



# AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER NEWSLETTER

## New Directions

Timothy Longman, Director



Welcome to the inaugural edition of the African Studies Center Newsletter. When I took over as director of the ASC in June 2009, I identified engaging our alumni more systematically and connecting more effectively with the African studies community in the Boston area and beyond as important goals. We hope that this Newsletter provides alumni and friends of the ASC with a better idea of the exciting Africa-related work that is underway at Boston University. Please keep us

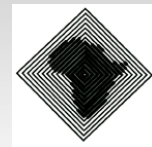
informed of important developments in your life and career so that we can pass them along to other members of our community.

Now in my third year, I am pleased to report on a number of new developments at the ASC. Long known for our excellence as a center for graduate students, we are working to increase our focus on undergraduates. We have created more programming with undergraduates in mind, and

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## Improving Communication Key to Center Plans

Peter Quella, Assistant Director

Since arriving to a warm African Studies Center welcome in the frigid cold of Boston last January, I have taken up the Center's goals of improving and renewing its communications strategy. Change started with the launch of the new website ([www.bu.edu/africa](http://www.bu.edu/africa)) at the end of September. With a WordPress core, the website has an updated aesthetic of

pictures and photos from Center activities and a simplified dropdown menu organization, which should make finding the desired information easier. If one still can't find something, a Google search window at the top right corner of every page allows searches specific to the African Studies site.

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### **New Directions, Continued from page 1**

for the first time, we are able to offer FLAS fellowships for undergraduates, both during the school year and for summer study.

In January, we welcomed Dr. Peter Quella as our full-time Assistant Director. A graduate of the African Languages and Literature program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Peter is a former Peace Corps Volunteer in Lesotho and was based in Johannesburg immediately before joining us. He is taking a primary role in many of our activities, including alumni relations.

This newsletter is one of several initiatives to improve our public outreach. Among Peter's big accomplishments is the development of a new website. Check it out at [www.bu.edu/africa](http://www.bu.edu/africa). We have also launched a Facebook page for the African Studies Center. At this year's African Studies Association meeting, please join us at a reception on Friday, November 18, 7:30 p.m. at the Marriott Wardman Park.

The ASC is involved in several exciting projects. The Director of our African Language Program, Dr. Fallou Ngom, has overseen the development of two fantastic new web-based curriculum modules for introductory and advanced classes (See [www.bu.edu/200word](http://www.bu.edu/200word)), as well as the first-ever textbook for teaching Wolof in the adapted Arabic script, Ajami. In another project, we are working closely with \*Facing History and Ourselves (see footnote below) on developing a secondary school curriculum on the anti-apartheid struggle that will be soon available for use in high schools throughout the US. We are

also overseeing a partnership between the BU School of Education and the University of Fort Hare on using technology to improve pedagogy and enable international linkages between students in South Africa and the Boston Area.

In 2013, we will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of the ASC. We are proud of our long tradition of supporting African studies at Boston University and look forward to keeping you informed of all of the exciting new programs that we continue to undertake.

\* Facing History and Ourselves, a non-governmental organization founded in 1976 in Brookline, Massachusetts, believes that education is the key to combating bigotry and nurturing democracy.

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### **Improving, Continued from page 1**

Even more value lies in the new events and calendar listings on the Center's homepage, where since launch thirty Africa-related events occurring on campus or in the community have been posted. A unique feature of WordPress websites is the interaction supported between visitors and Center through forms. There are eight such forms on the site—the most popular being one for submitting feedback and questions to Barbara Brown and the Outreach Program. The website tells us that over seven hundred visitors viewed the Outreach Contact Form and ten submitted queries.

Those interested in the work of our Publications unit should keep a close eye on the website. Soon it will be possible to purchase *IJAHS* journal subscriptions, issues, individual articles, and all our Working Papers in electronic (pdf) format online by credit card. We're also working to make all of Outreach's educational products available for online purchase by credit card too.

By turning to MailChimp for our email system, we've gained tremendous flexibility compared to the previous majordomo format. One can now join our mailing list via a link on the website (<http://www.bu.edu/africa/about/mailin-g-list/>), and one can unsubscribe via a link at the bottom of every email we send. MailChimp will also allow integration with two other popular means of communication—Twitter and Facebook—and eventually integration with SurveyMonkey that will make it easier for us to gain feedback on our activities.

Going forward we'll work to improve our two distinct formats for news—the electronic "Weekly Brief" and the printed biannual "Newsletter." I have worked to make the "Weekly Brief" an easy to read and accurate summary of the upcoming week's Africa-related events in the Boston area. The "Newsletter" will be our means to report on the Center's work, and to share alumni and current student news as a means of building networks, raising awareness of shared interests. As is the case with all newsletters, its quality will be dependent on the generosity of our African Studies community (You!) supplying us with news, personal and career-oriented, and exhibiting a willingness to strengthen working networks. Please feel free to share your thoughts for improving any of these with me at [pdquella@bu.edu](mailto:pdquella@bu.edu).



L–R: Fallou Ngom, director of the African Language Program, visiting researcher from China, Liu Zhongwei, assistant director, Peter Quella and Senegal-based programs coordinator, Ablaye Diakite liaise at the Dugout.

## A Partnership for Financial Democracy— BU Center for Finance, Law & Policy

Neal Estey

In order to be genuinely independent, an individual must possess the knowledge and skills that enable self-sufficiency. Otherwise, that person is vulnerable to the whims of others. In financial and economic systems, problems emerge when people do not have the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed decisions and take appropriate actions. Economics, in this sense, is largely about the needs, wants, decisions and behaviors of individuals.

The new Boston University Center for Finance, Law & Policy, organized under the Office of the Provost, serves as a multidisciplinary center that engages the University's faculty, students and industry stakeholders to educate, analyze, discuss, and recommend solutions regarding the critical financial, regulatory, and policy challenges of the day as those challenges impact the national and global financial system and the larger economy. This mission is achieved through high-quality research and analysis, engaging in and encouraging public dialog about the proper role and functioning of finance in local and global economies and societies, and by fostering collaborative initiatives. The Center works with schools, colleges and

centers within the University, and also with leading experts from government and industry.

