

# ERA Resource Guide for Students

## How to Use the ERA Resources

The site is broken up into individual projects, and each of these projects has a different navigation system. However, there are some basic guidelines which will help you to use the projects to their best effect.

Each project has a main entry screen. In some, this screen itself has a series of links to the individual elements of the project. In others, you will have to access the main navigation or contents pages by clicking a link on the main page.

Once you have accessed the main navigation section, you can follow the instructions there. In projects which have a series of themes, such as 'Peasant Social Worlds', there is also a contents page which contains a listing of all the pages in the project. This is useful if you are researching something specific, rather than attempting to learn as much as possible about the project.

Within most of the pages there are embedded hypertext links which can be used to access other relevant parts of the project, for example the glossary, in-depth explanations of a particular item etc. One way of using these is to read the whole page first, then go back and access any links. This way, you will not lose yourself in the site. If you do find yourself lost, you can either use the 'back' button on your browser or the navigation bars or buttons to take you back to the main page of the section you were in.

You can return to the main ERA site at any time by clicking on the bar at the bottom of your screen which says 'Return to main ERA page'. This will take you back to the entry screen, where you can select another project, find out more about ERA itself or even get some tips on creating your own anthropology site.

**Element 1****Pitt Rivers: anthropology and ethnography in the nineteenth century, the history of museums, field collection and the iconography of shields****Introduction:**

The materials presented in this element fall into six major parts, the first of which contextualises the work of Lieutenant-General Pitt Rivers within nineteenth century anthropology as a whole, the second of which examines one part of his collection (shields drawn from a number of different societies) in detail, and the third of which looks at his epistemology of field collection. From here, the element turns to a study of the development of ethnographic museumology, following which it explores some of the more abstract representational issues raised by the study of material culture. All of the element's sections reflect upon the life and work of Pitt Rivers, and these themes are brought together in the final section, which more specifically overviews his life and works. The element can be used in a number of ways to enrich the process of learning and understanding various (inter-related) anthropological issues:

- To clarify points from a lecture
- To plan an essay or seminar presentation
- As exam preparation
- As a tool for examining the career of Pitt Rivers
- To gain increased awareness of the processes involved in the construction of ethnographic knowledge, in particular the way in which it is constructed from ethnographic museum collections, and material cultural artifacts more generally.

**Themes:**

- The life of Lieutenant-General Pitt Rivers
- The history of anthropology and ethnography in nineteenth century Britain

## E1

The history of anthropology and ethnography at the University of Oxford  
Material culture  
Ethnographic museumology  
The epistemology of field collecting  
Weaponry

### **Layout of the element:**

The element opens at a 'front page' which contains a link to a 'site map' It is suggested that new users of the element follow this link first, as this brings up an index of all the parts (and their contents) giving an overview of the entire element.

Users following this link will note that the index of links found on the 'front page' are also constantly on view throughout the entire element (in a window on the left hand side of the browser window) and can be used to jump to other maximal parts of the element. Once such a link (to a maximal part) has been selected an index of all the materials contained in that maximal part will be displayed in the right hand window. A tool bar above the right hand window (which has a brown background) will also appear, which allows navigation to the (maximal part's) various sub-sections.

All selected materials are displayed in the right hand window.

### **Reading and using the element:**

How you read the element will be determined by personal choice and by your specific needs for reading the material. The element can be read in a linear manner, but could also be read section by section, each of which gives a (non-exhaustive) overview of one theme relating to Pitt Rivers' work. For users who have no background knowledge of this nineteenth century anthropologist at all, it may be worth beginning with the overview of his life and work contained in the final major part of the element, that which is entitled 'Pitt Rivers and the Pitt Rivers Museum'.

**Essay and seminar discussion topics:**

A number of (inter-related) topics can be examined in relation to the materials contained in this element. Although by no means exhaustive, the following list contains some issues which may be worth exploring:

How influential was the work of Pitt Rivers on the development of anthropology in the last century? (In what ways was he a 'typical' nineteenth century anthropologist? How did his work affect the course of the discipline's development at the University of Oxford and beyond?)

