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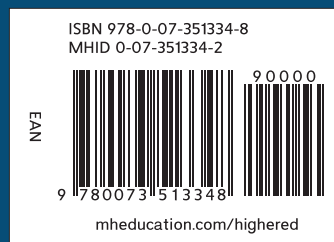
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A History of African Americans

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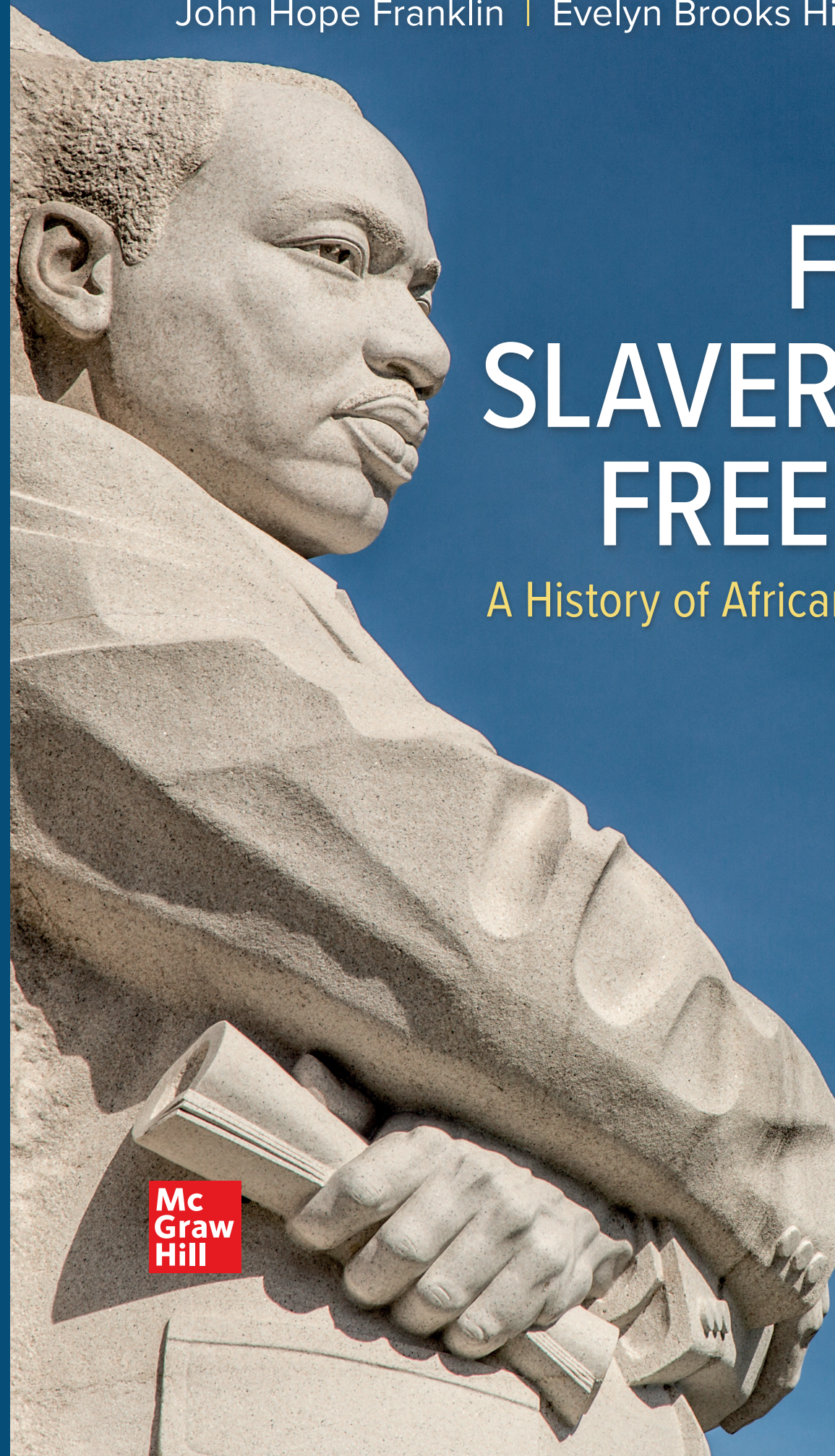