Within this framework the center has established a financial democracy initiative. Financial democracy refers to economies in which all individuals have both the freedom and skills to participate. Ensuring that the poor have those skills and access to financial services is indispensable to the alleviation of poverty. And yet, globally many individuals who are in greatest need are denied access to financial services precisely because of their poverty, as well as their gender, race or other discriminatory classifications. Subsequently, despite increasing demand for financial services, that demand is rarely met by conventional financial institutions. The financial democracy initiative addresses these issues through several projects pertaining to microfinance,

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### **African Studies Center Newsletter**

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#### **Language Program Staff**

Fallou Ngom, Director  
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Lori Delucia, Hausa  
Telahun Gebrehiwot, Amharic  
Doctor Katamzi, Zulu  
Jennifer Rosenbush, Zulu  
Alex Zito, Wolof

#### **Graduate Student Newsletter Editor**

Eniola Soyemi

We welcome our faculty, alumni, and students to send us updates and news. Please send updates to the African Studies Center for our spring 2012 Newsletter by April 1, 2012.

## New Hires in Anthropology, Economics and International Relations



*Joanna Davidson*

### **Anthropology**

Assistant Prof Joanna Davidson is a cultural anthropologist focusing on rural West Africans' responses to environmental and economic change. She has conducted long-term ethnographic research in Guinea-Bissau among Diola rice cultivators. She is writing a book on the changing notion of "sacred rice" in this region, and she published several articles on this and related topics. One important aspect of her work highlights the gaps between the goals of development programs and local peoples, and helps to explain the mixed success of new food technologies in Africa. She received her BA from Stanford University and her MA and PhD from Emory University.

### **Economics**

Assistant Prof Kehinde Ajayi's research interests are in the areas of economic development and the economics of education. Her current research examines whether school choice programs reduce educational inequality and evaluates the effect of school quality on student performance. Kehinde was a Spencer Foundation Dissertation Fellow and a

Fulbright Fellow. She received her PhD in economics from the University of California, Berkeley and her BA in economics from Stanford University.



*Kehinde Ajayi*

### **International Relations**

Assistant Prof Michael Woldemariam is a specialist on African politics, international security, political violence and conflict, and post-conflict governance and institution building. His doctoral dissertation focused on African insurgencies in Ethiopia and Mozambique and sought to explain the dynamics of factionalism and fragmentation in rebel organizations, building on fieldwork in those two countries and in refugee communities in Europe and North America. He has numerous fellowship awards, including serving as Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation fellow, an Africanist Doctoral Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and as an American Political



*Michael Woldemariam*

Science Association Minority Fellow. He also has conducted field studies in Somaliland, South Africa and India. Woldemariam earned his BA at Beloit College in political science and sociology and his PhD from the Department of Politics at Princeton University.

### **Partnership, continued from page 3**

regulatory frameworks, financial literacy, and other aspects of financial inclusion. Projects currently involve people and organizations on a global, local, and University level.

The Center connects experts from different disciplines. In this regard it is with great pleasure that the Center is actively pursuing collaborations with the ASC, which embodies a similar interdisciplinary approach.

As part of the ASC community, you are invited to engage the Center and share your own questions and ideas for collaboration.

## Faculty News



Joanna Davidson with her daughter in Guinea.

**Dr. David Hamer, Dr. Katherine Semrau, and Arthur Mazimba**

Since November 2009, Dr. David Hamer and Dr. Katherine Semrau of Boston University's Center for Global Health and Development, along with Arthur Mazimba (former Staehelne Fellow of the African Studies Center) of Boston University's Zambia-based office, the Zambia Center for Applied Health Research and Development, have been leading research for the Zambia Chlorhexidine Application Trial (ZamCAT). This study is implemented in partnership with the Zambia Ministry of Health and funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The aim of the study is to demonstrate whether chlorhexidine, a simple antiseptic wash applied to the umbilical stump of newborns, will reduce infection and thus improve infant survival rates. Each year nearly 4 million children die before 4 weeks of age, with one-third of these deaths due to infection.

Since launching the project, the study team has conducted formative research

to identify community-specific behaviors and practices related to umbilicus care through focus group discussions and in-depth interviews in Zambia's Southern Province. Over 42,000 pregnant Zambian women are being recruited for the study and currently over 12,000 have been enrolled.

The anticipated outcome of this study will be a proven, simple method to reduce neonatal mortality. Similar research in Nepal found that the neonatal mortality rate was reduced by 25%; and up to 34% in children who had the first chlorhexidine application within 24 hours of birth. The intervention—which costs pennies—would be a cheap, effective method to protect newborns in the first 28 days of life.

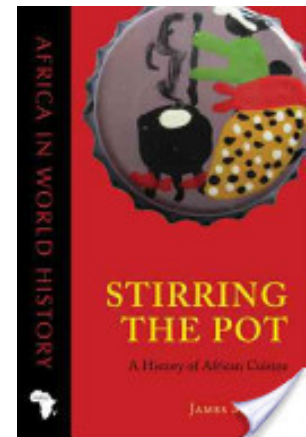
**Margaret Litvin, Assistant Professor of Arabic and Comparative Literature** has recently published her book: *Hamlet's Arab Journey: Shakespeare's Prince and Nasser's Ghost* (Princeton, 2011). The book examines the many workings of Shakespeare's Hamlet in

postcolonial Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. Her current book project (working title: *Arab Writers, Moscow Dreams: Forgotten Flows of Twentieth-Century Culture*), explores the educational and cultural ties between the Soviet Union and several Arab countries during and since the Cold War, tracing their effects on Arabic literature and theatre.

Prof. Litvin is on leave in the fall of 2011, doing research in Cairo. You can catch up with her on her blog: *Send Down the Basket!* at <http://margaretlitvin.com/>.

