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This article reinterprets *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta* (1956), one of the major works by the African historian Kenneth Onwuka Dike, not as a foundational nationalist historical production, but as part of an alternative Atlantic historiography from a non-Western perspective. Through a reconstruction of the library mobilized in Dike's book, the study maps a trans-imperial network that spans Black Atlantic intellectual production, infrastructures of historical training, research, communication and archival public policy, and the shifting boundaries of the historical profession in the first half of the twentieth century. Special attention is given to the institutional development of imperial/colonial history as a subfield, the emergence of new social actors in the historical guild in order to reveal the multiple layers of Dike's intervention. The result is a reframing of Dike as an Atlantic historian whose work invites us to rethink the historiographical geographies of decolonization and the plural genealogies of African historical writing.
Keywords: Kenneth Onwuka Dike; history of historiography; imperial/colonial history; Black Atlantic.

Kenneth Onwuka Dike como historiador atlântico: uma história alternativa dos anos formativos da historiografia africana

Este artigo propõe uma releitura de *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta* (1956), uma das principais obras do historiador africano Kenneth Onwuka Dike, não como uma produção histórica fundacional de cunho nacionalista, mas como parte de uma historiografia atlântica alternativa sob uma perspectiva não ocidental. Mediante a reconstrução da biblioteca mobilizada por Dike, o estudo mapeia uma rede transimperial que abrange a produção intelectual do Atlântico Negro, as infraestruturas historiográficas de formação, pesquisa, comunicação e política pública arquivística, assim como as transformações nas fronteiras da profissão de historiador na primeira metade do século XX. A análise dá atenção especial ao desenvolvimento institucional da história imperial/colonial como subcampo e ao surgimento de novos atores sociais na guilda com o objetivo de evidenciar as múltiplas camadas dessa intervenção historiográfica. O resultado é uma reinterpretação de Dike como historiador atlântico, cuja obra nos convida a repensar as geografias historiográficas da descolonização e as genealogias plurais da escrita da história africana.
Palavras-chave: Kenneth Onwuka Dike; história da historiografia; história imperial/colonial; Atlântico Negro.

Kenneth Onwuka Dike as an Atlantic Historian: An Alternative History of the Formative Years of African Historiography

Mario Eugenio Evangelista Silva Brito*

Introduction

About a decade ago, I conducted a comparative study on Kenneth Onwuka Dike and another West African historian, the Senegalese Cheikh Anta Diop, both widely recognized as pioneers in the development of the historical profession and in the scientific inquiry and reconstruction of Africa's past by Africans themselves[1]. That analysis focused on their respective publications, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830–1885* (1956) and *L'Afrique noire précoloniale* (1960). It examined how both authors, working within metropolitan research institutions on the eve of the Decolonization wave, contested the prevailing dictum that African history did not exist, except as the history of alien and superior "races" on African soil.

Despite obvious thematic and contextual differences, the works of Dike and Diop can be read, as African historian Bethwell Allan Ogot

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1 See Mario Eugenio Evangelista Brito, "Por uma descolonização da história: a historiografia africana da década de 1950, Kenneth Onwuka Dike e Cheikh Anta Diop" (master's thesis, Universidade Federal de Goiás, 2015), http://repositorio.bc.ufg.br/tede/handle/tede/5531. See Mario Eugenio Evangelista Brito, "Uma leitura desde a diáspora sobre historiografia africana independentista, a década de 1950, os casos de K. O. Dike e C. A. Diop," *Revista Transversos* 10, n.º 10 (2017): 205–35, https://doi.org/10.12957/transversos.2017.29520.

(b. 1929) once observed, as demonstrations "that African history could be written, that it was an academic discipline in its own merit"[2]. Ogot's invocation of their "demonstrative character" is hardly accidental; it signals the shared scientific spirit of the first generation of professional African historians. Yet the ways they applied historical reasoning and argumentation gave rise to substantive distinctions in their historiographical narratives. In my previous research, these divergences were comprehended as early articulations of what would later mature into a type of historical interpretation called "African perspective." Dike's and Diop's works from the 1950s thus anticipated the pluralism that would come to characterize this theoretical-methodological orientation, particularly in its codification through the eighth-volume UNESCO *General History of Africa*, in the 1980s[3].

One of the questions that has caught my attention ever since the beginning of my research is that of the historiographical classification of *Trade and Politics*. This question is provoked by the impression the work does not conform to the ideal type of nationalist historiography, and may instead belong to an alternative lineage of historical writing. What happens if, rather than treating it as the foundational text of the Ibadan Historical School, we were to understand it as one of the final testimonies of a regime of historical production whose origins do not lie in Dike's work, but are rooted before it, instead? In this context, I propose the meaning of *Trade and Politics* to be understood within the framework of an "Atlantic historiography from a non-Western perspective". That is, a regime of historical production shaped by the experience of exile, relocation, displacement[4], and structural inequality in the access to scholarly infrastructures. This regime is situated at what, in the case studied, was intrinsically linked to a site that has

2 See Bethwell A. Ogot, "African Historiography: From Colonial Historiography to UNESCO's General History of Africa," *Groniek* 27, n.º 122 (1993): 71–78, https://ugp.rug.nl/groniek/article/view/16429/13919.

3 For further discussion about the *UNESCO General History of Africa*, see Muryatan Santana Barbosa. "A África por ela mesma: a perspectiva africana na História Geral da África (UNESCO)" (PhD dissertation, Universidade de São Paulo, 2012), https://doi.org/10.11606/T.8.2012.tde-09012013-165600.

4 See Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), 18.

been described as both the "hub of very powerful imperial structures and networks" and the "node in cross-cutting conversations" among non-Western intellectuals from different parts of the globe[5].

I argue that, prior to being positioned as a Nigerian or African historian, Dike occupied the role of a "non-Western" scholar operating within the British metropolitan milieu. Moreover, the relationship between *Trade and Politics* and imperial/colonial historiography —often depicted as historiographical antithesis— should be approached not through the prism of conflict, but through that of connection[6]. This interpretative shift requires a global perspective on the evolution of imperial/colonial history as a discipline, from its late-nineteenth-century inception to its institutional consolidation in the first half of the twentieth century.

This text is structured in three sections. The first section revisits the tropes[7] through which Dike and *Trade and Politics* have been remembered, with particular attention to the debate between African and Africanist historians. It is argued that both competing groups share difficulties in achieving a more adequate understanding of the work and its author. It is within this context that the central question raised previously is addressed more concretely. The second section analyzes the library mobilized by *Trade and Politics*, proposing an interpretative mapping of its citations alongside a reconstruction of the imperial/colonial history subfield as a global phenomenon. The third section explores the network that can be unfolded mainly from Dike's *trajetória socioespacial* (socio-spatial trajectory)[8], incorporating

5 Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 5.

6 See below, "A Walk Through the Library."

7 I use "trope" as Michel-Rolph Trouillot does, to designate "formulas of silencing" in narratives. See Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015), 95–107.

8 The expression (*sociospatial trajectory*), as far as I know, was first formulated by Diogo Marçal Cirqueira as a derivation of Milton Santos's category of *formação socioespacial* (*sociospatial formation*) in *Espaço e sociedade* (1979). While Santos developed the concept to explain the mutual constitution of society and space, Cirqueira adapts it to the scale of an individual life-course, emphasizing that people move through a repertoire of places which they experience, signify, and interpret, and that space itself reciprocally shapes their trajectories. See Diogo Marçal Cirqueira, "Entre o corpo e

the perspectives of participant witnesses who held diverse institutional positions —ranging from an account of a Nigerian undergraduate woman student from the interwar period, to a paper by a gatekeeper of the historical profession in the immediate post-World War II era.

A case to reconsider: Trade and Politics

In the academic year of 1950–1, the thesis that would form the basis of the 1956's book *Trade and Politics* was successfully submitted at King's College, University of London[9]. In the preface to the first edition, Dike, by then a professor of History and vice-principal of the University College, Ibadan (the first institution of higher learning in colonial Nigeria) briefly recalled his doctoral years. He thanked Vincent Todd Harlow (1898–1961), Beit Professor at Oxford, and Gerald Sandford Graham (1903–1988), Rhodes Professor at King's College, London, who supervised his dissertation and offered him steady support[10].

A revealing comment on the work appeared in an obituary in *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, written by the Africanist historian John Donnelly Fage (1921–2002), who claimed that it: "clearly shows its origin in the imperial history of the day, of which Harlow and Graham were leading British exponents"[11]. Soon after, Jacob Festus Adebisi Ajayi (1929–2014), a scholar often associated with Dike's generation of Nigerian historians, offered a contrasting interpretation in the *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*. Ajayi pointed out that when registering his PhD topic in London, Dike rejected the standard "British Policy Towards...." approach, insisting instead "on a theme focussing on the activities of Africans and requiring the study of Oral Traditions in the

a teoria: a questão étnico-racial na obra e trajetória socioespacial de Milton Santos" (master's thesis, Universidade Federal de Goiás, 2010), 42–4, http://repositorio.bc.ufg.br/tede/handle/tde/1857.

9 University of London Senate Minutes (18 October), 206, quoted in Michael Omolewa, "The Education Factor in the Emergence of the Modern Profession of Historian in Nigeria. 1926–1956," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 10, n.º 3 (1980): 55, https://www.jstor.org/stable/41971337.

10 Kenneth Onwuka Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830–1879: An Introduction to the Economic and Political History of Nigeria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), vi.

11 J. D. Fage, "Obituary: Kenneth Onwuka Dike, 1917–83," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 54, n.º 2 (1984): 96, https://ww.jstor.org/stable/1159914.

field"[12]. Although securing approval from supervisors and the university committee was difficult, as Ajayi noted, Dike was the first to have such a topic accepted for a doctorate. Ajayi then concluded that Dike's "resultant work" marked "an important milestone in the evolution of historiography not only in Africa, but also generally"[13].

Fage's account, perhaps laying on a "paternal tone,"[14] stressed that *Trade and Politics* maintained a significant degree of continuity with the subfield in which his supervisors were embedded. Ajayi's version, in contrast, evoked a heroic rupture, highlighting Dike's agency within an environment marked by uneasy relationships both with the faculty, and with metropolitan academic institutions. Both accounts affirm the historiographical significance of *Trade and Politics* and vindicate Dike's overall legacy. Yet their differences reveal a one-sidedness in the framing of his roots and routes[15], which results in an ambivalent classification of Dike as a trailblazer for both African and Africanist historians.

The routes pole, as suggested in Fage's obituary, constructs an image of the historian beginning as "the son of Nzekwe Dike, a merchant," who pursued a translocal education and ultimately emerged as a "considerable" node within an "international academic" network, which was dedicated to the development of African Studies as a distinct field of knowledge[16]. The roots pole, represented by Ajayi's intervention, in contrast, insisted on the educationist and administrator's decisive role in the Africanization and construction of infrastructures to produce knowledge. This would be aimed at promoting "a sense of history as an essential ingredient of national life" in Nigeria. It becomes clear that the route-based representation of Dike's legacy which is emphasized in

12 J. F. Ade Ajayi, "'Towards a More Enduring Sense of History: A Tribute to K. O. Dike' Former President, Historical Society of Nigeria on Behalf of the Historical Society of Nigeria," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 12, n.º 3–4 (1985): 1, https://www.jstor.org/stable/44715364.