In what ways did contemporaneous theories exert an influence on Pitt Rivers' epistemology of field collection? (How did the alternative methods of collection he adopted [e.g. buying artifacts from auction, collecting them from field sites, etc.] affect the overall shape of his collection? How satisfactory was his approach to artifact collection?)

Why did Pitt Rivers collect 'military' artifacts (such as shields)? (What can such objects tell us about the societies from which they derive? Or about mankind as a whole?)

How may anthropological knowledge be constructed from the examination of museum collections? (Why do different museums display such collections in different ways? In what different ways has the Pitt Rivers collection been displayed?)

How and why have anthropological approaches to the study of material culture changed since Pitt Rivers' time? (Will such studies continue to have relevance for the discipline in the future?)

## E1

### **Web sites:**

The bibliography (at the end of the element) contains a comprehensive listing of sources relating to the various themes (Pitt Rivers, museumology, military artifacts etc.) covered in this element. Students with a particular interest in this topic, and more generally in the issues pertaining to museum ethnography, may wish to visit the following (related) web sites:

Links to the web sites of all the museums at the University of Oxford (including the Pitt Rivers) at: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/museums.html>

The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, The University of Harvard at: <http://www.peabody.harvard.edu/>

Museum of Anthropology at Wake Forest University at:  
<http://www.wfu.edu/Academic-departments/Anthropology/museum/index.html>

The University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology at:  
<http://www.umma.lsa.umich.edu/umma.html>

The Hunterian Museum University of Glasgow at:  
<http://www.gla.ac.uk/Museum/>

SCRAN (resource base of Scottish material culture and human history)  
a: <http://www.scran.ac.uk/>

University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology at:  
<http://cumaa.archanth.cam.ac.uk/museum.htm>

**Element 2****Peasant Social Worlds  
and their Transformation****Introduction:**

This element can be used in a number of ways to enrich our learning and understanding of anthropology:

- To plan an essay or seminar presentation
- To create essay topics or topics for discussion in seminars
- To clarify points in a lecture
- As exam preparation
- To gain increased awareness of the process of ethnographic research
- As a tool in comparative studies
- To study & learn about anthropological field methods
- To experience cultures in a more direct way through visual material & ethnographic accounts

**Reading & using the element:**

How you read the element will be determined by personal choice and by your specific needs for reading the material. Here are a few ways you may approach the texts depending on the context of study:

*Linear reading* If you are preparing for a seminar or essay you may want to begin reading the text from the Introduction through to 'Theory & debates' which contains options to look at the case studies or refer to the History section. In this way you go through all the main issues as you would when reading a book or article. This is more time consuming than reading selected topics but it provides all the salient information which you would need at the beginning stages of essay preparation i.e. when you have not yet read the essential readings.

## E2

*Text-based searches* This option can be used to search the bibliography for relevant texts to include in a bibliography, or to use as additional reading material which may not appear on your course reading lists. It may also be useful in searching through the text to clarify points you may not have understood fully in a lecture, for example you could use the search facility to enter keywords which are central to the arguments as presented in a lecture. This could also be useful once the preparatory work for an essay has been done, to check or cross-check that you have grasped fully the concepts being used. Searching the text by themes using this search option provides a list of sites where the themes appear, so it can be a quick way to search through the text for relevant material. \*\*\*This facility is not available on the CD.\*\*\*

*Reading by topics* If you have already reviewed the theoretical debates but need ethnographic examples, you could jump to Case Studies. This may be useful if you need examples to substantiate theoretical arguments put forward. This way of reading is more focused on specific areas which you know are needed to complete a piece of work. It is useful once you are already aware of the main points and arguments of a particular topic as you will be able to fill in the gaps of your knowledge. Alternatively, you can begin with the last page (<http://nt2.ec.man.ac.uk/multimedia/questions.htm>) which raises the questions with which this text is concerned; to get a general idea of some of the focal points in the text, and then read the sections. In other words, you could use this as guidance on what to read in the element, keeping the questions in mind as you go through the text for a more focused read.