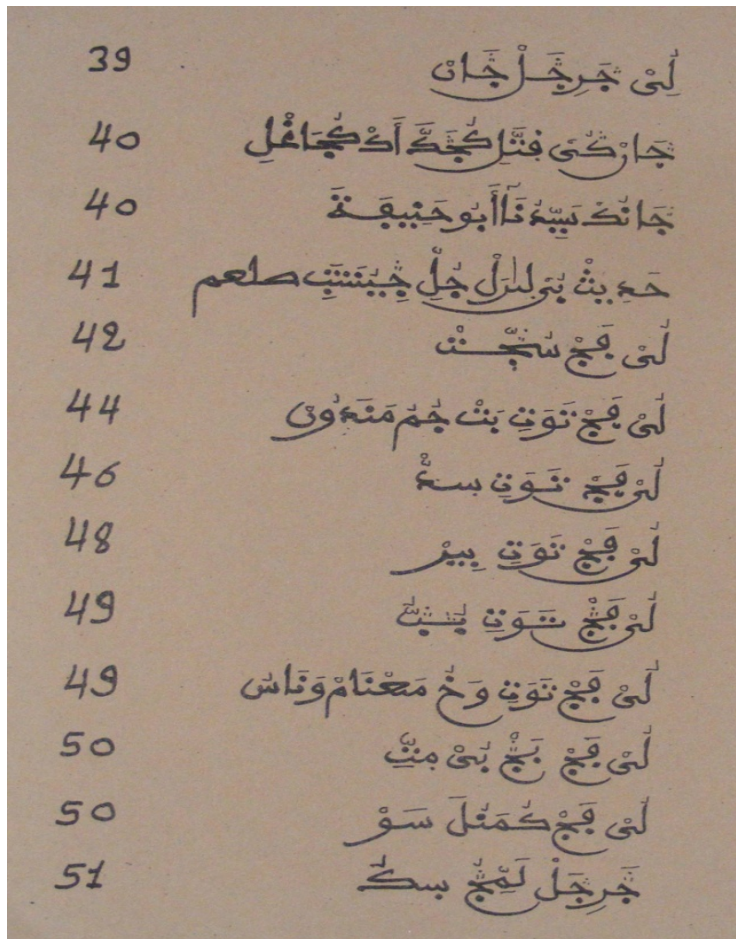
**James C. McCann, Professor of History, Associate Director for Development, African Studies Center, Director ad interim, Pardee Center for the Study of the Longer Term Future**

Prof. McCann's book *Stirring the Pot: A History of African Cuisine* won the 2010 Best in the World Award (African Cuisine Book category) at the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards, held in Paris in March 2011.



**Fallou Ngom, Associate Professor of Anthropology; Director, African Language Program, African Studies Center, Boston University**

Dr. Ngom leads the African Ajami Library (AAL) project, which is a collaborative initiative between Boston University and WARA/WARC funded by the British Library's Endangered Archives Program. AAL is envisioned as a digital "Alexandria Library" of



Sample of a collected Wolofal text, listing the chapters of a book of medical advice

- 39. The importance of praying
- 40. The prayer that helps the poor and someone who is worried
- 40. The prayer of Seydinā Abu Hanifa
- 41. The hadith that explains the benefits of using the Prophet's name
- 42. Healing sojjet, (varicella)
- 44. Healing any type of eye pain
- 46. Healing rheumatism
- 48. Healing stomachache
- 49. Healing headache
- 49. Healing sore throat
- 50. Healing toothache
- 50. Healing someone who cannot urinate
- 51. Benefits of the parrot's tongue (for healing children with speech disorder)

Islamized Africa, a continental open access public repository of aggregated Ajami materials. The first step to build AAL occurred this past summer. Dr. Ngom and Mr. Roger Brisson, head of Metadata Services at Boston University traveled to Senegal to lead a workshop at WARC. The workshop focused on digitization techniques of endangered Wolof Ajami manuscripts.

Although written records are rarely regarded as part of sub-Saharan Africa's intellectual heritage, important bodies of Ajami literature have existed in Oromo, Somali, Tigrigna, Kiswahili, Amharic, and Malagasy in East Africa, and in Bamanakan, Mandinka, Kanuri, Yoruba, Berber, Hausa, Wolof, and Fulfulde in West Africa for centuries. In South Africa, Muslim Malay slaves produced the first written record of Afrikaans in Ajami. The neglect is due to a number of factors, including the lack

of an Ajami public depository and the limited number of individuals with the linguistic skills and cultural background required to analyze Ajami documents. Yet, Ajami traditions in Africa are centuries-old and are quite varied; consisting of biographies, eulogies, genealogies, talismanic resources, therapeutic medical manuals, family journals, business transactions, historical records, speeches, texts on administrative and diplomatic matters (correspondence between Sultans and provincial rulers), Islamic jurisprudence, behavioral codes, grammar, and even visual arts. The primary goal of AAL is to ensure that these materials are no longer treated as footnotes, but as major sources of local African knowledge.

**Parker Shipton, Professor of Anthropology** at the Center, has completed his trilogy on entrustment and obligation in western Kenya and

abroad, with the publication of the third volume, *Credit Between Cultures: Farmers, Financiers, and Misunderstanding in Africa* (Yale University Press, 2010). This has further produced two chapters of other works now in press. The first: "Recruiting Nature: Snakes, Serpents, and Social Movements in East Africa and North America," forthcoming in David Gordon and Shepard Krech III, eds., *Indigenous Knowledge and the Environment in Africa and North America* (Ohio University Press, 2011). The second: "Belonging, Exclusion, and Ethnic Competition," forthcoming in Hiroyuki Hino, John Lonsdale, Gustav Ranis, and Frances Stewart, eds., *Ethnic Diversity and Economic Instability in Africa: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Shipton continues as series editor of the *Blackwell Anthologies in Social and Cultural Anthropology* (Wiley-Blackwell Publishing), and as co-editor (animals) of *On the Human*, a forum website from the National Humanities Center (NHC). In the summer of 2011, he led an interdisciplinary Jessie Ball duPont Seminar course at the NHC, in North Carolina, for college and university instructors on “The Concept of the Savage: Fact, Fiction, and Factual Fiction.”