13 Ajayi, "'Towards a More Enduring Sense of History'", 2.

14 See Eric Williams, *Inward Hunger: The Education of a Prime Minister* (local: Ebenezer Baylis and Son and Trinity Press, 1971[1969]), 46.

15 See Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, 5–19.

16 Fage, "Obituary," 96.

Africanist scholarship portrays him as having no agenda beyond the institutionalization of African history internationally. Whereas its root-based African counterpart prizes his militancy and commitment to the nation.

Caught between these poles, *Trade and Politics* appears to be suspended between Scylla and Charybdis: either a product of its author's early nationalist commitments, or a mere academic output for its own sake. On one hand, when interpreted as a nationalist history, *Trade and Politics* risks, somehow unfairly, being exposed to postcolonial critiques. When emplotted in an Africanist viewpoint, its politics seems trivialized[17].

A walk through the library

A reader who is familiar with the early twentieth-century intellectual history of the English-speaking "Black Atlantic" will quickly recognize that the author of *Trade and Politics* appeared to be integrated to some extent within this intercultural and transnational formation. The introduction to the book enlightens it, citing works such as the 1904's reprint of *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870,* and the first edition of *Black Folk Then and Now: an essay in the history and sociology of the negro race* (1939), both by William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868–1963), the unpublished 1938 M. A. Thesis *Africa and the Rise of Capitalism* by Wilson Elbe Williams (191?–1960)[18]. Two landmark works by West

17 About a postcolonial critique, see, for instance, Achille Mbembe, "As formas africanas de auto-inscrição," *Estudos Afro-Asiáticos* 23, n.º 1 (2001): 175–209, https://doi.org/10.1590/S0101-546X2001000100007.

18 There is no known record of W. E. Williams's birth year. He reported having earned a B. A. from Fisk University in 1935, as stated in a Letter to Du Bois. Based on the average age of enrolment in the so call "Negro colleges" at the time, between 18 and 21 years, and the standard duration of four years of "college work" required to complete a Bachelor of Arts degree, it is reasonable to infer that W. E. Williams was born between 1910 and 1914. About the date of his death, there is a record that says he died on 25 April 1960, as a former professor of economics at Virginia State College. After Howard, he got a Ph. D. from University of Southern California, the title of his thesis was "The Interpretation of Labor Union Motives by the United States Supreme Court". See Wilson E. Williams, Letter to W. E. B. Du Bois, Los Angeles, 25 August 1940, in *W. E. B. Du Bois Papers* (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts, Amherst Libraries, http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/

Indian historians were also cited: *The Black Jacobins* (1938) by Cyril Lionel Robert James (1901–1989), and *Capitalism & Slavery* (1944) by Eric Eustace Williams (1911–1981)[19].

In his analysis of *Trade and Politics*, the historian Ebere Nwaubani claims that Dike engagement with later works, particularly that of Eric Williams, indicates a turn toward "interpretations which were certainly heretical at the time of its publication", namely a "counter-thesis" to the humanitarian explanation of British's abolition of the slave trade, and an argument about the role of African slave labor on the rise of Britain's industrial revolution[20]. Nwaubani makes no comments about Dike's citations of W. E. Williams or C. L. R. James. In addition, regarding Du Bois's works, Nwanbani draws on a fragment from Dike's article "African History and Self-Government," published in series in the newspaper *West Africa*, only to dismiss them as "literature of polemics"[21].

My engagement with these citations in *Trade and Politics* begins where Nwaubani's insightful analysis leaves off. While his reading provides us with a useful point of departure, it is limited in two ways: first, it assumes the African past to be essentially continental, omitting an overseas dimension. For instance, the historical validity of *Black Folk* was criticized as early as its publication by Carter Godwin Woodson (1875–1950), in the *Journal of Negro History*. Woodson pointed out the inadequacy of the sections of Du Bois's book devoted to African history in Africa —which can be read as the shortcoming that, decades later, Dike's "literature of polemics" remark would echo. Yet Woodson

full/mums312-b093-i292. About the data on the students of the "Negro colleges", see Ambrose Caliver, "Collegiate Education of Negroes," *School Life,* March 1941, 183–185, https://books.google.com.br/books?id=WphI2lMFR2QC. About the dissertation thesis, see "Forty-Sixth List of Doctoral Dissertations in Political Economy in Progress in American Universities and Colleges," *The American Economic Review* 39, n.º 5 (1949): 1108–1141, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1810547. And about the notice of his death, see "Notes," *Southern Economic Journal* 28, n.º 2 (1961): 216–225, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1055753.

19 Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 3.

20 Ebere Nwaubani, "Kenneth Onwuka Dike, 'Trade and Politics', and the Restoration of the African in History," *History in Africa* 27 (2000): 232, https://doi.org/10.2307/3172115.

21 Kenneth Onwuka Dike, "African History and Self-Government," *West Africa*, 28 February 1953, 117, quoted in Nwaubani, "Kenneth," 241.

judged that "the author is at his best in dealing with the Negro in the New World", then adding, in the same line, that Du Bois was equally effective when "discussing the race in its connection with the world problems brought upon humanity by traffic in men, slavery, and the industry of imperialism —all the outcome of capitalism"[22].

This connectivity of the race with the world problems provides the framework that may facilitate a more nuanced interpretation of Dike's citation of *Black Folk* and the other works previously listed, which were mentioned in *Trade and Politics.* Moreover, on another level, it draws attention to the parallelism between the "part played by African colonists in the building of the New World"[23], which Dike claimed to be an emergent research trend, and the relevance of his own task, since —on his understanding— "no comprehensive assessment of the African middlemen's position in the Atlantic slave trade exists"[24].

Furthermore, alongside the omission of the part played by African colonists in the building of the New World in Dike's conception of modern African History, Nwaubani's reading does not undertake a systematic examination of the citations in *Trade and Politics*, even within the specific topic he foregrounds. Therefore, what Nwaubani describes as "heretical" historiography —reduced in his text to "Williams' thesis"[25]— may be interpreted more broadly. Since the 1930s, in fact, a loose constellation of "Negro" scholars, working independently yet with some awareness of one another's work, sought to incorporate Karl Marx's ideas into their studies of the "Negro problem" globally[26]. It is hardly surprising that some of these authors appear together in *Trade and Politics*.

22 Carter Godwin Woodson, review of *Black Folk Then and Now*, by W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Journal of Negro History* 24, n.º 4 (1939): 462, https://doi.org/10.2307/2714368.

23 Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 3.

24 Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 4.

25 See, for instance, William A. Darity Jr., "Disposal of an Old Orthodoxy: Reading Eric Williams' Dissertation," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 35, n.º 2 (2012): 169–175, https://www.jstor.org/stable/43551699.

26 W. E. B. Du Bois, review of *Economics and Social Reform*, by Abram L. Harris, *Crisis*, May 1958, 314, https://archive.org/details/sim_crisis_1958-05_65_5. See also Du Bois's citation of "Africa and the Rise of Capitalism", in *Black Folk Then and Now* (New York: Henry Holt, 1940), 137, and Eric Williams's *Capitalism and Slavery* (Capricorn Books, 1996 [1944]), 268, where W. E. Williams's master's thesis and C. L. R. James's *The Black Jacobins* are both cited.

The very existence of this constellation can be seen as a manifestation of a broader regime of historical production, extending beyond this Marxist-oriented scholarship. Understanding this regime, which may reveal an alternative account of the genealogy of Dike's historical thinking, requires, as a preliminary step, a systematic mapping of the intellectual networks reflected in the library which was mobilized in *Trade and Politics*.

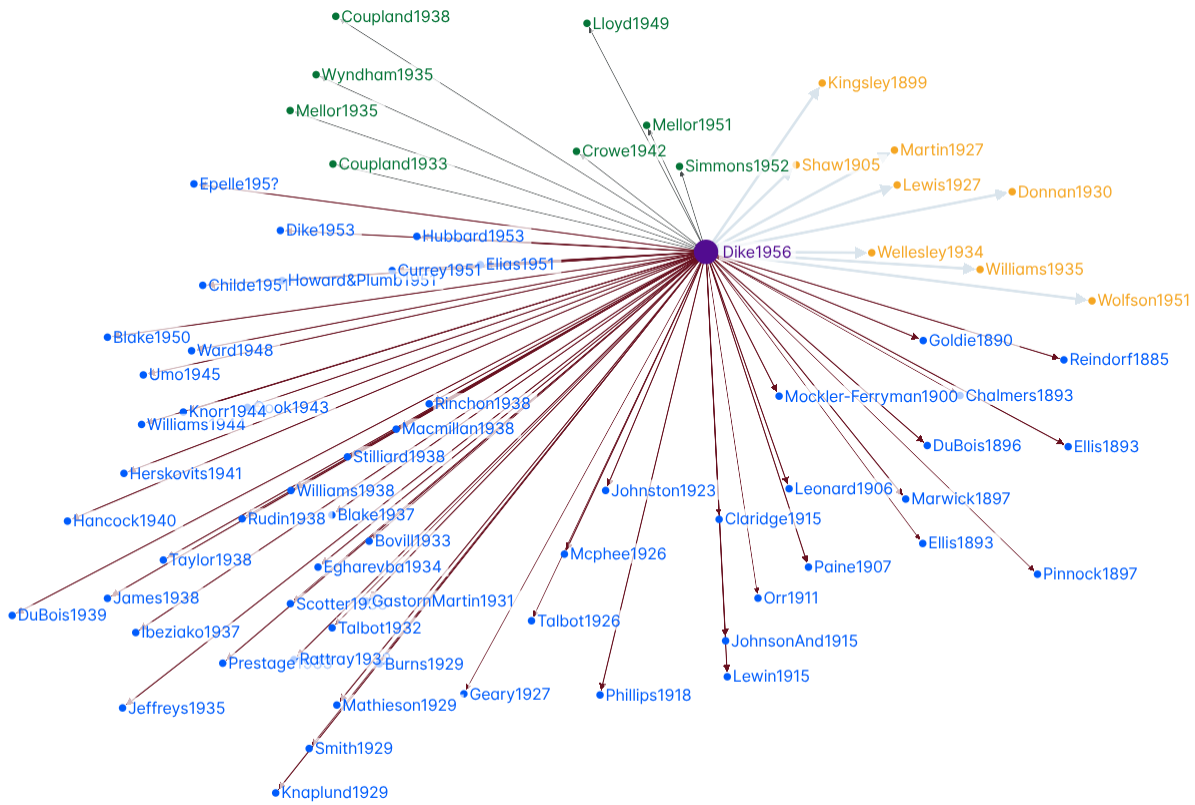


Figure 1 —Network Graph of cited works in *Trade and Politics*.