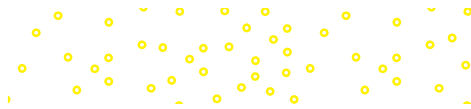
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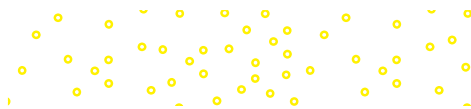


FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM
A History of African Americans

TENTH EDITION

John Hope Franklin
(1915-2009)

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham
Harvard University





FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM: A HISTORY OF AFRICAN AMERICANS, TENTH EDITION

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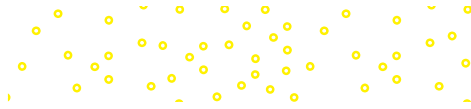
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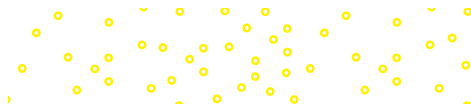
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Dedicated to the memory of John Hope Franklin



About the Authors

John Hope Franklin

John Hope Franklin was the James B. Duke Professor Emeritus of History, and for seven years he was Professor of Legal History at Duke University Law School. A native of Oklahoma and a graduate of Fisk University (1935), he received the A.M. and Ph.D. degrees in History from Harvard University (1936 and 1941). He taught at a number of institutions, including Fisk, St. Augustine's College, and Howard University. In 1956 he went to Brooklyn College as Chair of the Department of History, and in 1964, he joined the faculty of the University of Chicago, serving as Chair of the Department of History from 1967 to 1970. At Chicago, he was the John Matthews Manly Distinguished Service Professor from 1969 to 1982, when he became Professor Emeritus.



Jim Bounds/Raleigh News & Observer/
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Among his many published works are *The Free Negro in North Carolina* (1943), *Reconstruction after the Civil War* (1961), *A Southern Odyssey* (1971), and perhaps his best-known book, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, now in its tenth edition. In 1990 a collection of essays covering a teaching and writing career of fifty years was published as *Race and History: Selected Essays, 1938-1988*. In 2005, he published his autobiography, *Mirror to America*.

During his long career, Professor Franklin was active in numerous professional and educational organizations. For many years he served on the editorial board of the *Journal of Negro History*. He also served as president of the following organizations: The Southern Historical Association, the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa, the Organization of American Historians, and the American Historical Association.

Dr. Franklin served on many national commissions and delegations, including the National Council on the Humanities, the President's Advisory Commission on Ambassadorial Appointments, and the United States delegation to the 21st General Conference of UNESCO. He was appointed by President Clinton to chair the President's Advisory Board for the One America initiative in June 1997.

He was the recipient of many honors. In 1978 *Who's Who in America* selected him as one of eight Americans who have made significant contributions to society. In 1995 he received the first W.E.B. DuBois Award from the Fisk University Alumni Association, the Organization of American Historians' Award for Outstanding Achievement, the NAACP's Spingarn medal. In the same year President Bill Clinton conferred on Franklin the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian medal. In addition to his many awards, Dr. Franklin received honorary degrees from more than one hundred colleges and universities. John Hope Franklin died on March 25, 2009, at the age of 94 years.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham is the Victor S. Thomas Professor of History and of African and African American Studies at Harvard University. She is also the national president of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History from 2014 to 2021. The first African American to chair the Department of History at Harvard University, she served in this position from 2018 to 2020. She chaired Harvard's Department of African and African American Studies from 2006 to 2013.

Professor Higginbotham earned a Ph.D. from the University of Rochester in History, an M.A. from Howard University, and B.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Before coming to Harvard, she taught in the Department of History at the University of Pennsylvania. Previously she taught on the faculties of the University of Maryland and earlier Dartmouth College. In 2010–2011, she was a visiting professor at the Duke University Law School and had the distinction of being its inaugural John Hope Franklin Professor of American Legal History. She has also been a Visiting Professor at Princeton University and New York University.