His current studies concern human-animal relations, fictive kinship, and the twists and turns of sequencing in ritual, ceremony, and other affairs. Extending his earlier work on western Kenya and the Bantu-Nilotic language convergence zone, Shipton and several students and postdocs have begun collaborative archival work on the cultural history of Nilotic-speaking Acholi Lwo and their Bantu-speaking neighbors in northern Uganda. In other intermittent work on the Senegambian region of the western Sahel, he is delighted to have the company of Prof. Fallou Ngom and the recently arrived Prof. Joanna Davidson.

**Pamela Allara, Visiting Researcher, African Studies Center**, is guest curator for the exhibition, “Transformation and Exchange: Boston Artists and Artist Proof Studio, Johannesburg, 1995-2010,” taking place at the Tufts University Art Gallery, May 31–July 29, 2012. She is also writing an essay for the catalogue “Coming of Age: The Artist Proof Studio at 21,” at the Johannesburg Art Gallery, which opened in April 2010.

She is the author of “Paul Emmanuel: The South African Male in Process,” *NKA: Journal of Contemporary South African Art* 28 (Spring, 2011), pp. 56–64. Also forthcoming is her essay, “Zwelethu Mthethwa: The Art of

Documentary,” which will be included in the anthology, *The Blackwell Companion to Modern Art in Africa*, edited by Monica B. Visonà and Gitti Salami, 2012.

**Jean Borgatti, African Studies Center Visiting Researcher**, has recently opened an exhibit called “African Conversations: Works from the Permanent Collection in Dialogue,” at the Fitchburg Art Museum, North Central Massachusetts’ oldest and most treasured cultural institution.

African Conversations places African works in the museum’s permanent galleries, juxtaposed with objects from Asia, ancient Egypt, Classical Greece and Rome, and 19th- and 20th-century Europe and America, as well as in two special exhibitions—“LitGraphic: The World of the Graphic Novel” (a touring exhibition organized by the Norman Rockwell Museum), and “Discovery from the Air: Aerial Photography,” by William Garnett. The conversations may be formal (a Senufo bird staff shown with the images of flying Canadian geese), or conceptual (an Oron-Ibibio elder’s portrait adjacent to a 19th-century New England deacon’s portrait). We delight in being able to place a Hubert Ogunde 1967 publication in English of *Yoruba Ronu! or Yoruba People, Think Again!* in the context of the world of the graphic novel. On exhibit in the Simons Building lobby is our newest major acquisition—Sokari Douglas Camp’s “The Drummers”—last seen in the United States as part of her exhibition at the Smithsonian in 1988–1989. The exhibits run from September 25, 2011–January 1, 2012. Dr. Borgatti will do a gallery talk on Wednesday, December 10, 6:00 pm. For details please visit [www.fitchburgartmuseum.org](http://www.fitchburgartmuseum.org)

**Jeanne Marie Penvenne, Associate Professor of History and Core Faculty in International Relations, Tufts University, African Studies Center Visiting Researcher**

Prof. Penvenne’s most recent publications include: “Learning from Jill Dias: Press, Photography and People,” *Actas do Encontro: As Licções de Jill Dias* (Lisbon: Universidade Nova de Lisbon, forthcoming 2012); “Two Tales of a City—Lourenço Marques, 1945–1975,” *Portuguese Studies Review*, a special two volume issue in honor of Jill R. Dias (forthcoming 2011); “Fotografando Lourenço Marques: A Cidade e os seus Habitantes de 1960 á 1975,” in Cláudia Castelo, Omar Ribeiro Tomaz, Sebastião Nascimento e Teresa Cruz e Silva, eds., *Os Outros da Colonização: Ensaios sobre Tardo-colonialismo em Moçambique* (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2011.)

**Marc Sommers, Visiting Researcher**, is a Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars for 2011–2012. He is currently engaged in writing a book on youth and conflict in Africa; for which he will draw on extensive field research in several war-affected African countries (Burundi, Congo, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and South Sudan), and interviews with agency officials. The book will contrast non-elite youth priorities and challenges with how governments and international institutions address these same issues.

Dr. Sommers has a number of forthcoming publications, including his new book, *Stuck: Rwandan Youth and the Struggle for Adulthood* (University of Georgia Press, in association with U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) Press, 2011); two new USIP Special Reports: *Youth in Rwanda and Burundi: Contrasting Visions* (with Peter Uvin), and *Dowry and Division: Youth and State*

*Building in South Sudan* (with Stephanie Schwartz); and a new report for UNICEF: *Becoming Youth: Empowering Marginalized Adolescents in Conflict-Affected and Politically Unstable Countries*. He is aiming for his book, *Marley's War: Terror and Transformation in Sierra Leone*, to be published in 2013 (USIP Press).