Figure 1 displays seventy-three citations found in Dike's work, only considering publications from 1885 onwards. This *terminus a quo* is neither arbitrary nor incidental: it coincides with the closing year of *Trade and Politics*' chronological framework and, as we will discuss later, aligns with a broader rupture in the production of history on European expansion. The coloured scheme reflects a typological classification

of cited works, not strictly based on their subject matter, but rather on their metadata (title, place of publication, and selected aspects of authors' backgrounds). In the graphic, green indicates works associated with the orthodoxy of imperial/colonial historiography (eight in total). These publications were typically affiliated with institutions such as Oxford, Cambridge, or the University of London and, therefore, published in England. The authors of these publications were English male nationals. Blue designates works aligned with what may be defined as unorthodox imperial/colonial scholarship (fifty-seven in total), a group that includes publications marked by connections to area studies, interdisciplinarity, non-English authorship, publication outside England, or production by independent or amateur contributors. Finally, orange marks the works authored by women (eight in total), whether academic historians or independent/amateur contributors.

The blue section is by far the most numerous and internally diverse, encompassing, among others, the works we discussed previously. Roughly half of these publications appeared during the interwar period, while eleven were published in North America. Significantly, eleven of the cited authors from this group, including Dike himself (in a single self-citation), were of African descent, with geographic ties spanning the United States, West Indies, and West Africa. This quantitative overview, however, only captures a part of the picture. The following sections undertake a qualitative examination of three groups of cited works and authors, framed within an exploratory global history of historical writing.

The dynamics of institutionalization of imperial/colonial history

From the global perspective deployed in this article[27], the institutional environment underpinning *Trade and Politics*' networks is best

27 See George G. Iggers and Q. Edward Wang, *A Global History of Modern Historiography* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2008); Daniel Woolf (ed.), *The Oxford History of Historical Writing, vol. 4, 1800–1945*, ed. Stuart Macintyre, Juan Maiguashca and Attila Pók (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

approached by revealing the overlap of two processes: the emergence of history as a modern academic discipline and the subsequent development of imperial/colonial history as a subfield.

The differentiation of the production of historical narrative into "a distinct branch of knowledge with its own principles and methods, and as a profession with its one procedures and institutions"[28] was shaped by the sociohistorical process and conditions of the German-speaking lands in the post-French Revolution and Napoleonic wars. Generally, the institutionalization and professionalization were driven by the expansion of the professoriate amid the ongoing reforms of institutions of higher learning. As an autonomous university discipline with scientific pretensions, history became integrated into the broader process of societal modernization.

In its initial phase, the expansion and dissemination of this modern historiography primarily took place in Europe and in countries of European settlement. Although these institutional processes were diffusionist in character, they followed divergent paths shaped by the specific preconditions of each national context. This resulted in hybrid historiographical traditions. A common feature across these contexts, however, was the exclusion of broad segments of society from academic careers, and, consequently, from a possible participation in the historical profession. Women and those positioned outside the supposed "ethnological unity of the whole"[29] in Europe or in countries of European settlement were frequently barred by formal or informal restrictions, regardless of whether they possessed cultural or economic capital that could have enabled academic achievement. At the same time, even insiders from socially disadvantaged backgrounds were often excluded, as they lacked the economic and cultural capital to access higher education and to benefit from the professional opportunities thereby generated[30].

28 Stuart Macintyre, Juan Maiguashca, and Attila Pók, editors' introduction to *The Oxford History of Historical Writing: vol. 4, 1800–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1.

29 John Robert Seeley, *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures* (London: Macmillan, 1883), 50. On Seeley, see section below "The presentation program of imperial/colonial history."

30 See Gabriele Lingelbach, "The Institutionalization and Professionalization of History in Europe and the United States," in *Oxford History of Historical Writing*, vol. 4, 89.

Predictably, internal specialization emerged as a subsequent development within the historical profession. The early generalist profile gradually gave way to a variety of specialised fields, which were defined by different criteria: chronological (e.g. ancient, medieval, modern), thematic (e.g. ecclesiastical, constitutional, military, economic) and spatial (e.g. local, national, international). At a smaller scale, each emerging speciality or subfield of teaching and research began to replicate the institutional structure of the discipline within the university in its search for power: each one was engaged in securing funding, obtaining dedicated rooms, establishing recruitment mechanisms, claiming lines in the academic syllabus, days in the academic calendar, space in academic events, pages in scholarly periodicals, and in representation tasks within professional associations and "service institutions"[31]. However, as specialization unfolded under different sociohistorical conditions to those that originally shaped the discipline, much of what can be said about the former does not automatically apply to its subfields.

An examination of the institutional environment surrounding Dike's doctoral research suggests that its supervision in the Faculty of Arts at King's College fell under the Rhodes Chair of Imperial History. This would account for the change that took place between Dike's registration in 1947, when the chair was held by Harlow, and 1949, when it passed to Graham.

The Rhodes Chair of Imperial History was established in 1919, the same year as the Vere Harmsworth Chair of Imperial and Naval History at Cambridge. Unlike the Regius Chairs of Modern History at Oxbridge, founded nearly two centuries earlier through royal endowment, both of these newer professorships were funded by private sources: the Rhodes Chair by the Rhodes Trust and the Harmsworth Chair by the Harmsworth Fund[32].

31 By "service institutions," Lingelbach refers to bodies that support historians in conducting research—such as institutional archives (state or private) and, more contingently, national associations, when they provide tools like printed editions of documents, archival inventories, and similar resources. See "The Institutionalization", 87–88.

32 See "Notes and News," *History* 4, n.º 14 (1919), 85–89, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24399060.

They mimicked the oldest of them all: the Beit Chair of Colonial History, established in 1905 at Oxford. Here, the involvement of two late-nineteenth-century magnates —Cecil Rhodes (1853–1902) and Alfred Beit (1853–1906)— channelled through their philanthropic ventures, was decisive. Their fortunes, largely built on mining activities in invaded African territories, provided the financial backing for the institutionalization of imperial/colonial history as an academic subfield.

In his will, Rhodes emphasized the role of British universities in shaping colonial elites, promoting imperial unity, and fostering solidarity among English-speaking peoples by founding what he termed "Colonial Scholarships"[33]. Beit, a trustee and later chairman of the Rhodes Trust, advocated for curricular reform at Oxford, his alma mater, particularly the inclusion of the history of Britain's overseas dominions. His aim was to cultivate a more accurate knowledge of British history, especially among Rhodes scholarship recipients who started to come to Oxford from all parts of the Empire[34].

From this perspective, the history of the institutionalization of imperial/colonial history appears inseparable from the transformation of the student body within British universities. At another level, the very material possibility of such a transformation was bound to African exploitation.

Whatever the case may be, on the eve of the Second World War, the landscape of the subfield stood as follows:

33 Cecil John Rhodes, *The Last Will and Testament of Cecil John Rhodes with Elucidatory Notes to Which Are Added Some Chapters Describing the Political and Religious Ideas of the Testator,* edited by W. T. Stead (London: Review of Reviews, 1902), 23–27.

34 George Seymour Fort, *Alfred Beit: A Study of the Man and His Work* (London: Nicholson & Watson, 1932), 174.

Table 1 – The Subfield of Imperial/Colonial History before the Second World War

Local	Institution	Nomenclature of the Course/Chair	Holder	Academic Position
Bristol (England)	University of Bristol	Imperial History	Charles Malcolm MacInnes (1891-1971)	Reader
Cambridge (England)	University of Cambridge	"Vere Harmsworth" Imperial and Naval History	Eric Anderson Walker (1886-1976)	Professor
London (England)	University of London	"Rhodes" Imperial History	Arthur Percival Newton (1873-1942)	Professor
London (England)	University of London	Imperial History	Eveline Christiana Martin (1894-1960)	Reader
Oxford (England)	University of Oxford	["Beit"] History of the British Empire	Vincent Todd Harlow (1898-1961)	Lecturer
Aberystwyth (Wales)	University of Wales	Colonial History	Ernest Jones Parry (1908-1992)	Lecturer
Edinburgh (Scotland)	University of Edinburgh	History of the Constitution of the British Empire, etc.	Arthur Berriedale Keith (1879-1944)	Lecturer
St. Andrews (Scotland)	University of St. Andrews	American and Colonial History	Vacant	Lecturer
Kingston (Canada)	Queen's University	"Douglas" Canadian and Colonial History	Reginald George Trotter (1881-1951)	Professor

Source: Data compiled from The Universities Bureau of The British Empire, *The Yearbook of the Universities of the Empire* (London: Bell and Sons, 1938).

The table shows that the first holder of the Rhodes Chair, Arthur Percival Newton, remained in post, while John Holland Rose (1855–1942), the first holder of the Vere Harmsworth chair, was succeeded by Eric Anderson Walker (1886–1976). Newton and Rose served as general editors of *The Cambridge History of the British Empire* (1929–36)[35], regarded as the key reference work of the subfield. Newton also served as editor of the Imperial Studies Series, under the auspices of the Royal Empire Society. Harlow, listed in the table as a Beit Lecturer, would later succeed Newton as Rhodes Chair. At Oxford, Harlow was also active in other initiatives sponsored by the Rhodes Trust. Between 1928 and 1938, he served as the Keeper of the library

35 Alongside Ernest Alfred Benians.

at Rhodes House, a branch of Bodleian Library. Established in 1925, the Rhodes House became, during Harlow's tenure, one of the leading repositories for materials related to imperial affairs[36]. The counterpart to the Rhodes Library at the University of London was the Institute of Historical Research (IHR), the "Librarian Laboratory of History", whose founding was contemporary with the Rhodes Chair[37].

Although London lagged behind Oxford and Cambridge in institutionalizing imperial colonial history, it nonetheless came to host the principal facilities that supported research in the subfield, including the Public Record Office, the British Museum, and IHR. Absent from the table, but nonetheless significant, is its School of Oriental Studies (founded in 1917), later renamed School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) after the Second World War, which signaled a growing cross-disciplinary exchange in the subfield. Moreover, the University of London played a significant role in expanding British higher learning institutions overseas. That is evident in the case of Nigeria, particularly after the "1926 Nigerian Education Ordinance."[38]

The table further indicates other sites for the training and research of imperial/colonial history, alongside Cambridge, Oxford, and London. These included universities located in the British Isles but outside England – such as the University of Wales, the University of Edinburgh, and the University of St. Andrews – and an institution located in the "King's Dominions Overseas"[39]. That institution, the Queen's University, was a special case, not just because of its location but also because the Douglas chair was the sole professorship outside the British metropole and only the second to be created (1909-10) in all the Empire. Its first holder was William Lawson Grant (1872–1963), a former Beit lecturer at Oxford[40].

36 Dunelmian 13, "Professor Vincent Harlow: Historian of the Commonwealth," (July, 1962), 195–196.

37 See *Yearbook of the Universities of the Empire*, 1938.

38 See Omolewa, "The Education Factor"; Richard Gray, "Christianity: Trusteeship and Education," in *The Cambridge History of Africa, vol. 7: from c. 1905 to 1940*, ed. Andrew Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 182–190.