Professor Higginbotham's writings span diverse fields—African American religious history, women's history, civil rights, constructions of racial and gender identity, electoral politics, and the intersection of theory and history. She is the author of the prize-winning book *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (1993), for which she is especially recognized for conceptualizing “the politics of respectability.” The book was included among *The New York Times* Book Review's Notable Books of the Year in 1993 and 1994. She is the co-editor with Henry Louis Gates, Jr., of the multivolume reference work *African American National Biography* (2008, 2012). As a co-author with John Hope Franklin, she thoroughly revised *From Slavery to Freedom* in her writing of the ninth and tenth editions.

Professor Higginbotham has received honorary degrees and numerous other honors and awards, most notable of which is the National Humanities Medal presented to her by President Barack Obama at the White House in 2015. She was elected to membership in the American Philosophical Society and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences—the nation's oldest learned societies. In 2008 she received the Carter G. Woodson Scholars Medallion from the Association for the Study of African American Life and also the Legend Award from the National Urban League. In 2020 she was selected to be honored with the Preservation and History Award from the New England Historic Genealogical Society.



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Preface

■ The Tenth Edition of *From Slavery to Freedom*

Nearly a decade has passed since the publication of the ninth edition of the “new” *From Slavery to Freedom*. In the preface of that edition, I introduced the theme “the present in history” to describe the organizing principle that informed my revision of this classic survey of African American history. The theme reflected the book’s inclusion of new chapter titles and information, new historical actors and intellectual crosscurrents, as well as new scholarly interpretations and methodologies. In the ninth edition I asserted that “historical scholarship is not only different but far more complex than in 1947 or in 1967 or in 1988 or even in 2000—the dates of some of the earlier editions, including the eighth edition.”

Those words are no less applicable today. In the intervening years between the ninth and tenth editions, a tremendous amount of new scholarship has emerged on capitalism and slavery, on African Americans and Native Americans, on abolitionism’s many forms and faces, on the nineteenth- and twentieth-century lives of the “New Negro” as a race-motivating concept, on the nonviolent protest activism of youth in the 1940s, on the health clinics of the Black Panther Party, and on the shifting views of prominent hip-hop artists on sexuality. Those are but a very few of the many fascinating new topics found in the tenth edition. The book’s new “Windows in Time” also provides unique vantage points from which to get a first-hand view of people, organizations, and community activities. Such vantage points render multiple and, equally important, conflicting voices in the past. Recent scholarship has been incorporated in every chapter of the book.

I even posit my own revisionist interpretation in chapters 19, 20, and 21, the trilogy of chapters that cover the long struggle for equality from the 1930s to mid-1970s. Historians have traditionally identified those decades as marked by four types of activism: lawyer activism in courts and legislatures; worker protest through labor unions; grassroots mass nonviolent direct action for integration and voting rights; and black power in various forms that ranged from revolution to cultural identity to mayoral office. I identified those four types of activism in the ninth edition. However, in the tenth edition I depart from that model and add knowledge-oriented, scholar activism as a distinct fifth form that operated at times independently, though more often in concert with the others.

Equally new, I have adopted a different theme—“the turns in history”—to describe the tenth edition’s organizing principle. Each turn represents a vibrant new intellectual trend and subfield in the larger discipline of history. This emphasis is unique, because it represents the opportunity to focus on influential directions recently taken by historians. The tenth edition of *From Slavery*

P R E F A C E

to Freedom heightens our awareness of four new directions in interpreting the past: the environmental turn, spatial turn, carceral turn, and transnational turn.

Environmental history appears in the book's first chapter. The study of ancestral Africa reveals the influence of climate and other environmental factors over many centuries. Painted and carved images on boulders, cliffs, and in caves in the Sahara Desert, date back thousands of years and testify to pastoral societies in areas that experienced progressively decreasing rainfall and later became completely arid. A number of chapters connect environmental and spatial history, while telling stories that differ over time and place. Their common thread relates to racialized spaces that signal inequality. Whether in southern slavery or in New South cities, or whether in Warren County, North Carolina in the 1980s or in Flint, Michigan in the second decade of the twenty-first century, African Americans daily experienced and strove to combat place-based health problems and challenging social ills.