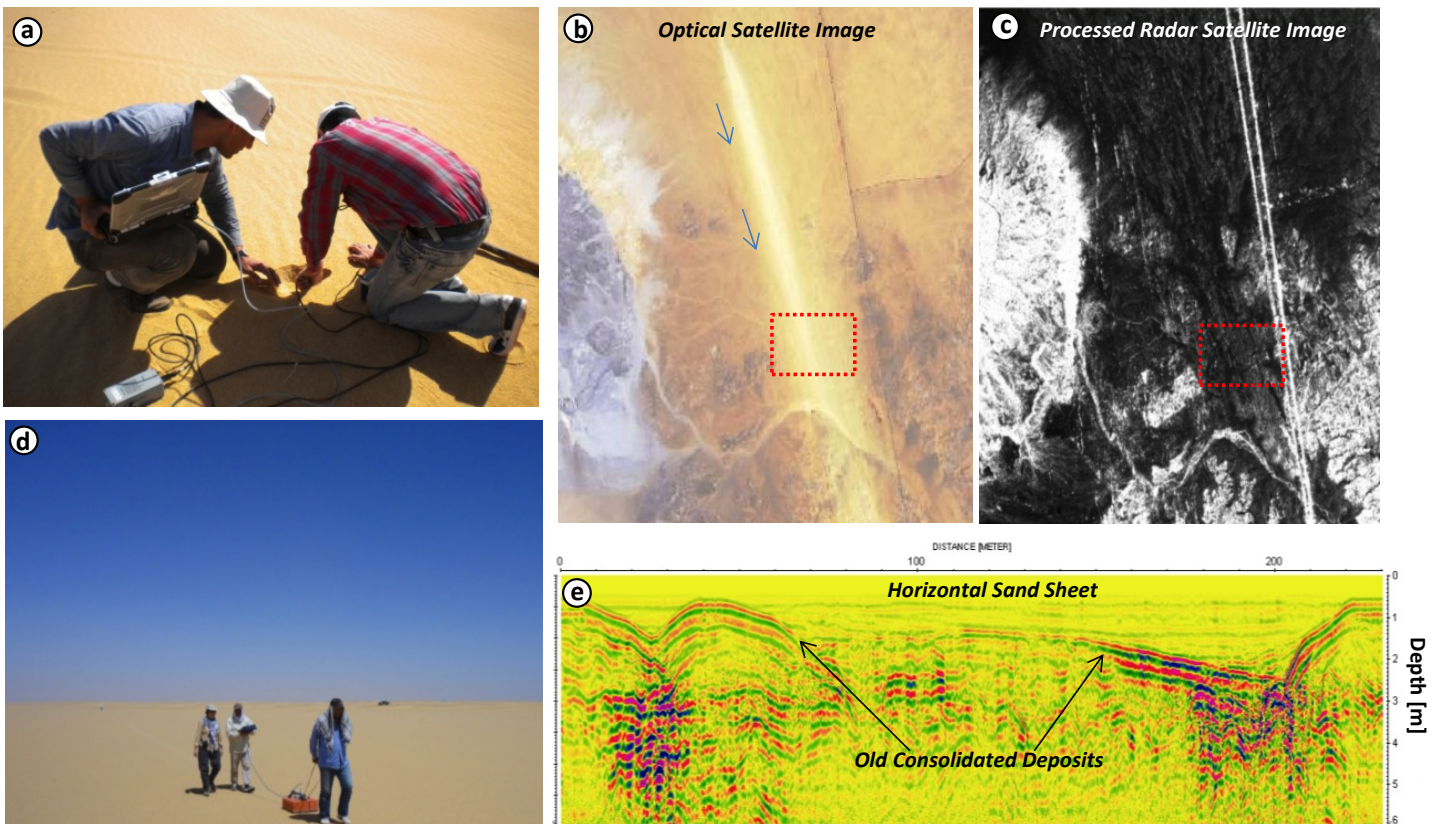
**Laura Ann Twagira, Visiting Researcher, African Studies Center**, recently organized the panel, "Perspectives on Food Sovereignty: Taste, Technology, and the Environment," for the upcoming African Studies Association meeting in Washington D.C., with Prof. James McCann as chair and papers from Prof. Benjamin Lawrance (Rochester Institute of Technology), BU graduate students Natalie Mettler (History) and Arianna

Fogelman-Huhn (Anthropology), as well as a paper from graduate student Laura Ann Twagira (Rutgers University).

**Magaly Koch, Research Associate Professor at the Center for Remote Sensing, Boston University**

Dr. Magaly Koch is directing the NSF-funded project entitled, "U.S. Egypt Cooperative Research: Assessing the Potential of Natural Resources for Land Use Planning and Development West of Aswan, Egypt," which has implications for large-scale groundwater exploration from space. A team of U.S., Egyptian, and Japanese scientists is using satellite and ground-based radar sensors to explore the hydrological setting of a desert plain area near Aswan in

Egypt. Improvements in radar imaging technology (long wavelength, multipolarization, and high spatial resolution) is making subsurface mapping of buried features such as faults and paleochannels possible at increasing depths and spatial resolutions. However, little is known about how deep radar beams sent out from space can penetrate the surface sediments and how small of a target can actually be detected and identified. This research addresses these questions and examines the terrain conditions that make radar penetration possible.



Field measurements of soil conditions (a), optical satellite image showing moving sands (b), satellite radar image revealing faults under the sand (c), and ground based radar work confirming the nature and arrangement of subsurface deposits (d & e). (Image credit: ALOS/AVNIR-2 & ALOS/PALSAR provided by JAXA. Photo credit: Magaly Koch & Ahmed Gaber)





Barbara Brown and Roberta Logan lead the African Literature Reading Group for Educators in a discussion of Nozipo Maraire's *Zenzele: A Letter for My Daughter*, October 26, 2011.

## Outreach News

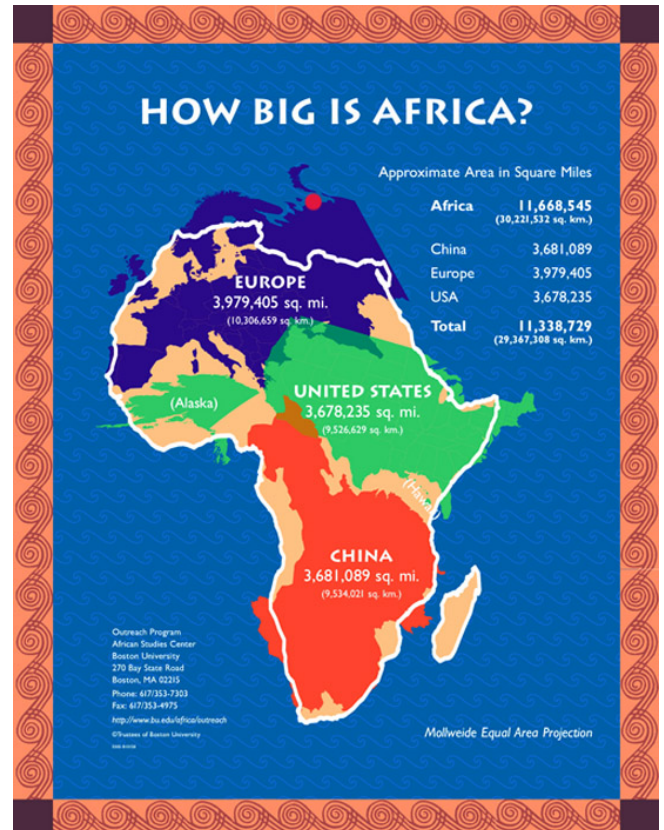
### Barbara Brown, Director of the African Studies Center's Outreach Program