39 Term as used in *Yearbook of the Universities of the Empire*, 1938.

40 Douglas Chair Has Symbolic Carvings," Queen's University Journal, November 12, 1935, 8. See also Hilda Neatby. Queen's University. Volume 1, 1841–1917: To Strive, to Seek, to Find and Not to Yield, ed. by F. W. Gibson and R. Graham. (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), 283-4.

Beyond the geographical scope of the table, the United States likewise became a significant site for the study of imperial/colonial history, primarily in relation to the Thirteen Colonies. Over time, subjects such as the transatlantic slave trade called for, as Elizabeth Donnan suggested, a more explicitly intercolonial approach[41]. This unfolding, however, is part of an unorthodox side of imperial/colonial scholarship, which will be examined later in the text, through the lens of individuals' sociospatial trajectories rather than through the chronicle of institutions. Before doing so it is, however, necessary to clarify the foundational model of orthodox imperial/colonial history as an academic discipline.

The presentation program of imperial/colonial history

Beit was not alone in taking the initiatives that led to the establishment of the first chair dedicated to colonial and imperial history. He was associated with other prominent "self-professed imperialists", such as the radical Tory Leopold Stennett Amery (1873–1955) and the journalist Alfred Milner (1854–1925). All three were devotees of John Robert Seeley's (1834–1895) ideals[42]. It is no coincidence that Hugh Edward Egerton (1855–1927), whose early work *A Short History of British Colonial Policy* (1897) aligned with Seeleyan new interpretation of England's modern history, became the first elected holder of the Beit Chair, a decade after Seeley's death[43].

Seeley belonged to the group of academic historians involved in the creation of the *English Historical Review* (EHR), first published in 1886, alongside figures such as William Stubbs (1825–1901), John

41 "When a collection which should illustrate this traffic was first under consideration the intention was to confine it to the trade to the Thirteen Colonies, but it soon developed that such an attempt would be unsatisfactory, perhaps absolutely misleading. The traffic to the Thirteen Colonies, to the West Indies, and to Spanish America was so closely interwoven that to a certain extent it seemed necessary to treat it as a whole." Elizabeth Donnan, preface to *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America, vol. 1, 1441–1700*, ed. Elizabeth Donnan (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1930), V.

42 See Amanda Behm, *Imperial History and The Global Politics of Exclusion: Britain, 1880–1940* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

43 See Wm. Roger Louis, Introduction to *The Oxford History of the British Empire, vol. 5. Historiography*, ed. Robert W. Winks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton (1834–1902), George Walter Prothero (1848–1922) and Adolphus William Ward (1837–1924). In this context, the series of lectures delivered by Seeley as the Regius Professor of Modern History to undergraduate students at Cambridge, during the academic year of 1881–82, is regarded as the foundational event of the subfield of imperial/colonial history – not in an institutional sense, as discussed above, but through the formulation of a new historiographical desideratum.

"It is a favourite maxim of mine that history, while it should be scientific in its method, should pursue a practical object"[44]. So begins *The Expansion of England* (1883), the volume in which Seeley's lectures were later published. Like the opening article of the *EHR*, these words register the emergence of a "new historical thinking", attached with "German historical schools", that had sprung "from the shock of the French Revolution"[45]. Yet this renewed interest in *Historismus*, among Seeley and his colleagues, came in a different historical moment. Their concerns were not shaped by revolutionary rupture, but by the subtler anxieties of the 1880s, at "the height of the Victorian achievement"[46]. What was at stake here was less the methodological apparatus of Übungen (seminar) or *Quellenkritik*[47] (source criticism), which Seeley, as a former professor of Latin, might well have been able to theorize, than a metanarrative of power and the power of history[48].

To illustrate this last point, I turn to Dike's narrative of an 1824 incident at Bonny, then the leading slave-trading kingdom of West Africa, which itself relies on the published account of Captain W. F. W. Owen[49]. In Dike's retelling, Owen, acting in the service of the Royal Navy, had

44 Seeley, *The Expansion of England*.

45 Lord Acton, "German Schools of History," *The English Historical Review* 1, n.º 1 (1886): 7–42. http://www.jstor.org/stable/546982.

46 See Peter Burroughs, "John Robert Seeley and British Imperial History," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 1 (1973): 191–211, doi:10.1080/03086537308582372.

47 See George G. Iggers, "The Intellectual Foundation of Nineteenth-Century 'Scientific' History: The German Model," in *Oxford History of Historical Writing*, vol. 4; Rolf Torstendahl, *The Rise and Propagation of Historical Professionalism* (New York and London: Routledge, 2015).

48 See Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, 60–61; see Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 4–30.

49 See Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 15–17.

ignored protocol by beginning a coastal survey "without further consideration" of King Opubu or "his etiquette", who retaliated by suspending trade with the British[50]. In the negotiations that followed, Opubu delivered a forceful defence of his sovereignty, grounding his authority both in his status as a "brother monarch" of the king of England, and in the ancestral trust of his kingdom[51]. Owen, recording the episode in 1833, dismissed the king's words as mere "rage and exhaustion", while he professed astonishment at the deference British traders showed toward an African ruler[52]. Dike interpreted that "[t]he captain [was] a typical product of the industrial order," whereas "the English traders who cringed to win King Opubu's favour knew the reality of his power"[53]. By the end of the century, however, such recognition of African authority had all but disappeared from the sphere of Atlantic trade and diplomacy, as the Berlin West African Conference made clear. There, Britain assumed "the authority of a protecting power" over the Brights of Benin and Biafra: a telling instance of what some authors have described as the period of "Western supremacy and outright racism"[54] or even a "White-supremacist thermidor" and "a kind of White backlash against abolitionism and emancipation"[55].

If we imagine Seeley confronted with the Bonny episode, he would likely have framed it through a transition between what he named as "old colonial system" and a modern one: thus, the conduct of the traders and the naval officer embodied distinct temporalities. Seeley would have read the crisis at Bonny much as he explained the reasons that led to the conquest of India[56], by pointing out an anarchy antecedent. In this transposition, Owen's blindness to African authority meets with a historical amnesia in Seeley's lectures[57].

50 W. F. W. Owen, *Narrative of a Voyage to Explore the Shores of Africa*, 343–361. Quoted in Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 16.

51 *Narrative of a Voyage* 343–361. Quoted in Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 16.

52 *Narrative of a Voyage* 343–361. Quoted in Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 16.

53 Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 15, 17.

54 Iggers and Wang, *A Global History of Modern Historiography*, 172.

55 Michael O. West, "Global Africa: The Emergence and Evolution of an Idea," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 28, n.º 1 (2005): 94, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40241620.

56 Seeley, *The Expansion of England,* 194–196.

57 On "historical amnesia" and empire, see David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

These two temporalities underpinned Seeley's re-interpretation of English history, in which the national territory was imagined as a global entity, and the roots and routes of English nationality were thought in more connected and equitable terms. This did not happen at the level of the individual trajectory, but rather at the level of the state: what was at stake was the new relationship between colonies and the mother-country. A relationship made possible, as Seeley observed, by "Science," which "has given to the political organism a new circulation, which is steam, and a new nervous system, which is electricity"[58].

Equipped with scientific developments, the modern state also acquired a different morality: for it, crime and punishment did not operate in the same way. As Seeley argued, "God who is revealed in history does not usually judge in this way"[59]. Conquests, even when "lawlessly" carried out, were not, in his view, destined to be lost in a later generation; and since "government is never to be confounded with property," states did not necessarily have "a right," still less an obligation, to restore gains "more or less ill-gotten"[60].

Since statehood was the main criterion for a human group to be considered historical, the further a group was from that political organization, the less problematic their conquest appeared, both in terms of conflict and narrative. As Trouillot's account of Henry I and Sans Souci shows, conquest struck twice—first literally, then symbolically[61].

By claiming a scientific approach to history, Seeley sought to consolidate his cultural authority by maintaining an aseptic distance from literary, antiquarian and speculative outputs. Yet it is important to note that his work marked a rupture with historical outputs embodied in travel writing, abolitionist accounts and Romantic narratives, which had previously offered a broader understanding of what constituted history and the purpose of historical writing. In this sense, Seeley was not merely determining what constituted legitimate historical knowledge, but was also offering a means of disempowerment by way of prescribing the forms of pastness.

58 Seeley, *The Expansion of England,* 74.

59 Seeley, *The Expansion of England,* 134.

60 Seeley, *The Expansion of England,* 134–135.

61 Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 59.

Finally, it is revealing how Seeley extended his case for the value of colonial history—especially those colonies he described as the outcome of an English exodus—into the narrative of modern English history. He forged the ethnological unity of a "Greater Britain" by invoking a collective identity with his audience, speaking in terms of "we" and "our." I suggest this gesture was made possible only within the restrictive social composition of a Cambridge lecture room in the 1880s. In this moment, the claim to objectivity overlapped with a tacit subjectivity, binding scientific history to the shared assumptions of a narrow elite. Yet his project was soon disregarded by his successor as Regius Professor, Lord Acton, who, as general editor of *The Cambridge Modern History* (1902–1910), "almost totally ignores even European activities in the outside world." Still, Seeley's lectures had planted the seeds for a new specialization—imperial/colonial history—even if it long remained at the "fringe" of the profession[62].

From "Oxford is no longer 'a city of dreaming spires'" to the "Negro Oxford" in the New World

Bolanle Awe (b. 1933) is the only woman historian considered to be of the same generation as Dike, even if she defended her PhD thesis at Oxford in 1964, after Nigeria became independent[63]. In a recent interview, she provided interesting information about the individuals involved in the production of history within British Academia at that time, recalling: "I started African history in Oxford and I was fortunate to have as my supervisor a lady called Margery Perham"[64]. During the Silver Jubilee Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Dike used his keynote address to reflect on the state of African history before

62 J. D. Fage, "The Development of African Historiography," in *General History of Africa, vol I: Methodology and African Prehistory*, ed. Joseph Ki-Zerbo (Oxford: Heinemann, 1995), 33.

63 Also, her dissertation, "The Rise of Ibadan as a Yoruba Power in the Nineteenth Century", unlike those of her fellow countrymen, was never published. See Adeyemi Bukola Oyeniki, "Awe. Bolanle (1933b)," in *Dictionary of African Biography, vol. 1*: *ABACH-BRAND* ed. Emmanuel Akyeampong and Henry Louis Gates Jr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 300–301.

64 Ronke Olawale, "Interview with Bonlanle Awe", 31 October 2019, posted October 2019, by Global Feminisms Project. University of Michigan Library, Deep Blue Repositories, 71 min., 16 sec., https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/163354.

the Society's creation, illustrating it through his personal encounter with Margery Perham. The episode stemmed from the controversy surrounding his article in *West Africa*, written in opposition to Perham's "British Problems in Africa," published in *Foreign Affairs*. In his recollections, Dike stated Margery Perham as "a towering figure in the area of colonial politics and policies," adding that "her views in this field were greatly respected." Before the publication of his article, West Africa's editor, David Williams, who was a personal friend of Dike, forwarded a draft to Margery Perham. Dike recalled taking a train to Oxford, where they met at her residence and she admitted that her *Foreign Affairs* was flawed and praised his writing. In his own words, they "parted friends"[65].