The carceral turn, which focuses on mass incarceration and racial criminalization, has produced a burgeoning field of study. Thus, carceral history appears in *From Slavery to Freedom*. The tenth edition illuminates the rise of mass incarceration in the late twentieth century into the twenty-first century; it also calls attention to the imprisonment of large numbers of black men, women, and children in the southern states a century earlier, when Jim Crow laws and racist ideas fueled the system of convict leasing with a new type of bound labor, which in turn funneled revenue into state governments. The transnational turn calls attention to political, social, and cultural movements that cross nations and continents, and should be easily appreciated in our contemporary world of global networking and sharing of videos and music. The tenth edition explores transnational history from several perspectives, including abolitionism in the pre-Civil War era, Garveyism in the 1920s, and hip-hop in the present.

Finally, the cover of *From Slavery to Freedom*'s tenth edition features the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, while the last chapter of the book contains the section "Monuments to History." It is fitting that the powerful sculpture of King stands in a pose with his arms crossed and his eyes focused, as if pondering the book's title. As if once again from the mountaintop view that he depicted in his very last speech on April 3, 1968, King appears to be measuring the Promised Land of freedom and, like us, to be pondering the ambiguities of our time.

Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham
Harvard University

Acknowledgments

I will always remember John Hope Franklin and thank him for the opportunity to co-author this now classic survey of African American history. Having known him since my childhood because of his regular interaction with my father in the work of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, I came also to know the importance of *From Slavery to Freedom* at an early age.

In revising the book for the tenth edition, I continue to be grateful to all who helped me with the ninth edition because their assistance laid the foundation upon which new research and topics could emerge. Over the years since the publication of the ninth edition, however, scholars Donald Yacovone and Karen Cook Bell wrote to me with corrections as to the wording that accompanied an image and chart, respectively. Student research assistants helped to compile sources and introduced me to new topics and information. I am deeply appreciative of their research assistance and that of other persons, some of whom worked only for a few days and some for a few weeks and months. They include Amsale Amelu, Jonathon Booth, Alexa Herlands, Daniel Debois, Stephanie Garlock, Irvin Ibarguen, Samuel Klug, Elizabeth McCord, Joshua Mejia, Andrew Pope, Allison Puglisi, Jesse Rakoske, Andrew D. Segal, Brittany Smith, and Magdalene Zier. My research assistants played a variety of roles—researching, editing, proofreading, and fact checking.

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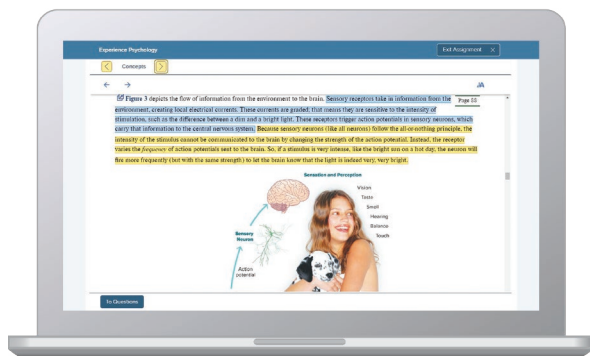
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FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM
A History of African Americans

Ancestral Africa

An Ancient Land and People

Early Commercial Networks

African Slavery

The Great Empires

Other States

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Meroe pyramids



“Of the antiquity of the Negro there can be no doubt,” George Washington Williams wrote confidently in his two-volume *History of the Negro Race in America* (1883). His emphasis on Africa as the ancestral homeland of black Americans stood prominently within a black literary tradition of poems, theological essays, and historical narratives dating from the eighteenth century. Noting the presence of African people at the “first dawn of history,” Williams spoke of ancient African civilizations much like the white educated elite spoke of the greatness of Rome and Greece. “Before Romulus founded Rome,” Williams proclaimed, “before Homer sang, when Greece was in its infancy, and the world quite young, ‘hoary Meroe’ [in present-day Sudan] was the chief city of the Negroes along the Nile.” With a divinity degree from Newton Theological Institution, Williams sought to vindicate his racial heritage as did other late nineteenth-century trained African American Protestant clergy who mined biblical and classical Greco-Roman texts for their comments on the ancient African kingdoms of Egypt, Ethiopia, Kush, Nubia, and Meroe. Such texts served as the basis for writing books that countered racist images of a continent devoid of civilization, governments, and culture.