Earlier in the year, Dr. Barbara Brown served as a consultant to PBS for their children's show "Arthur" (see the episode "In My Africa" at [http://pbskids.org/go/video/?category=Arthur&pid=LZC\\_y65ckZxoo7H\\_wkebF5fKTHaBt7ZZ](http://pbskids.org/go/video/?category=Arthur&pid=LZC_y65ckZxoo7H_wkebF5fKTHaBt7ZZ)).

Over the summer, Dr. Brown, hosted a week-long summer workshop on Arabic and Middle Eastern cultures for middle school students. She also partnered with Primary Source on a week-long seminar on "Colonialism in Africa," at which Professor Diana Wylie and several graduate students served as presenters.

This fall, Dr. Brown will be giving two workshops; the first for teachers on the Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai at the annual African Studies Association meeting, and the second at the annual conference of the National Council for the Social Studies where she will be presenting with four teachers from the Outreach program's 2010 Fulbright-Hays GPA program to Egypt and Tanzania. She will also co-sponsor the exhibit booth on "Teaching Africa" at the NCSS conference.

Dr. Brown and everyone who has worked at Outreach are pleased to announce two forthcoming DVDs: "Inside Africa: Introducing the Continents and Its People to Young Children" (produced with Zadi Zokou) and "What Do We Know About Africa?" And the two Outreach posters are continuing to sell well, over 10,000 have been sold so far!



### About the African Collection at the Fitchburg Art Museum – Jean Borgatti

African art has assumed a new prominence at the Fitchburg Art Museum recently with large gifts from three major New England collectors, William and Bertha Teel, the Genevieve McMillan-Reba Stewart Foundation, and Dwight and Anna Heath. These works form the nucleus of a collection of some 400 traditional objects in wood, cloth, metal, and mixed media originating in over twenty countries distributed across the African continent. The museum has made several judicious purchases as well to develop the story of African art that we would like to tell. The most significant of these is a pair of welded metal drummers, kinetic sculpture by Sokari Douglas Camp, a transnational contemporary artist born in Nigeria's Niger Delta and now living in London. The other significant purchase is a brilliant cloth applique mask and costume commissioned from an artist who had continued making these in his local community in Nigeria until his death in 2010—complete with films of

Continued on page 13



An excerpt of a Wolofal (Wolof Ajami) manuscript penned by Serigne Mbaye Diakhate (1875-1954). Copyright @ manuscript owner. Picture by AAL-Team (Fallou Ngom, Ablaye Diakite, and Birane Gassama).

## African Language Program: Updates on languages & Advanced Wolof Students' Translation Project

### African Ajami Library (AAL)

AAL is a collaborative initiative between Boston University and WARA/WARC funded by the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme. Project AAL is led by Dr. Fallou Ngom (Associate Professor of Anthropology & Director, African Language Program, African Studies Center, Boston University). AAL is envisioned as a digital "Alexandria Library" of Islamized Africa, a continental open access public repository of aggregated Ajami materials. The first step to build AAL occurred this past summer. Dr. Ngom and Mr. Roger Brisson, Head of Metadata Services of Boston University traveled to Senegal to lead a workshop at WARC focused on digitization techniques of endangered Wolof Ajami manuscripts. Five people were trained in the workshop, including Mr. Ablaye Diakite (AAL-Team Member), Mr. Birane Gassama (AAL-Team member), Mr. Abdoulaye Niang (WARC Technical Director), Mr. Aliou Badara Sarr (WARC Assistant Librarian), and Mr. Ali Diop (an independent scholar).

Although written records are rarely regarded as part of sub-Saharan Africa's intellectual heritage, important

bodies of Ajami literature have existed in Oromo, Somali, Tigrigna, Kiswahili, Amharic, and Malagasy in East Africa, and Bamanakan, Mandinka, Kanuri, Yoruba, Berber, Hausa, Wolof, and Fulfulde in West Africa for centuries. In South Africa, Muslim Malay slaves produced the first written record of Afrikaans in Ajami. The neglect is due to a number of factors, including the lack of an Ajami public depository, the limited number of individuals with the linguistic skills and cultural background required to analyze Ajami documents, and a lack of interest on the part of the few qualified scholars, as many Europeans and Arab scholars with the linguistic competence to study these materials have often deemed their insights of little scholarly interest. Most assume that sources of useful knowledge on Africa are either oral or written in European languages. Yet, Ajami traditions of Africa are centuries-old and are quite varied, consisting of satirical, polemical and protest poetry, as well as biographies, eulogies, genealogies, talismanic resources, therapeutic medical manuals, family journals, business transactions, historical records, speeches, texts on understanding of Islamized Africa, administrative and diplomatic matters (correspondence between Sultans and provincial rulers),



## WARA News

The West African Research Association is headquartered at Boston University's African Studies Center. A consortium of colleges and universities with interests in Africa, WARA's mission is to promote research on West Africa and its diasporic communities and to facilitate exchange between West African scholars and their counterparts in the region, in the U.S. and elsewhere.