Dame Margery Freda Perham (1895–1982) belonged to the pioneering generation of English women to receive academic degrees from Oxford[66]. She graduated in History in 1917 from St Hugh's College, a women's college founded in 1886 with the aim of serving students of limited financial means. However, like other women of her time, she received her degree years later, *ex post facto*, when Oxford formally began awarding degrees to women. This recognition allowed her to embark on an academic career. She initially taught at the University of Sheffield, where she first engaged with imperial/colonial history as a subject. This detail is particularly noteworthy. As shown in Table 1, Sheffield had no professorship, lectureship, or readership explicitly dedicated to imperial/colonial history, suggesting that the field may have circulated informally or through broader disciplinary frameworks. Meanwhile, Oxford, though an important site for imperial/colonial history, did not integrate the subject into its women's colleges. This omission suggests both the marginal position of the subfield within the wider discipline and its alignment with Seeley's conception of history as the "school of statesmanship," a domain traditionally framed in gendered terms[67].

65 Kenneth Onwuka Dike, "African History twenty five years ago and today," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 10, n.º 3 (1980): 13–22, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41971334.

66 See Vera Brittain, *The Women at Oxford: A Fragment of History* (New York: Macmillan, 1960).

67 See Deborah Wormell, *Sir John Seeley and the Uses of History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 43. See Brittain, *The Women at Oxford*, 111.

In 1924, Margery Perham returned to St. Hugh's as a tutor. Much of her teaching took place at Rhodes House, then directed by Harlow[68]. Some years later, she secured funding from the Rhodes Trust in the form of a Travelling Fellowship. She had the opportunity to visit diverse regions of Africa between 1929 and 1932. Four years later, she edited the book *Ten Africans* (1936), in which she exchanged, quite possibly for the first time, with a Nigerian woman student at Oxford, one of the contributors to the volume, whose essay I will discuss in detail later.

Margery Perham was not the only woman to supervise a Nigerian doctoral student. Between 1950 and 1951, Eveline Martin, from Northern Ireland[69], played this role for Saburi Oladeni Biobaku (1918–2001), who was working on the thesis "The Egba and their neighbours, 1842–1872"[70]. During the same period, Eveline Martin was also supervising a West Indian woman PhD student, Elsa Vasta Goveia (1925–1980), whose thesis was entitled "Slave Society in the British Leeward Islands 1780–1900," and who happened to be a friend of Dike[71].

In the 1950s, Eveline Martin remained a reader in Imperial History at the University of London (a position she already held by 1938, as Table 1 indicates), until she became a Visiting Professor at University College, Ibadan. She had earned her doctorate under Newton, and her thesis was published as the second volume in the Longman series Imperial Studies, which her supervisor edited[72]. In *Trade and Politics*, Dike cited this book of Eveline as one of the few to address "the character of the association of the coastal kingdoms with European traders" in West African history[73].

68 See Patricia Pugh, "Margery Perham and Her Archive," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 19 (1991), 212–228, https://doi.org/10.1080/03086539108582856.

69 See Queen Mary University of London, "Dr Eveline Martin, Reader in African & Imperial History, Westfield College," in *Women at Queen Mary Online: A Virtual Exhibition*. Queen Mary, University of London, accessed 1 February 2024, https://women.qmul.ac.uk/virtual/women/atoz/martine.htm.

70 Omolewa, "The Education Factor", 56.

71 Elsa Goveia's memoir, composed c. 1961, posthumously published under the title "A Tribute to Elsa V. Goveia," *Caribbean Quarterly* 30, n.º 3–4 (1984): 2–6, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40653546. About her friendship with Dike, see Mary Chamberlain, "Elsa Goveia: History and Nation," *History Workshop Journal* 58 (2004): 167–190, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25472759.

72 See R. Coupland, review of *The British West African Settlements, 1750–1821: A Study in Local Administration* by E. C. Martin. *History* 13, n.º 49 (1928): 72, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24400511.

73 Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 4.

The other women academic historians cited by Dike were Freda Wolfson, Judith Blow Williams (1890–1956) and Elizabeth Donnan (1883–1955). Freda Wolfson, who appears to have been South African, studied at the University of the Witwatersrand before completing her PhD at King's College, under the supervision of Harlow and Eveline Martin[74], and later became a lecturer in History at University College, Exeter[75]. Judith Williams and Elizabeth Donnan, both Americans, taught at Wellesley College. Although biographical information on these figures is scarce, their inclusion is significant. The interwar years, coinciding with women's enfranchisement, marked a turning point: women began to attain legal parity with men at universities across the British Empire. At Oxford, women had been informally admitted since the late nineteenth century, but it was only in 1920 that they were officially allowed to receive degrees, as Margery Perham's trajectory illustrates. In this context, Vera Brittain, a contemporary Oxford student of Margery Perham's, reflected on the presence of women at the university and emphasized the internationalist pressures that led to the adoption of the so-called "Women's Statute," passed on 17 February 1920[76].

On the other side of the Atlantic, in the United States, the conferral of university degrees to women began significantly earlier. In 1833, Oberlin College, an institution with a strong pastoral and evangelical orientation, located in a "colony" of the same name in Ohio, became the first U.S. college to grant degrees to women[77]. The first woman to earn a doctorate in History, Kate Asaphine Everest (1859–1938)[78], did so sixty years later, in 1893, at the University of Wisconsin[79].

74 See Freda Wolfson, preface to "British Relations with the Gold Coast, 1843–1880" (PhD dissertation, University of London, 1950), https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/.

75 See Freda Wolfson, "A Price Agreement on the Gold Coast-The Krobo Oil Boycott, 1858–1866," *The Economic History Review* 6, n.º 1 (1953): 68–77, https://doi.org/10.2307/2591022.

76 Brittain, *The Women at Oxford*, 152.

77 Anna Julia Cooper, "The Higher Education of Women," *Southland*, April 1891, 186–202, https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_published/28.

78 Her married name was Kate Everest Levi. She was supervised by Frederick Jakson Turner, who also was, in this early period of professional training in History for women, the supervisor of Louise Phelps Kellogg (1862–1942). See Bonnie G. Smith, *The Gender of History: Men, Women, and Historical Practice* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1998), 185–212; John M. Rhea, *A Field of Their Own: Women and American Indian History, 1830–1941* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), 123–162.

79 See William B. Hesseltine and Louis Kaplan, "Women Doctors of Philosophy in History," *The Journal of Higher Education* 14, n.º 5 (1943): 255, https://doi.org/10.2307/1975170.

It was only in the interwar period that the first Black woman earned a doctorate in History: Anna Julia Cooper (c.1858–1964)[80]. Her early education took place at Oberlin College, but her doctorate was not awarded in the United States. Instead, she earned it in 1925 from the *Faculté des Lettres* at the Sorbonne. Approximately four years earlier, another pioneering Black woman, Jeanne Paule Nardal (1896–1985), later known as Paulette Nardal, began her academic journey at the same university. Born in Martinique, Philippe Grollemund claims that Nardal was the first Black woman student at the Sorbonne[81], marking a symbolic milestone that occurred nearly half a century after the admission of the first woman to the *Université de Paris*[82].

Anna Cooper scrutinized some of the same sources in *Les Archives Nationales* (French National Archives), that C. L. R. James would later consult for *The Black Jacobins*. Nevertheless, in "L'attitude de la France à l'égard de l'esclavage pendant la Révolution," her analysis was far removed from James's interpretation of the French Revolution and the colonial question[83].

The Nigerian student whom Margery Perham met and invited to contribute to *Ten Africans* was Kofoworola Aina Moore (1913–2002)[84]. Kofo Moore studied at St. Hugh's College between 1932 and 1935. In her final undergraduate year, she authored an autobiographical essay for the volume. A close reading of this essay would merit an article of its own. Kofo More is recognized as one of the first Nigerian students

80 See Deborah Gray White, introduction to *Telling Histories: Black Women Historians in the Ivory Tower*, ed. Deborah Gray White (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 1–27.

81 Philippe Grollemund, "Paulette Nardal, les confidences de la femme des fiertés noires," *FLAME*, Mondes noirs: hommage à Paulette Nardal/Black Worlds: A Tribute to Paulette Nardal, n.º 1, https://www.unilim.fr/flamme/94.

82 Carole Christen-Lécuyer, "Les premières étudiantes de l'Université de Paris," *Travail, genre et sociétés* 4, n.º 2 (2000) : 35–50, https://doi.org/10.3917/tgs.004.0035.

83 I am currently investigating Anna Julia Cooper's dissertation in the course of my doctoral research. For the present purposes, however, the reader may compare the two works. See Anna Julia Cooper. "L'attitude de la France à l'égard de l'esclavage pendant la Révolution," (PhD dissertation, Université de Paris, 1925), https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_published/25; and C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint Louverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1989 [1938]).

84 Her married name is Kofoworola Aina Ademola. See Gbemi Rosiji, *Lady Ademola: Portrait of a Pioneer: Biography of Lady Kofoworola Aina Ademola, MBE OFR* (Lagos: EnClair, 1996).

to obtain a B. A.[85], but more than that, she bore witness to a moment of transformation in British academia. In her contribution, Kofo More observed that Oxford was no longer "a city of dreaming spires" or "the secluded arbour of the privileged and the rich"[86]. With the arrival of the "scholarship undergraduate," she explained, the university's "outlook has widened" and "become openly more liberal." Oxford, in her view, was no longer aloof but "throbbing with interest" in the social questions of the day, whether a "hunger-march" or a parliamentary "debate on unemployment." Most striking was its attention to the imperial world: "India has recently been very much in the limelight; African questions are always at issue." Even if she was "disillusioned often by the Oxford Union," Kofo Moore admitted that she continued to retrace her steps there to hear debates on "problems of the Colonies"[87].

Eric Williams and Kofo Moore were contemporaries, with him arriving at Oxford around 1932[88]. Confronting this changing landscape, Eric Williams, as he later wrote in his autobiography, framed Oxford less in terms of relations among non-Western students (as Kofo Moore did) and more in terms of the tension between non-Westerners and the English establishment. He recalled, for instance, the exclusiveness of his college, where "no 'native,' however, detribalised, could fit socially into All Souls"[89]. Yet, paradoxically, Eric Williams himself came to embody the transformation of Oxford in this period. His doctoral dissertation, "The Economic Aspect of the Abolition of the West Indian Slave Trade and Slavery," directly challenged the "traditional view" held by authorities such as the Beit Professor at the time, Reginald Coupland (1884–1952): a confrontation portrayed as "a clash between generations"[90].

85 See Omolewa, "The Education Factor."

86 Kofoworola Aine Moore, "The Story of Kofoworola Aine Moore, of the Yoruba Tribe, Nigeria: Written by Herself," *Ten Africans,* edited by Margery Perham (Northwestern University Press, 1963 [1936]), 323–344.