### **Themes:**

- South American Ethnography
- Economic Anthropology
- Development Studies
- Ethnicity & Nationalism
- Issues of Land rights
- Women's position

Peasant Agriculture  
 Kinship  
 Field Methods  
 Shamanism  
 Ethnography

**Essays/seminars/discussion:**

Drawing on evidence from the 2 case studies compare the different methods and styles of ethnographic representation and analysis.

What field methods are being used? How is the data represented and in what ways does this influence our understanding of the texts? How does the author's presence influence our perceptions of the societies?

How does anthropology seek to understand contemporary social processes? Use John Gledhill's Mexican Case study to discuss this.

'Underdevelopment' is not a state (of backwardness and lack of modernisation) but a process: a process of distorted socioeconomic change which reflects fundamental structural inequalities in the world economy. Discuss.

What are peasants today? Are the classical models of 'peasant society' and 'peasant economy' adequate tools of analysis today? Have modern lifestyles made it impossible to make a clear distinction between 'urban' and 'rural' society? Beyond the Classical Debates - The Changing Character of the Peasantry - <http://nt2.ec.man.ac.uk/multimedia/theory12.htm>.

\*\*\* This page reiterates the main questions put forward in the Introduction, having now explored the classic theories and debates on peasant agriculture.\*\*\*

For essay topics see also last page at: <http://nt2.ec.man.ac.uk/multimedia/questions.htm> - Some questions and a note on Method.

## E3

### Element 3

### 'Venda Girls' Initiation': John Blacking

#### **Introduction:**

This element contains a number of articles and collections of video and songs based on Blacking's work on the three phases of initiation for Venda girls: *vhusha*, *tshikanda* and *domba*, which he documented during two years of fieldwork in the late 1950's. Throughout his life Blacking drew upon his original research to formulate many of his ideas about the crucial role of music and dance in human society. He provides us with detailed ethnographic descriptions of these institutions and of the expressive repertoire used in them. The aim of this project is not so much to outline the way in which the Venda material marked John Blacking's work as it is to re-present his data on initiation schools in the spirit in which it was originally published: as an invitation for further analytical readings. This element can be used in a number of ways:

- To clarify points from a lecture
- To plan an essay or seminar presentation
- As exam preparation
- As a tool for comparative ethnographic studies
- To gain increased awareness of the processes involved in the construction of ethnographic knowledge, in particular the way in which anthropological accounts are constructed from field notes

#### **Themes:**

- Anthropology of the body
- Visual anthropology
- Ethnomusicology
- Myth analysis
- Analysis of symbols
- Field methods/methodology

**Reading and Using the element:**

How you read the element will be determined by personal choice and by your specific needs for reading the material. Here are a few ways you may approach the texts depending on the context of study:

*Reading by topic* That is, if you are preparing a discussion on a specific issue such as ethnomusicology, it is a good idea to begin by going to the 'Venda music' section which introduces the reader to venda music and some ethnomusicology issues. Similarly, if preparation has already been done on the subjects of ritual performance and/or the body, the reader could begin by going straight to the 'video clips' section, to view in practice, the theoretical arguments surrounding these issues. In other words, this way of selected reading is useful if you have already reviewed the theoretical debates surrounding these issues but require further examples, clarification or expansion of a particular topic.

*Linear reading* To begin a study of Venda society, ethnomusicology, ritual, etc. the reader could start with the introduction and continue through the element in much the same way as reading a book. This would ensure that all of the major themes and important issues were included in the preparatory stages of an essay plan/seminar discussion. In this way you go through all the main issues as you would when reading a book or article. This is more time consuming than reading selected topics but it provides all the salient information which you would need at the beginning stages of essay preparation i.e. when you have not yet read the essential readings.

**Essays/seminars/discussion:**

A number of (inter-related) topics can be examined in relation to the materials contained in this element. Although by no means exhaustive, the following list contains some issues which may be worth exploring:

## E3

In what ways does the body become ascribed with social meaning and/or identity in the context of Venda girls' initiation rites?