### Saharan Crossroads

In July, WARA hosted the second conference focusing on links across the Sahara. The conference, entitled *Saharan Crossroads: Views from the South*, took place in Niamey, Niger, and brought together some 50 scholars from around the Sahara and beyond. This followed on *Views from the North*, the first conference in the series, held in Morocco in June 2009. We are hoping to organize a third conference, *Views from the Center*, sometime in the future.



### West African Peace Initiative

This three-year project focusing on conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the region, will host its last conference, *Narratives, Facts and History: Documenting Peace and Conflict in West Africa*, in Praia, Cape Verde in December. The first conference, *Peace Making in West Africa: Historical Methods and Modern Applications*, was held in December 2009 in Dakar, and the second, *Faith Communities & Their Role in Conflict*, in December 2010 in Freetown. The upcoming conference will provide an opportunity for academics and journalists to engage around critical issues affecting peace in the region. An outgrowth of the project has been the inauguration of *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review*, a peer-reviewed journal published by Indiana University Press in collaboration with WARA and edited by WARA board member, Abu Bakarr Bah of Northern Illinois University.

### African Calligraphy in Action

This fall, WARA is pleased to be sponsoring the visit of Senegalese calligrapher Yelimane Fall in the Boston area. Fall's work will be on exhibit at Boston University GSU Gallery from November 10–December 16, with an opening lecture and reception on November 10.

### Rethinking Islam in West Africa

This collaborative speaker series, co-sponsored by the African Studies Center at Boston University and WARA, engages various aspects of Islam in the region. Speakers in 2011 have included Professor Beverly Mack of the University of Kansas, who spoke on *West African Roots of American Islam*, and most recently, Professor Ismail Rashid of Vassar College, who spoke on *Islamic Diversity and Radicalization in Sierra Leone*.

**Fitchburg Art**, *continued from page 9*

similar masks dancing and an interview with the artist himself carried out in English and the local language. These two works bridge the gap between the iconic masks and sculptures characteristic of the 19th century and now, when local traditional art in Africa features new materials and artists are also educated at universities at home and abroad, selling their work through international galleries.

**The Challenges of Education in the DRC—**  
Amelia Croft

On September 29, 2011, Dr. Jacques Makambo Badibanga from the Eglise du Christ au Congo led a discussion on “The Challenges of Education in the Democratic Republic of Congo.” Dr. Makambo outlined the transition from the colonial Belgian regime, under which education was primarily directed by missionaries, to Mobutu’s years of government-controlled schools, and later, to the development of shared responsibilities between the church and state, and highlighted some of the challenges facing the education system in the DRC today. From the limited resources available to students to poor-quality teacher training and compensation and lacking school facilities and accommodation, it is little wonder that the system fails to function and there is a high dropout rate, particularly among girls.

Dr. Makambo further spoke of the corruption in the churches, the inefficiency of the government, and the DRC’s resource curse. To quote Dr. Makambo, “The resources in the Congo are reserved for the world, not for the Congolese... how can we be sitting on all this wealth and yet be so poor?” Dr. Makambo was adamant that the most fundamental issue facing the DRC was that of poverty; which he believed largely explained the additional challenge of corruption.

**Program Degrees and Certificates, 2010–2011***Africa-Related Dissertations*

**Christopher Annear**, Ph.D., Anthropology, “Weathering the Commons: Resilience and Heterogeneity in an Inland Fishery, Mweru-Luapula, Zambia.”

**Alfredo Burlando**, Ph.D., Economics, “Health and Human Capital Development in Africa.”

**Melissa Graboyes**, Ph.D. History, “Surveying the ‘Pathological Museum’: A History of Medical Research and Ethics in East Africa, 1940-1965.”

**Ron Lamothe**, Ph.D., History, “Slaves of Fortune: Sudanese Soldiers and the River War.”

**Catherine Long**, Ph.D., Political Science, “Structuring Decentralization: Hybrid Institutions in Tanzanian Public Health and Financial Management Interventions.”

**Masse Ndiaye**, Ph.D., Political Science, “Global Governance and State Dysfunctionality in Africa: The Statehood Dilemma in Failed State Reconstruction.”

**Ashraf Nabih el Sherif**, Ph.D., Political Science, “Democratization of Islamist Movements in Egypt and Morocco: Political Opportunities, Organizational Frameworks, and the Ideological Marketplace.”

**Taryn Vian**, Ph.D., University Professors Program, “Good Governance and Performance-Based Budgeting: Factors Affecting Reform Progress in Lesotho Hospitals.”