Because of his professed commitment to objectivity and his extensive use of footnotes and quoted original sources, Williams is considered the first serious historian of the African American experience. Writing in the 1880s, the erudite Williams benefited from the new facts and findings to emerge during the nineteenth century. Archaeological discoveries and travel accounts broadened his knowledge of Africa, making it possible for him to write about West African kingdoms, as well as previously unknown western and southern states. He described cities, rivers, armies, and even languages. He stated in the preface to his massive study that “whatever science has added, I have appropriated.”

Today, social scientists and natural scientists have much to say about the African past. Archeological, environmental, linguistic, and genomic studies have played a noteworthy role in overturning the once-popular notion of Africa as the “Dark Continent,” meaning without a known or knowable history. Genomic scientists largely agree that humans started their evolutionary journey in Africa several million years ago and from there migrated to different parts of the earth. Given that centuries of New World enslavement closed off personal hereditary knowledge of a specific ethnic lineage in Africa, it is no less than astounding that genomic sequencing now makes possible the ability to find one’s roots. Equally fascinating is the cultural and social legacy of “new” African Americans, specifically, the successive generations of persons born of immigrants who came to the United States from every part of Africa and its diaspora during the twentieth century and particularly since the mid-1960s. They comprise an integral part of the contributions of African-descended people to the history of this nation and world, the most notable example being Barack Obama of Kenyan ancestry, the forty-fourth president of the United States.

An Ancient Land and People

More than three times the size of the U.S. mainland, the African continent has historically encompassed a vast range of peoples and environmental conditions. Most of the continent lies within the tropics, in what environmental historians and climatologists call the *intertropical convergence zone*. Ecological perspectives, meaning insight into the ways people adapt to their changing environment, call attention to the influence of climate and

CHAPTER 1 ANCESTRAL AFRICA

other environmental factors over many centuries. Only the northern and southern tips of Africa have a moderate, Mediterranean climate. In West Africa, from which the majority of persons in the Atlantic slave trade came, various ecological zones are distinguishable, so that (moving from north to south) the Sahara produced salt; the Sahel, livestock; the Savannah, cereals; and the forest region, gold and kola. This ecological diversity affected social development in meaningful ways. Domesticated cattle, for example, spread along regions that were free of the tsetse fly—the insect that spreads trypanosomiasis, which kills cattle. The development of cattle keeping and other forms of pastoralism occurred then in the savannah grasslands in the southern Sahara and the plateaus of eastern and Southern Africa.



Franz Aberham/Getty Images

Chad cave paintings

The southern Sahara, though today a desert, was once covered in savannah grasslands that supported cattle raising. Rich concentrations of rock art, the painted and carved images on boulders and cliffs in the Sahara desert, date back several thousand years and testify to pastoral societies in areas that are now completely arid. Between 300 B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) and 1500 C.E. (Common Era), the Sahara region experienced progressively drier periods, a process known as *desertification*. Although interrupted by occasional wet periods, human adaptation to the desert's southward expansion resulted in the cultivation of drought tolerant crops, such as millet and sorghum. Desertification led eventually to the introduction of camels in place of cattle herding in the northern Sahel regions and to new trade networks and other sociocultural, political, and economic patterns. Indeed climate shifts and changing terrain over millennia provide the backdrop against which occurred migrations, agricultural innovation, metallurgy (the development of iron and copper smelting), urban settlement, and state formation. A significant body of writings in Arabic by Islamic geographers, cartographers, historians, and travelers in West Africa confirm the impact of desertification. Spanning the ninth through fourteenth centuries, the travel narratives of geographers such as Al-Bakri, Al-Idrisi, and Ibn Battuta provide a window onto the landscape, climate, social structures, and culture. Their first-hand accounts of their visits to trading centers along the trans-Saharan caravan route describe far wetter conditions than the dry, unlivable desert conditions in some of those same places today.