87 Moore, "The Story of Kofoworola Aine Moore", 332.

88 Williams, *Inward Hunger*, 33.

89 Williams, *Inward Hunger*, 45.

90 Louis, Introduction to *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, 24.

Harlow, the Beit Lecturer and Keeper of Rhodes House, was Eric Williams's supervisor: "a relatively young man who was, as so few in Oxford really were, a genuine scholar," and "the premier colonial scholar," though occupying a position that did not fully reflect this status[91]. These were Eric Williams's words about him. This profile contrasts sharply with recollections from the 1950s. Bolanle Awe remembered Harlow with antipathy: "[h]e was the overall boss," sceptical of the value of teaching and researching West African history, intransigent in his attitude toward his students[92]. It is true, however, that Eric Williams's praise, besides referring to an earlier stage of Harlow's career, was closely tied to his specialization in West Indian history.

Dike recalled that his first supervisor was "a kind and courteous scholar, albeit rather aloof and official in his relations with students"[93]. Among "colonial" students, there was nevertheless a sense that he was "too close to the Colonial Office," which created unease when criticism of British rule arose[94]. Though Dike insisted in retrospect that "none of" them "was ever victimised," he admitted that the suspicion persisted at the time —until it was "dispelled by the impact of the very different temperament shown by GSG [Graham] when he succeeded Harlow as Rhodes Professor"[95]. From that point onwards, his recollections focus on Graham, who struck him as "approachable," indifferent to race or nationality, and widely respected among students for his modesty and abhorrence of arrogance. Graham, who was not only younger than Harlow but also had a very different trajectory: he came from Canada and had spent time at Harvard. According to Dike, Graham "understood and accepted the forces that were transforming the old empire into the Commonwealth"[96].

91 Williams, *Inward Hunger*, 49.

92 *Interview by Olawale.*

93 Kenneth Onwuka Dike, "Gerald S. Graham: Teacher and Historian," in *Perspectives of Empire: Essays Presented to Gerald S. Graham*, ed. John E. Flint and Glyndwr Williams (London: Longman, 1973), 5.

94 Dike, "Gerald S. Graham", 5.

95 Dike, "Gerald S. Graham", 5.

96 Dike, "Gerald S. Graham", 6.

Another North American figure with whom Dike developed a close relationship was Melville Jean Herskovits (1895–1963). This was especially the case after the publication of *Trade and Politics*, when Dike visited Northwestern University and took part in the Africanist group at the Twenty-Fifth International Congress of Orientalists[97]. Whether he had already established a personal connection with Herskovits during the research and writing of his doctoral dissertation is less certain. What is clear is that in *Trade and Politics*, Dike cited Herskovits's work: *The Myth of the Negro Past* (1941)[98].

In this context, it is important to stress the role of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in Chicago and its journal, the *Journal of Negro History*, patterned after the *American Historical Review*. The journal aimed to gather sociological and historical information about African Americans, to study populations of African descent, to publish works in this field, and to foster racial understanding by promoting mutual knowledge between groups[99]. During its first three years, the Association survived only because its founder, then a teacher at Armstrong High School in Washington, D.C., covered the annual deficits out of his own salary. Financial backing was later secured from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial and the Carnegie Foundation. Carter Godwin Woodson (1875–1950) gave the *Journal of the Negro History* a global outlook, evident in the numerous articles and reviews[100].

The *Journal of Negro History* and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History provided a relevant platform for the publication of Black scholars. Ruth Anna Fisher (1886–1975) contributed regularly to the *Journal* in the 1940s, and she also edited a book published by the Association[101]. Like Anna Cooper, she had earned her B.A. from

97 Fage, "Obituary", 96.

98 Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 1966, 28.

99 See Earl E. Thorpe, *Black Historians: A Critique* (New York: William Morrow, 1971), 110.

100 See Robin D. G. Kelley. "'But a Local Phase of a World Problem': Black History's Global Vision, 1883–1950," *The Journal of American History* 86, n.º 3 (1999): 1045–77, https://doi.org/10.2307/2568605.

101 Ruth Anna Fisher (ed.), *Extracts from the Records of the African Companies* (Washington, DC: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1928).

Oberlin College in 1906, then heading to London in 1920, first to study at the London School of Economics and Political Science (University of London), then to work for the Department of Historical Research of the Carnegie Institution of Washington and, later, for the Historical Mission of the Library of Congress[102]. At a time when photographic technology (photostats and microfilm) was reshaping practices of recordkeeping and storage, her archival labor focused on locating, identifying, selecting, and copying documents in British archives relating to American history, positioned her as a key actor in what contemporaries described as the "American missions in the European Archives"[103].

One of the major outputs of these American missions was the publication of *Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade (1544–1808)*, a four-volume collection compiled and edited by Elizabeth Donnan. Elizabeth Donnan had earned a B. A. from Cornell University in 1907 and, between 1911 and 1919, she worked in the Department of Historical Research of the Carnegie Institution of Washington[104]. Both Donnan and Ruth Anna Fisher were hired by John Franklin Jameson (1859–1937), a member of the first generation of American academic historians, co-founder of the American Historical Association, director of the Carnegie Institution's Department of Historical Research (1905–1928), and later Chief of the Division of Manuscripts at the Library of Congress, where he also held the Library's Chair of American History (1928–1937).

The editorial work of Ruth Fisher and Elizabeth Donnan extended beyond the boundaries of national history, shaping both the subfield of imperial/colonial history and Negro History. An unsigned review of Elizabeth Donnan's *Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade*, published in the *Journal of Negro History*, recommended that her volumes,

102 She is regarded as the first American woman to work in the Library of Congress. She started as Assistant researcher and then became a Consultant in Negro History. See Sylvia Lyons Render, "Afro-American Women: The Outstanding and the Obscure," *The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress* 32, n.º 4 (1975): 306–321, http://www.jstor.org/stable/29781646.

103 Roscoe R. Hill, *American Missions in European Archives* (Mexico, D. F.: Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, 1951).

104 See the obituary in "Historical News," *The American Historical Review* 60, n.º 4 (1955): 1024–1036, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1844982.

together with Ruth Ficher's *Extracts from the Records of the African Companies*, "should be studied by students of Negro History"[105]. It is plausible that this review was authored by Woodson. As Earl Thorpe observed, he was "the largest single contributor of book reviews to this publication." Moreover, Woodson was a recognized specialist: he earned his PhD in History at Harvard in 1912, becoming the second African American to do so[106].

His dissertation on Virginia's secession[107] was supervised by Albert Bushnell Hart (1854–1943), who had also supervised Du Bois, the first African American to receive a PhD in History (1895)[108]. Unlike Woodson's dissertation, Du Bois's work was published as the inaugural volume of the Harvard Historical Series. As it turned out, this very first volume of the Harvard Historical Series was cited, as noted above, in the opening volume of the Oxford Studies in African Affairs series, *Trade and Politics*.

Finally, in the United States, the challenge of the foundational exclusionary patterns of academic careers took a *sui generis* form: institutions for African Americans that were at once products of segregation and engines of prestige. Howard exemplified this, being, as Eric Williams put it, both a "Jim Crow milieu" and a "Negro Oxford"[109]. The Negro Colleges played a significant role in employment opportunities for African Americans in particular, and for African people around the Atlantic in general. After several rejections, Eric Williams joined Howard University. Alain LeRoy Locke (1885–1954) —a fellow Oxonian, former Rhodes scholarship recipient, and longtime Howard professor— served as series editor for his

105 Unsigned review of *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, edited by Elizabeth Donnan, *The Journal of Negro History* 16, n.º 1 (1931): 100–102, https://doi.org/10.2307/2714004.

106 William B. Hesseltine and Louis Kaplan, "Negro Doctors of Philosophy in History," *Negro History Bulletin* 6, n.º 3 (1942): 59, http://www.jstor.org/stable/44246869.

107 See Carter Godwin Woodson, "The Disruption of Virginia" (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 191), https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990040203140203941/catalog.

108 See Hesseltine and Kaplan, "Negro Doctors", 59; W. E. B. Du Bois. "The Suppression of the African Slave Trade in the United States of America, 1638–1871" (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1895), https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/990038300410203941/catalog.

109 Williams, *Inward Hunger*, 57.

first publication, *The Negro in the Caribbean* (1942)[110]. Nnamdi Azikiwe (1904–1996), Dike's fellow countryman, likewise moved through the network of Negro college during the interwar period[111].

The changes from 1948

When Harlow addressed the British Historical Association in early 1948, he took the opportunity to report on the developments in the production of knowledge about the British Empire's past. His participation in the Association's proceedings suggests an intention to share his academic speciality, the "[imperial/]colonial history", with an audience beyond the "closed club of experts"[112]. Harlow began by claiming that "[a]t a time when western democracy is fighting for its life, we cannot afford, in teaching British history, which is the record of a worldwide experiment in democracy, to distort it by being insular"[113]. He appeared to make an inverse operation of Seerley's Lecturers, trying to "denationalize" colonial history, in favour of a *non-insular* mode of historical writing. At the same time, he validated colonial history by invoking the trope of "West" and "democracy".

Harlow carefully tried to clarify what he meant by "colonial": "I must define my use of the word 'colonial'"[114] which implied both a demographic scope —"not only colonies proper (i.e., areas of European settlement) but all dependent territories under the jurisdiction of the British Crown" —and, naturally, a historicity— "I am excluding the history of colonies after they had been granted responsible government"[115]. In dialogue with Seeley's program, Harlow recast "Greater Britain," avoiding an explicit Pan-English narrative.

110 Alain LeRoy Locke, foreword to Eric Williams, *The Negro in the Caribbean* (Washington, DC: The Associates in Negro Folk Education, 1942).

111 See Nnamdi Azikiwe, *My Odyssey: An Autobiography* (London: C. Hurst, 1970).

112 See Michael Bentley, "Shape and Pattern in British Historical Writing, 1815–1945," in *Oxford History of Historical Writing, vol. 4*, 220.

113 Vincent Harlow, "Recent Research in Colonial History since 1783," *History* 117–118 (1948): 83, http://www.jstor.com/stable/24402207.

114 Harlow, "Recent Research in Colonial History", 73.

115 Harlow, "Recent Research in Colonial History", 73.

By redefining imperial/colonial history, Harlow encouraged his audience to consider its current state through the emergence of what he calls "new post-graduate generation"[116]. This development, which challenges the foundational exclusionary patterns of academic careers, has already been discussed in this article. Yet, through Harlow`s eyes, different meanings of the same process are brought out. From him, three main factors could explain this generational shift among researchers in the field of imperial/colonial history.

The first factor derived from the war-time experience as an encounter, for the common people,with what Eveline Martin called "the Outer Empire"[117]. This exposure produced a new wave of researchers, particularly in the field of imperial/colonial history. As Harlow noted that "quite a number have been attracted to colonial history as the result of personal contact while on war service with colonial peoples and their present-day problems"[118]. This attraction was not limited to researchers but extended also to schoolteachers. Ultimately, the return of war veterans resonated beyond the university, shaping metropolitan public opinion and sensibilities regarding the colonial question.