*Africa-Related Masters Degrees*

**Julia Berman**, M.A., International Affairs

**Maren Coniglione**, M.A., International Relations

**Jamie DeAngelo**, M.A., Art History

**Trevor Green**, M.A., International Relations and Environmental Policy

**Jillian Jaeger**, M.A., International Relations and Religion

**Katherine Opie**, M.A., History

**Justin Tinsey**, M.A., International Relations

**Hillary Weimont**, M.A., International Relations

*Graduate Certificates in African Studies*

**Christopher Annear**, Anthropology

**Julia Berman**, International Affairs

**Maren Coniglione**, International Relations

**Jamie DeAngelo**, Art History

**Katherine Opie**, History

**Justin Tinsey**, International Relations

*Undergraduate Minors in African Studies and African Language & Literature*

**Susan Zalkind**, History

**Jennifer Ferreira**, Biology

**Zachary Gersten**, Biology

**Rachel Hawkes**, International Relations

**John Hutchison-Maxwell**, Geography

**Anthony Scavone**, International Relations

**Shira Tiffany**, International Relations



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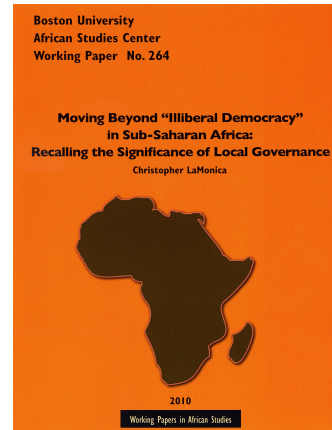
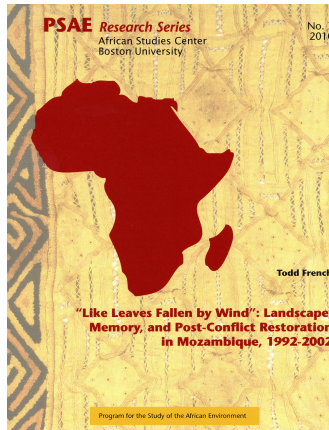
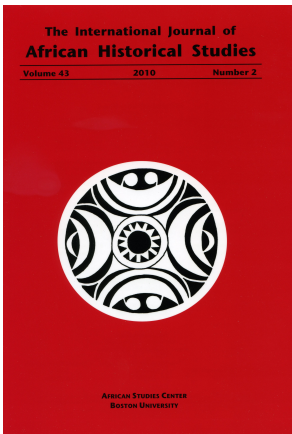
A \$25 conference fee is payable upon on-site registration on March 30.

To Apply: Submit an application form and 500-word abstract describing your paper's topic, methods, and arguments by **February 1, 2012**. Application and abstract submission can be completed at the following URL: <http://www.bu.edu/Africa/forstudents/graduate/annual-graduate-conference/>. **Email:** [bugradconferenceafrica@gmail.com](mailto:bugradconferenceafrica@gmail.com).

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## Publications



The Center's Publications Program is in the final stages of making all our publications available for purchase online. All papers in our *Working Papers in African Studies* series, *Papers in the African Humanities* series, and *PSAE Research Series* are now available as pdf files. In addition, individual issues and individual articles published in the *International Journal of African Historical Studies* from 2007 (Vol. 40) to the present (Vol. 44) are available for purchase. Visit our website for details or contact us at [ascpub.bu.edu](http://ascpub.bu.edu).

#### Working Papers in African Studies

***The Founding of Kanem by Assyrian Refugees ca. 600 BCE: Documentary, Linguistic, and Archaeological Evidence***, by Dierk Lange. WP No. 265 (2011). PDF \$6.00.

***Moving Beyond "Illiberal Democracy" in Sub-Saharan Africa: Recalling the Significance of Local Governance***, by Christopher LaMonica. WP No. 264 (2010). PDF \$6.00.

***Dying to Win: Elections, Political Violence, and Institutional Decay in Kenya***, by Susanne D. Mueller. WP 263 (2010). PDF \$6.00.

***Good Food, Ridiculous Diets, and a Well Fed Swahili: British Approaches to Food in Colonial Zanzibari Institutions***, by Melissa Graboyes. WP No. 262 (2009). PDF \$6.00.

***Chappati Complaints and Biriani Cravings: The Aesthetics of Food and Diet in Colonial Zanzibari Institutions***, by Melissa Graboyes. WP No. 261 (2008). PDF \$6.00.

***"Marriage and Madness": Marriage Stability and Demon Possession in Irigwe, Nigeria***, by Walter H. Sangree. WP No. 260 (2008). PDF \$8.00.

#### PSAE Research Series

***Satellite Imagery, Landscape History, and Disease: Mapping and Visualizing the Agroecology of Malaria in Ethiopia***, by Magaly Koch and James C. McCann. PSAE Research Series No. 8 (2010). PDF \$6.00.

***"Like Leaves Fallen by Wind": Landscape, Memory, and Post-Conflict Restoration in Mozambique, 1992-2002***, by Todd French. PSAE Research Series No. 7 (2010). PDF \$6.00.

***Bearing the Burdens, Reaping the Rewards: Who Benefits from Africa's National Parks?***, by Kallie Szczepanski. PSAE Research Series No. 6 (2010). PDF \$6.00.

***Forest Reserves and Local Rights: German East Africa's Mt. Kilimanjaro***, by Robert Munson. PSAE Research Series No. 5 (2009). PDF \$6.00.

***Kings and Farmers. The Urban Development of Aksum, Ethiopia: ca. 500 BC-AD 1500***, by Rodolfo Fattovich. PSAE Research Series No. 4 (2008). PDF \$6.00.

***Damming the Empire: British Attitudes on Hydropower Development in Africa, 1917-1960***, by Heather Hoag. PSAE Research Series No. 3 (2008). PDF \$6.00.

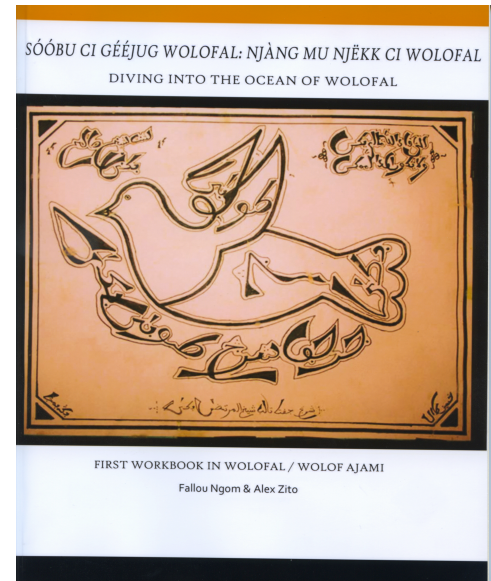
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## New Language Program Publication

The elementary-level Ajami workbook for Wolof was published in its first edition in November 2010. The book features 94 photo illustrations and over 170 exercises to introduce the complete alphabet. It requires no experience in Arabic-based scripts. Copies were sent to all NRCs and other African Language Programs for evaluation. The book's methods and results were presented at a panel on Wolof instruction at the 2011 ALTA Conference. In addition to use and further evaluation at Boston University, it was introduced at elementary level at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in Summer 2011. The book is currently under revision for a second edition; the latter will form a model for other elementary-level Ajami workbooks in relevant languages, notably Hausa. The Wolof workbook will also form a model for the development of intermediate and advanced Wolof Ajami workbooks and others.

New Edition available for purchase in January 2012, \$15 + postage

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