Africa has about two thousand languages, which can be classified into four very different linguistic groups: Koisian in southern Africa; Afro-Asiatic in northern Africa; Nilo-Saharan in north-central Africa; and Niger-Congo in equatorial and southern Africa. Through ancient patterns of migration, assimilation, and adaptation, each of these groups spread their respective languages and culture. The native languages of most African peoples belong to the Niger-Congo linguistic group, which comprises more than 1,400 different languages, with the majority of

African Climate and Its Impact on Development

The Bantu Dispersion

them (more than five hundred) being Bantu. Contemporary scholarship explains the Bantu-linguistic preponderance by positing that in approximately 2000 B.C.E. Bantu-speaking farmers in what is today eastern Nigeria and southern Cameroon began a series of many intermittent advances on foot along two regional paths: one to the south into Central Africa and the other into eastern and southeastern Africa, altogether encompassing the modern nations of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and portions of Tanzania, and Kenya. Unlike the older Bantu-migration thesis that tended to portray a relatively rapid and continuous movement of a few homogeneous groups along the two paths, the dispersion thesis portrays many centuries of discontinuous movements by smaller groups on foot through rainforests and savannahs in search of new and fertile land to farm. Researchers in genomics, historical linguistics, and archaeology add to the historical record by offering a considerably more complex and nuanced version of Bantu speakers' encounters and interactions with the indigenous inhabitants of the new territories they entered. Their multidisciplinary findings underscore long-term migratory patterns for interpreting local diffusion of the Bantu language, similarities, and regional differences in the appearance of specific words among Bantu speakers, genetic intermixing, and agricultural innovation, such as cattle keeping and millet production in eastern and southern Africa. Not until the mid-twentieth century did archaeological methods of radiocarbon dating confirm the indigenous African origins of iron technology. Good-quality steel was produced by Africans as early as 600 B.C.E. in the Sahara desert fringe, an area today called the Jos Plateau of northern Nigeria. The iron findings, which included knife and ax blades, arrows, and fragments from an iron-smelting furnace wall, refute claims that iron smelting was introduced to Africa from an external, nonblack civilization.

Iron Technology

A preheating device, called a *tuyère*, which blasts hot air into a fiery furnace, has been shown to be indigenous to Africa and distinctively different from contemporaneous European techniques. In African societies, iron working was a highly skilled craft, one that conferred status and prestige and was usually limited to members of a particular lineage or social group. Indeed, ironworkers were often thought to possess magical-religious powers. In the Yoruba culture, the deity Ogun was believed to be the god of iron.

The ancient Nok people of the Jos Plateau have been identified by archeologists as an early iron-age society. Excavation sites in this region at Taruga and Samun Dukiya suggest that, as early as 500 B.C.E., the Nok lived in organized, permanent settlements that were centers of both agriculture and iron work. Numerous stone axes and iron instruments used by the Nok have been excavated, as well as beautiful terracotta figures and pottery from this early period.

Nok terracotta figures, first unearthed in 1943 during tin mining operations on the Jos Plateau between the Niger and Benue rivers in Nigeria, are the most ancient extant examples of figurative African sculpture, as well as the oldest evidence of advanced, organized society in sub-Saharan Africa. Employing modern technologies such as thermo-luminescence testing and radiocarbon dating, scientists date the Nok figures from 500 B.C.E. to 200 C.E. Fabricated from local clay, often mixed with gravel and fired in kilns, the terracotta Nok works are generally hollow human or animal figures of coil construction. Nok animal figurines are relatively realistic, whereas the portrait sculptures reveal an impressive degree of stylization. Most surviving Nok pieces are heads that were once part of full-body figures. The heads appear disproportionately large, with facial features that include triangular-shaped