The second factor would be the arrival of those researchers identified, in Harlow's account, by their otherness, *non-European* or *non-Western*: "representing an increasing diversity [...] of race from Empire territories overseas"[119]. In this regard, Harlow cited two works resulting from Ph.D. research, *Ceylon under the British Occupation*[120], by Colvin Reginald de Silva (1907–1989), under the supervision of Newton, and *Capitalism & Slavery*, by Eric Williams, who was his doctoral advisee at Oxford[121]. His commentary surrounding the former

116 Harlow observed, "Alongside the 'old hands' there is a new post-graduate generation making its initial essays in historical investigation." Harlow, "Recent Research in Colonial History", 73.

117 Eveline C. Martin, "The English establishments on the Gold Coast in the second half of the eighteenth century" (master's thesis, University of London, 1922), 167, https://archive.org/details/englishestablish00mart/mode/2up.

118 Harlow, "Recent Research in Colonial History", 73.

119 Harlow, "Recent Research in Colonial History", 73.

120 Colvin Reginald de Silva, *Ceylon under the British Occupation, 1795–1833: Its Political, Administrative and Economic Development*, 2 vols. (Colombo: Colombo Apothecaries, 1942).

121 Humberto García Muñiz, after consulting letters between the advisor and the advisee archived at the Eric Williams Memorial Collection (University of the West Indies), concluded that Harlow and Williams had enjoyed a cordial relationship during that period, notwithstanding

work suggests some difficulty in its classification[122]. Nonetheless, the English historian concentrated less on what the book argued than on the circumstances that surrounded it[123], with his comments concluding in the following observation: "It is encouraging to note that other non-European students from these islands are now coming to this country to undertake research into Caribbean history"[124].

Subsequently, Harlow turned his attention to another group of researchers under the same designation (non-European or non-Western): "A few Africans are doing likewise". Harlow went on to add: "Such studies of British administration by representatives of the communities concerned should be valuable and salutary"[125]. Yet, beyond this narrowly defined scope, Harlow relegated African history to the domain of "tribal history, deriving as it does from oral tradition". Since "tribe" was conventionally understood as the antithesis of the modern state[126], and given that "oral source" was not contemplated by the framework of *Quellenkritik*[127], such a form of inquiry fell, in his view, outside the competence of historians, instead belonging to ethnologists, as Isaac Schapera and SOAS's initiatives —very much in harmony with the spirit of Seeley's program.

These are the reasons for the scepticism, as Bolanle Awe recalled, of "the overall boss" toward the very idea of West African history. In any case, it becomes evident that, unlike Seeley, Harlow could no longer address his audience through the fiction of a homogeneous 'we'. The fact that his former students included both Eric Williams and Dike

Williams's thesis challenging well-established figures in the subfield, such as Sir Reginald Coupland. See Introduction to Eric Williams, *El negro en el Caribe y otros textos*, ed. Humberto García Muñiz (La Habana: Fondo Editorial Casa de las Américas, 2011), 419–458.

122 Harlow observes: "A book of wider scope". Harlow, "Recent Research in Colonial History," 81.

123 Harlow, "Recent Research in Colonial History," 81.

124 Harlow, "Recent Research in Colonial History," 81.

125 Harlow, "Recent Research in Colonial History," 81.

126 See Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 43. A discussion about the idea of "tribe" in Dike and Diop, see Brito, "Uma leitura desde a diáspora," 229–231.

127 *De la tradition orale: essai de méthode historique* (1961) by Jan Vansina seems to be the first attempt of theoretical methodological systematization of studying oral traditions from a historiographical point of view. See David Newbury, "Contradictions at the Heart of the Canon: Jan Vansina and the Debate over Oral Historiography in Africa, 1960–1985," *History in Africa* 34 (2007): 213–254, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25483698.

only serves to confirm the extent to which the imagined unity of the Empire could no longer be sustained by an assumed ethnological unity, but was confronted with an ethnological diversity.

The participation of women historians constitutes the third factor in defining this new generation. In this context, unlike his approach to the contributions of war veterans and non-Western researchers, Harlow does not offer any diversity-based apologetic comments. This omission may be attributed to the absence of explicit overlap between the researchers' origins and their chosen object of study, as the impact of women's studies on British Imperial history begins to appear only in the late twentieth century[128].

Harlow, as shown elsewhere in this study, was a colleague and a supervisor to women historians. In his intervention at the British Historical Association, he named Margery Perham, Lillian Margery Penson and Eveline Martin. Unlike their male counterparts, also cited by Harlow, their roles were presented more in terms of professorship and editorship than as authors of substantive historical works[129]. This framing is striking, given that each already had published monographs: *The Colonial Agents of the British West Indies* (1924) by Lillian Penson, *The British West African Settlements* (1927) by Eveline Martin and *Native Administration in Nigeria* (1937) by Margery Perham.

If Science had been the driving force behind the transformations in the concepts of time and space that enabled Seeley to imagine a Greater Britain, War became the motor of similar transformations in Harlow's perspective. War was not only a moment of overseas encounters and exchanges but also blurred the frontiers between civilization and barbarism: crimes once thought to be committed against distant "primitive" people now occurred in the very heart of Europe. The idea of progress, once invoked as an extenuating circumstance for the global criminality of the European modern states, could no longer be sustained in the face of over-

128 See, for instance, Robin W. Winks, "The Future of Imperial History," in *Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 5, 665.

129 Harlow, "Recent Research in Colonial History," 81–82.

whelming destruction. Therefore, Harlow's non-insular history was also non-nationalist, with the effect of denaturalizing European rivalries: "the history of Britain overseas is part of the history of Europe overseas." As a result, his resilient faith in the Empire was recast on a Pan-European foundation with an openness to racial diversity.

His recognition of a new generation of historians also marked a difference from Seeley, but this acknowledgement remained bound by an intellectual division of labour: Caribbean historians were expected to write Caribbean history, Africans to write African history in the narrow sense of what Harlow described as "British administration in individual territories," each confined to their own region within the imperial geography. Even women, whose presence he noted, seemed to be valued more for their institutional positions than for their intellectual contributions, as they were largely excluded from authorship in the core outputs of recent research.

Thus, although his words were delivered in an academic environment where the imagined unity between speaker and audience —so strongly suggested in *The Expansion of England*— was no longer viable, Harlow closed off the possibility of writing the history of the Outer Empire beyond a Western-centric perspective and restricted the capacity of non-Western and women historians to engage with the Empire as a whole.

A year after Harlow's presentation, the issue of imperial/colonial history was revisited by a representative of this new generation he had witnessed. It was John William Blake (1912–1987) at another relevant academic forum for British historians: a meeting of the Royal Historical Society[130]. This time, however, a Copernican inversion had taken place: the emphasis shifted from the Empire as a unified whole to its constituent parts. Blake theorized the historical inquiry of "regional or tropical studies," which would be later formalized as "area studies," a geographic specialization within the imperial/colonial history that can be traced back to developments in the interwar period[131].

130 John William Blake even paraphrases Harlow's "Recent Research in Colonial History" at the beginning of his own paper. See John William Blake, "The Study of African History," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 32 (1950): 49.

131 Louis, Introduction to *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, 24–25.

Blake directed his attention specifically towards the history of the West Coast of Africa. He also advanced a more radical version of Harlow's critique of insular history, advocating for a historical perspective independent of the historicity of Harlow's *British administration in individual territories* — one that embraces "history [...] through African eyes and for its own sake"[132]. In other words, Blake added a layer to Harlow's framing of imperial/colonial historical inquiry as "the history of the impact of western civilization, on both sides of the Atlantic, upon the rest of the planet"[133], a history of "the reaction of native cultures to alien culture"[134]. Speaking as a professor of Modern History at the Queen's University Belfast[135], located in North Ireland, in a region which, in Seeley's words, "the English" were once "but a colony in the midst of an alien population still in the tribal stage"[136], Blake also represented an unorthodox voice within the subfield, a stance that subsumes his intervention under the dominant group (blue) of cited works in *Trade and Politics*, as shown in Figure 1.

Indeed, Dike was among the attendees at the Royal Historical Society meeting: "I remember very well the astonished but delighted reaction of a young Nigerian scholar, Dr. Kenneth [O.] Dike, to an appeal I made in March 1949", Blake wrote in 1977, in the Preface of the Second Edition (1977), of *European Beginnings in West Africa, 1454–1578*[137]. This work was an M. A. thesis started in 1933 and finished in 1936 at King's College, when the author was a recipient of an Inglis scholarship. The volume was first published in 1937, being the fourteenth of the Imperial Studies Series, whose general editor, as already mentioned, was Newton. Dike cited this work as one of the studies on

132 Blake, "The Study of African History," 49.

133 Harlow, "Recent Research in Colonial History," 83.

134 Blake, "The Study of African History," 51.

135 Biographical notes on Blake, see Fage, "British African Studies", 402; P. E. Hair, "J. W. Blake: A Tribute," *History in Africa* 16 (1989): 413–414.

136 Seeley, *The Expansion of England*, 9.

137 John William Blake, preface to *West Africa: Quest for God and Gold, 1454–1578: A Survey of the First Century of White Enterprise in West Africa, with Particular Reference to the Achievement of the Portuguese and Their Rivalries with Other European Powers* (London: Curzon, 1977), xii.

the "diplomatic relations" between the Portuguese and the southern Nigerian states during the early Portuguese contacts[138]. Blake's paper at the Royal Historical Society was likewise used as one of the theoretical methodological references in *Trade and Politics*.

Blake's methodological proposition, in advocating for an African historical perspective, called for a *longue durée* narrative extending from the Stone Age to the Industrial Era, departing from the periodization of the First and Second British Empires proposed by Seeley, later endorsed by Harlow. Within this temporal framework, Europeans and Afro-Europeans' relations are treated as part of a global relationship between the "Negro race", "indigenous peoples" of Africa, or simply "Africans" and the alien cultures. Such an enterprise, Blake argued, required a new kind of historian: "the equipment of the historian by itself will not be enough. To complete the task properly the resources of the anthropologist, the philologist, and the archaeologist need also to be brought to bear"[139], Even within the intersection with the developments of the First and Second Empires, Blake applied Harlow's non-insular vision in more practical terms: "there is a very urgent need for centralizing and summarizing the somewhat isolated researches of British, Dutch, South African, French, Belgian and American scholars"[140]. In this context, he also drew attention to a topic largely overlooked by the English historian: the transatlantic slave trade and its aftermath, which he regarded as unavoidable for comprehending the modern history of the West Coast of Africa. It is important to note that Blake's use of the term "West Coast of Africa" does not refer to the British administrative territory known as West Africa, but rather to an Atlantic Africa encompassing the regions of Senegambia, Guinea, Congo, and Angola.

In contrast to Harlow, whose curatorial effort resulted in a bibliographical repertoire restricted to English-language materials, albeit with a wide range of places of publication, from Colombo (Ceylon)

138 Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 43.

