

# History in Africa

A JOURNAL OF METHOD

David Henige, Editor



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Douglas Henry Jones was awarded a Ministry of Education studentship at the University of Liverpool in 1941 and resumed his studies there in October 1946 after four years of active service with the Royal Artillery. In January 1949 he obtained a BA degree with 1st Class Honours in History and a Charles Beard Postgraduate Studentship which he used to embark on an MA Thesis on the Church in Chester 1250-1550. This was successfully submitted for an MA Degree in June 1953 and was eventually published by Chetham Society.

In 1951 he was appointed to the lectureship in the History of West Africa at the School of Oriental and African Studies and became a recognized teacher at the University in 1961 and senior lecturer in 1964. From March 1954 to October 1955 he was seconded from the School of Oriental and African Studies to the History Department at the University College of the Gold Coast, as it then was. While there he delivered a course of lectures on the history of Africa from the seventh to the eighteenth centuries which was probably one of the very first efforts ever made in an English-speaking University to present a full course on African history, as opposed to a course on European activities in Africa.

It was during this spell of teaching in Ghana that he did most of his African field work: three months in northern Ghana. The article he published in 1960 on the history of the Gonja district was based on the oral traditional material he collected at that time. In the following year he was able to spend five months traveling extensively in French West Africa and this provided him with the basis for his major research interest, the history of the French penetration of Haut-Sénégal-Niger. At the time of his death he was working on the growth of a westernized elite which originated in the French settlements of St. Louis and Gorée, looking particularly at developments in the 1840s and 1850s, when French policies of assimilation were directly affected by a revival of Catholic missionary activity. In particular, he hoped to tackle this through looking at the nature of one missionary society, the Brothers of Christian Instruction, and its failure. In addition to illuminat-

ing the emergence of an African elite before the rapid European conquest of the region, he hoped that the study would throw more light on the origins of the modern missionary movement in France and its links with French colonialism and on the nature of French policies of assimilation in Senegal.

It was as a teacher, however, that Douglas Jones was most loved and will be both best remembered and most deeply missed. Apart from his pioneering work teaching African history in Ghana, he has taught at every level on the history of Africa and on most periods of African history. Many of his doctoral students have good reason to remember his meticulous attention to detail as well as the breadth of his knowledge. Though for many years dogged by appallingly bad health and severe domestic problems, he never allowed these to stand in the way of his devotion and the care with which he attended to the needs of his students.

Shula Marks