford, 15-17 May 2009

Aimed to recuperate the memory of this important African modernist and former Oxford student, this inter-disciplinary symposium will analyze Marechera's legacy and the general situation in black southern African writing today. In encouraging both academic and creative approaches to Marechera's writing, the symposium seeks to draw a wide variety of responses to an author widely regarded as one of the most innovative African writers of the 20th century. Bringing together renowned international scholars, writers, and artists, it will emphasize transnational cultural interaction, creative freedom and free movement across national borders, of which Marechera was an embodiment, analyzing the meaning of 'African literature' in the 21st century.

Confirmed speakers include Ben Okri, Helon Habila, Caryl Phillips, Flora Veit-Wild, and James Currey. More information at: www.marecheracelebration.org. 250 word abstracts by 15 January 2009 to: dobrota.pucherova@trinity.ox.ac.uk

Tales of Slavery: Narratives of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Enslavement in Africa, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada, 20-23 May 2009

Most of the sources used to write the history of slavery in Africa are European, but the memories of the external and internal slave trade remain and are embedded in African ritual, song, and memory. Proposals are sought which deal with the exploration of new research methodologies and the re-examination of old ones. Our major objective is to make available to students and scholars African sources on slavery, enslavement, the slave trade and to improve our understanding of these documents. The conference goal is to seek out and explore newer methodologies, to find more African sources, and if possible, to look for the voices of the slaves themselves. It also wants to make these sources more widely available.

This conference follows *Finding the African Voice: Narratives of Slavery and Enslavement*, held at Bellagio in September 2007. It explored a wide range of different kinds of sources: oral traditions, life histories recorded by missionaries, court documents from both colonial and Islamic courts, petitions to colonial authorities, proverbs, folk-lore, music, and personal correspondence. Because of space limitations at Bellagio, it was limited to West and Northwest Africa and to the historic past. The organisers are now interested in opening up a wider range of questions, for example, the impact of the slave experience on witchcraft belief and on contemporary representation of political power, personal and social memories relating to trajectories of emancipation/resubordination in colonial and postcolonial times, and narratives of contemporary enslavement. They are also interested in a fuller exploration of music, dance, proverbs and folklore and would like to collect as many life histories as possible from the point of view of descendants of slaves and of former masters and slave-dealers. Organisers hope to have funds available to bring scholars from Africa, including graduate students working on questions of slavery. 250-word abstracts by 30 September 2008 to slavery.tales@utoronto.ca

Respacing Africa: AEGIS Third European Conference on African Studies (ECAS 3), Institute of African Studies, Leipzig, Germany, 4-7 June 2009

The members of the Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies (AEGIS) are organizing a biannual European Conference on African Studies. AEGIS was founded in 1991 as a network of European Centres of African Studies. It is a network of university and non-university African Studies centres based in Europe. It aims to create synergies between experts and institutions. With primary emphasis on Social Sciences and Humanities, AEGIS' main goal is to improve understanding about contemporary African societies. AEGIS current membership is Barcelona, Basel, Bayreuth, Bordeaux, Copenhagen, Edinburgh, Gothenburg, Hamburg, Leiden, Leipzig, Lisbon, London, Mainz, Naples, Oxford, Paris, Porto, Trondheim and Uppsala.

The conference is open to all disciplines and methodological approaches representing the Social Sciences and Humanities. However, at the same time the Steering Committee strongly encourages panel proposals which look into the re-scaling and re-shaping of Africa through the various references which are being – or have been – made to the spatial dimensions of human action (social, symbolic, imagined or otherwise). This includes processes of globalisation, regionalisation, transnationalisation and re-nationalisation – at all levels and across time.

The call for panels for this conference is now closed and a list of the approved panels and a short description can be found on the [ECAS website](http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~ecas2009/). The organisers now invite paper proposals for presentation on these panels. Abstracts up to 400 words by 31 December 2008 via <http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~ecas2009/>

To be able to submit you have to register as an official website user. After confirmation of your registration you can upload a <.doc> or <.pdf> file to the panel you would like to participate in. Please [read instructions](#) for uploading first. Paper proposals which do not fit into one of the approved panels will not be considered.

For questions concerning a proposed paper, please contact the panel organiser directly. For general questions concerning paper proposals, please contact the Organising Committee of ECAS 3 at: conference@aegis-eu.org

Each panel session will last two hours and will accommodate four papers. If a panel attracts more than four sound and relevant paper proposals, the panel convenor may consider organising additional sessions and, in this case, consult with the Organising Committee accordingly.

Hierarchy and Power in the History of Civilizations: Fifth International Conference, Moscow, Russia, 16-19 June 2009

Organized by the Center for Civilizational and Regional Studies of the Institute for African Studies under the Russian Academy of Sciences in co-operation with the School of History, Political Science and Law of the Russian State University for the Humanities, the conference is to discuss the following issues: hierarchical and flat structures in the history of cultures and civilizations; civilizational and evolutionary models of socio-political development; historical and ethno-cultural variability of the forms of socio-political organization; from simple societies to the world-system: pathways and forms of political integration; socio-political and cultural-mental factors of social transformations; cultural and socio-biological foundations of dominance in human societies; ideology and legitimation of power in different civilizational contexts; cultural models of power's perception in different civilizations; violence and non-violence in the history of political institutions; access to information as a means of political manipulation and mobilization; power, society, and culture in the era of globalization; and the study of "hierarchy and power": schools, trends, and methods. The working languages of the Conference are Russian and English. Abstracts up to 500 words for papers or panels (of three papers) by 15 February 2008 to Dr Oleg I. Kavykin: conf2009@conf2009.ru

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