THE NEXT STEP FOR A JOURNAL OF METHOD

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I

For over thirty years, *History in Africa: A Journal of Method* has been at the forefront of publishing scholarship on textual analysis and criticism of African historical sources, historiographical essays on the literature concerning Africa's past, bibliographical essays on relevant historical topics, reflections on the role of theory in historical investigation, and archive reports. The new editorial team will maintain this profile with an emphasis on theory and method, while aiming to enhance the journal by focusing on issues that will expand its appeal beyond its current audience. We seek to broaden the framing of methodological and historiographical topics to discuss new information technologies and pedagogical issues. The new editors work with an inclusive definition of "History" and invite scholars, no matter what discipline, to join the discussion and analysis of the

History in Africa 37 (2010), 1–5

https://doi.org/10.1353/hia.2010.0025 Published online by Cambridge University Press

past. In the multi-polar world of the twenty-first century, the new editors embrace the "in" in the title and are committed to publishing an increased number of articles from scholars on the continent. We also operate with a pluriform definition of "Africa" that includes the worlds of the diaspora and recognizes regional variations in the continent. The new editors wish to bring new perspectives associated with Africa's twenty-first century renaissance into the journal. Finally, the new editors will remain faithful to the focus of David Henige, the founding and long-serving editor of *History in Africa*, on the critical analysis of both the epistemological bases of historical inquiry and the construction of arguments about the past.[1]

History in Africa is the ideal venue to discuss critical issues about history and heritage. Historians long have engaged methodological, epistemological, and interpretive issues, as well as the often "vulnerable" nature of African historical sources (such as the deterioration of manuscripts, the destruction of archives in conflict zones, and the loss of recorded interviews to decay, to name just three). The twenty-first century brings new opportunities and challenges, especially the introduction of new technologies and media and their roles in the collection, preservation, and distribution of historical sources. Other issues in an increasingly globalized world are copyrights, intellectual property rights (of "informants" and "assistants"), author's rights and human subjects regulations, with each discipline and national tradition having distinctive concerns. The editorial team recognizes that its readers and contributors are scholars addressing these issues in sophisticated ways, and we hope that *History in Africa* becomes *the platform* for discussions of all these critical issues and bridge academic, linguistic and other divides separating scholars working on these topics throughout the world. In our view, *History in Africa* is a global journal, with the mission to produce, *thanks to* its focus on Africa, knowledge for *all* historians as well as all those who teach about Africa.

[1]See, for instance, David Henige's *Historical Method and Argument* (Madison WI, 2005), but also by the same author, "'It is a job I would like'," *History in Africa* 36 (2009), 1-2.; "In at Many Births," *History in Africa* 36 (2009), 6-8.

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II

Continuity and change are essential to successful transitions. All the current members of the editorial board have enthusiastically replied to our request to continue their membership.[2] Their continued involvement affirms the new editors' commitment to the level of quality and academic rigor that *History in Africa* always has been proud to offer to its readers. We are deeply honored that David Henige has accepted a position on the Editorial Board.

In order to represent the present-day field of studies, we enlarged the Editorial Board with members who will serve a five year term. We are most happy that the following scholars accepted a position in the editorial board:

Babacar Fall (Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar)
Shamil Jeppie (University of Cape Town)
Irene Odotei (University of Ghana, Legon)
Ayodeji Olukoju (University of Lagos)

As editors we welcome the Editoral Board members' active encouragement of others, especially younger scholars, to submit papers for possible publication in *History in Africa*. We also hope that the members of the Editorial Board, as well of other senior scholars in the field of African history, will contribute articles in which they elaborate on the way the discipline was institutionally and intellectually formed, and what this means for the research agendas of future generations of researchers of history in Africa.

III

The new editors of *History in Africa* are adding a blind, peer-review process to the evaluation of submissions. The members of the Editorial Board have played a role in the process and will continue to be

[2]Allen Roberts previously had informed David Henige of his wish to withdraw from the Editoral Board.

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consulted, from time to time, and also will be asked to be peer-reviewers. We believe that the move to blind, peer-review will augment the reputation of the journal and provide more broadly-based feedback to prospective contributors. This process would not only meet the present-day standards for academic publishing, but also make *History in Africa* more enticing to scholars needing peer-reviewed publications for tenure, promotion, and job application.[3] A peer review system is also necessary to cover geographically a large(r) part of Africa.

IV

The new editorial team will be pro-active in recruiting future contributors, by organizing panels at African studies conferences throughout the world and at major conferences of historians' professional organizations. These panels may produce contributions to the journal, but definitely will create a fertile ground for academic reception of the journal's mission in general, and its themes in particular. Of course, we are also open to suggestions from readers who may alert us to panels and research groups dealing with methodological issues in the study of the history of Africa and the people who lived a live "with" Africa.

History in Africa's next issue will be the product of this pro-active search: it will deal with the scholarly work of David Henige, the founder of this journal. David Henige has inspired many scholars all over the world, not only the "usual suspects" in his own network. We invite these scholars to submit their contributions. These contributions must, in line with the journal's mission, discuss methodological dimensions of David Henige's work, with a special attention for

[3]*History In Africa* is one of two official journals of the African Studies Association (the other one is the 'bigger' *African Studies Review*). In addition to the printed version, *History in Africa* is also available through Project Muse, and included in the JStor collection. *History in Africa* is indexed in AICP, ASD, AmH&L, ArtHuCl, BibLing, CCA, CurCont, DIP, HistAb, IBSS, IIBP and elsewhere, so its contents are widely available within and outside the field of Africa scholars. This well-established profile will be enhanced by our move to full peer-review of articles.

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issues of literacy, a central theme in Henige's work to which he made contributions that have acquired the status of a "classic."[4] These contributions will be published in *History in Africa* 38 (2011), together with a selection from the papers presented at a double-panel at the 2010 Annual Conference of the African Studies Association, titled "Literacy and historical analysis revisited – Essays in honor of David Henige."

Please note that, in order to be published in *History in Africa* 38 (2011) submissions must have been received before **15 January 2011**. Contributors should also be prepared to follow a tight editorial production schedule in the period February-June 2011.

Bibliography

Henige, David, *The Chronology of Oral Tradition: Quest for a Chimera* (Oxford, 1974).
—, *Historical Method and Argument* (Madison WI, 2005).
—, "'It is a job I would like'," *History in Africa* 36 (2009), 1-2.
—, "In at Many Births," *History in Africa* 36 (2009), 6-8.

[4]Here we think in particular of David Henige, *The Chronology of Oral Tradition: Quest for a Chimera* (Oxford, 1974).

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