139 Blake, "The Study of African History," 64.

140 Blake, "The Study of African History," 64.

to Toronto (Canada), Blake's assemblage was multilingual, drawing on Dutch, French, Portuguese, and Spanish scholarship. Moreover, his non-insular orientation made him attentive to intellectual debates beyond British Academia. For instance, he observed: "recently American historians have shown increasing interest in the tribal homelands from which the enslaved came and a draw by [Ulrich] Philips of long slave coffles marching down to the West Coast from the heart of jungle Africa"[141].

In Blake's utterance, one may encounter female authorship: books of authors already mentioned like *A Tropical Dependency* (1905) by Flora Shaw, *British West African Settlements* by Eveline Martin, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America* (4 vols.,1930–35) edited by Elizabeth Donnan, and new mentions as Sybil Eyre Crowe and her *Berlin West African Conference, 1884–5* (1942) and Thora Guinevere Stone's M. A. dissertation "The struggle for power on the Senegal and Gambia, 1660–1713" (1921)[142].

At this point, tentative tendencies can be traced out of the group of women historians cited by Blake, Harlow and Dike. The former, as shown in Figure 1, cited eight publications of woman: again the above books of Eveline Martin, Flora Shaw and Elizabeth Donnan, and also Mary Henrietta Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa* (1897), Freda Wolfson's "British Relations with the Gold Coast, 19th Century" (unpublished thesis), Dorothy Wellesley's *Sir George Goldie* (1934) and Ethelreda Lewis's *Alfred Aloysisys Horn* (1929). Moreover, Dike was a contemporary and friend of Elsa Goveia in London, and he later worked with Lalage Jean Bown (1927–2021) and Aba Cecile Mchardy (1930–2015) on the Organising Committee of the First International Congress of Africanists, where he assumed the role of chairman[143].

141 Blake, "The Study of African History," 51.

142 It is reasonable to assume that Harlow and Blake were aware of the gender of the authors, given the scarcity of women authors in that male-dominated context. To underscore the significance of their womanhood for today's readers, I took the additional step of uncovering the complete names of these women.

143 See *The Proceedings of the First International Congress of Africanists, Accra 11th–18th December 1962*, ed. Lalage J. Brown and Michael Crowder (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964).

These observations underscore the ubiquity of women in the consolidation and subsequent developments of imperial/colonial history as an academic subfield, as well as in the particular case of Dike's socio-spatial trajectory. In this context, although women historians produced a notable number of biographies[144], their more decisive contribution seems to have been in area studies. Thora Stone and Eveline Martin were surely among the pioneers of the tendency, particularly with respect to West Africa[145]. They belonged to a circle at the IHR, under the patronage of Newton, alongside Caroline Skeel (1872–1951). It is said that the majority of the students in New's seminar inaugural session were women[146]. Beyond this regional emphasis, their unorthodox enterprise within imperial/colonial history can be characterized by an interdisciplinary orientation —primarily toward economic history— and by an intercolonial framework that sought to link the histories of the West Indies and West Africa[147].

Hence, the generational transition noted by Harlow parallels Kofo More's account of scholarship undergraduates arriving in the 1930s —a process that constituted a significant demographic innovation in terms of geographical, social, racial, and gender diversity, rather than merely a change in age. Moreover, it is fair to argue that the participation of non-Western scholars actually had less to do with Harlow's intellectual division of labor and more to do with establishing Blake's new kind of historian. This new historian was the main driving force of an unorthodox current to imperial/colonial history, which, I contend, finds its most developed expression in *Trade and Politics*. The book embodies a meta-

144 The most famous is Perham's *Lugard: The Years of Adventure, 1858-1898* (1956) and *Lugard: The Years of Authority, 1898–1945* (1960). It is also worth to mention the already cited Dorothy Wellesley's *Sir George Goldie* (1934) and Harlow give notice about a study of Eveline Martin about Sir James Stephen. See "Recent research," 82.

145 See Martin, "The English Establishments", 167, https://archive.org/details/englishestablish00mart/mode/2up.

146 See Sarah Stockwell, "The Imperial and World History Seminar," in *Talking History: Seminar Culture at the Institute of Historical Research, 1921–2021*, ed. David Manning (London: University of London Press, 2024), 177.

147 "Hence though our theme is essentially and exclusively Caribbean, it often carries us into the ill-explored recesses of West Africa's story, as it necessarily must." Arthur Percival Newton, *The European Nations in the West Indies, 1493–1688* (Adam & Charles Black, 1966 [1933]), xvii.

narrative of power defined by a decentering territoriality and ethnologically diverse politics. This worked not only through the much-discussed use of oral tradition but also by repurposing the puissant machinery of metropolitan libraries and archives, rehabilitating productions of pre-scientific and independent/amateur scholars as valid historical interlocutors and adopting an interdisciplinary approach to its crafting. Dike maintained a commitment to history as a science but in a fashion far less aseptic toward other forms of historical knowledge than Seeley.

Conclusion

This article has examined *Trade and Politics* genealogy, intending to open up an alternative way of understanding both the work and its author. Rather than approaching the book as the foundational expression of a nationalist historiography, it has explored how Dike's intervention can also be situated within a broader field of Atlantic historical production shaped by institutional transition, transimperial circulation, and shifting academic boundaries in the mid-twentieth century.

By analyzing the bibliography of the book and allocating it to classes with relevance to that particular site of production of history, the article has sought to reconstruct the environment in which Dike operated. This includes the development of imperial/colonial history as a subfield, the reorganization of academic institutions, and the growing presence of scholars from colonized regions, of non-European origins, and of women within the historical profession. The focus was mainly on the interwar period, also approaching the aftermath of the Second World War. These overlapping transformations formed the backdrop against which Dike crafted his research questions, selected his interlocutors, and positioned his argument.

In the development of imperial/colonial history as a subfield, two moments were decisive. The first was its emergence at the intersection of the intellectual ambitions of historians such as Seeley, endowments financed by imperial fortunes, and the restrictive social landscape of British universities. The second came with the arrival of new voices, coinciding with the rise of extra-academic arenas of intellectual exchange and political imagination of

Black Atlantic as Pan-African Congress, the Universal Negro Improvement Association, the Comintern, and *Négritude*, together with "a wide array of internationalists movements and institutions —liberal, socialist, communist, Chrisitan, feminist, and imperialist in their orientation"[148].

At the same time, the historical profession itself was experiencing its own form of internationalism, with the creation of associations such as the *Comité international des sciences historiques* (1926) and the International Institute of Social History (1935). Among these initiatives was an event organized by Henri Pirenne, in which Ruth Fisher participated[149]. In this context, the profession was increasingly exposed to divergent political orientations from within and from outside, it was no longer possible to claim historical truth from the narrow vantage point of white, male nationalism.

The inequality of power in the historical production was evident at different levels, as were the strategies devised to navigate it. Patrons were indispensable for gaining access to certain positions, yet these relationships were asymmetrical rather than one-sided, and not always obvious. This is illustrated by the material sources of the institutionalisation of imperial/colonial history, by Kofo Moore's reflections on Oxford's transformation, and by Harlow's observation of a new generation.

Nevertheless, single-sex and predominantly Black institutions —often the only professional avenues available to women and historians of African descent— together with parallel initiatives such as the *Journal of Negro History*, became crucial sites of historical authority for theses newcomers.

If, as Gilroy suggests, the ship was the central chronotope of the nineteenth century, then for academic historians in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, the chronotope of the (scholar)ship became the primary vehicle for mobility and exchange. Many historians of the Black Atlantic were its beneficiaries. The experience of displacement fostered cross-fertilization and provided access to the machinery of knowledge —libraries, archives, and related institutions.

148 Matera, *Black London*, 16–17.

149 "A Tribute," *J. Franklin Jameson: A Tribute*, ed. Ruth Anna Fisher and Willaim Lloyd Fox (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1965), 1–8.

In this context, Dike was training as an imperial/colonial historian in a period of intergenerational tension. *Trade and Politics*, from the perspective of imperial/colonial historiography, could be classified as an area study, which brings the novelty of being concerned with the "position of power" of Africans and the progressive decline of that power, from the suppression of the traffic in men and the rise of "legitimate commerce."

It may also be read as a form of "Negro History" in the Woodson's sense, capturing the African positions of power in the formation of the Atlantic world. Like Eric Williams, who described *Capitalism & Slavery*, as at once English economic history, West Indian history, and "Negro history," Dike characterized *Trade and Politics* as a study of both Atlantic and tribal history[150]. Therefore, the fact that its topic is located at the intersection of various interests is not a point of mere academic debate; rather, it demonstrates that the work matters to a more diverse "us" as human societies.

The interdisciplinary nature of this historical writing is unequivocal. Yet within this interdisciplinarity, political history assumes particular importance. The book's principal argument locates power in territorial sovereignty, above all in the defence of the traders' frontier along the seaboard, and the capacity of Delta societies to adjust "to the new economy and changing society." As Dike himself observed, "Trade and politics are inextricably mixed,"[151] a view reflected in the book's very structure, which shifts back and forth between more economic and more political topics[152]. Nevertheless, *Trade and Politics* does not stem from a materialist, Marxist-inflected approach to economic and social history. Anthropology also figured prominently in this interdisciplinary outlook, as tribal organization was redefined and elevated to the status of a legitimate historical and political entity. In order to cope with unequal access to the means of historical production, the new kind of historian forges the hybridity of ideas that Gilroy discusses; this process is in the same vein as an interdisciplinary methodological choice, it

150 Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 20.

151 Dike, *Trade and Politics*, 80.

152 See A. Adu Boahen, "The African Association, 1788–1805," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 5, n.º 1 (1961): 44, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41405737.

differs in that it can be extended to embrace an intercultural and less self-assertive scientific history.

The Decolonization and the Civil Rights Movement established a rupture in this regime of historicity. The second half of twentieth century saw the rename of *The Journal of Negro History* to the *Journal of African American History*, the imperial/colonial historians concerned with Africa became Africanist historians, as we saw there were the emergence of Ibadan and Dakar school of history, predominantly Black and single-sex high learning institutions came to an end; new multidisciplinary fields such as Gender Studies and Black Studies took shape, among other transformations.

On 9 March 1961, Du Bois sent a letter to Dike, then based in Ibadan, concerning the long-envisioned *Encyclopedia Africana* project. That was not the first time he sent a letter to Dike about the project. On this occasion, Du Bois expressed worry about the Arabic-speaking people of Africa. Nonetheless, his tone was optimistic: "I think our project is proceeding favorably, but, of course, there are lots of difficulties. I shall write in more detail later concerning our plans"[153]. Du Bois died two years later, coincidentally a day before the March on Washington, where Martin Luther King delivered his most iconic speech. The *Encyclopedia Africana* project remained unrealized in his lifetime. In a way, a poetic metaphor of the end of the regime of historical production this article seeks to reconstruct.

153 W. E. B. Du Bois, Letter to Kenneth Dike, 9 March 1961, in *W. E. B. Du Bois Papers* (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries, http://credo.library.umass.edu/view/full/mums312-b153-i397.

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