What use are video/pictorial data for understanding social phenomena? Can they be used as 'stand alone' evidence or do they need to be contextualised?

Ethnomusicologists have suggested that the analytical category of 'music' is ethnocentrically biased.

### **Suggested further reading:**

In addition to the above mentioned themes it is a good idea to view **Element 8** which focuses on Venda divination systems as well as those practised by the Mambila. This would provide more detail on Venda society in general thus expanding our knowledge of Venda culture.

#### *Initiation*

Heald, S. 1999. *Manhood and morality: sex, violence and ritual in Gisu society*. London: Routledge.

La Fontaine, J. S. *Initiation*. Middlesex: Penguin Books.

Talle, A. 1993. 'Transforming women into 'pure' agnates: aspects of female infibulation in Somalia'. In *Carved flesh, cast selves: gendered symbols and social practices* (eds) V. Broch-due, I. Rudie & T. Bleie. Oxford: Berg.

Richards, A. I. 1956. *Chisungu: a girls' initiation ceremony among the Bemba of Northern Rhodesia*. London: Faber & Faber.

van Gennep, A. 1960 [1909]. *The rites of passage*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

#### *The body*

Dieterlen, G. & Y. Cisse. 1972. *Les fondements de la societe d'initiation du Komo*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

Douglas, M. T. 1973 [1970]. *Natural symbols: explorations in cosmology* (2nd edition). London: Barrie & Jenkins.

Jackson, M. 1981. 'Knowledge of the body'. In *Man* (N.S.) 18 327-345

- Mauss, M. 1935. 'Les techniques du corps'. In *Journal de psychanalyse* 32 (reprinted in [1950]*Sociologie et anthropologie* (ed.) Claude Levi-Strauss. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France).
- Strathern, M. 1993. 'Making incomplete'. In *Carved flesh, cast selves: gendered symbols and social practices* (eds) V. Broch-due, I. Rudie & T. Bleie. Oxford: Berg.

*Visual Anthropology*

- Banks, M. & H. Morphy. 1997. *Rethinking visual anthropology*. London: Yale University Press.
- Collier, J. 1967. *Visual anthropology: photography as a research method*. London: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Crawford, P. I. & D. Turton (eds) 1992. *Film as ethnography*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Edwards, E. (ed.) 1992. *Anthropology and photography, 1860-1920*. London: Yale University Press in association with the Royal Anthropological Institute.
- Hockings, P. 1995. *Principles of visual anthropology* (2nd edition). New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

*Ethnomusicology*

- Blacking, J. 1973. *How musical is man?* London: Faber.
- Koskoff, E. (ed.) 1989. *Women and music in cross-cultural perspective*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Lomax, A. 1968. *Folk song style and culture*. Washington DC: American Association for the Advancement of Science.
- Merriam, A. 1964. *The Anthropology of music*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Rouget, G. 1985. *Music and trance: a theory of the relations between music and possession*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- (See also the regional discographies contained in each issue)

## E4

### **Element 4                      Working Notes on the Kingdom of Bum: identity and ethnicity and colonial ethnography**

#### **Introduction:**

This element is concerned with the region of West-central Africa, the Cameroon Grassfields. It contains a wide variety of ethnographic materials including Sally Chilver's field diary and the results of collaborative fieldwork undertaken by Chilver and Kaberry. This section provides an ethnographic overview of the region and remains, to date, the starting point for any ethnographic research in the Grassfields.

Information on the Kingdom of Bum appears in a section on 'Traditions of Migration, Settlement and State Formation' and also in 'Social and Political Institutions: Selected Examples'. The ethnographic materials contained in the collection reflect very much on issues to do with political and ritual hierarchies and the construction of local identity. This methodologically broad approach to the Grassfields explicitly includes the views of explorers, missionaries and colonial administrators. This element can be used in a number of ways:

- To clarify points from a lecture
- To plan an essay or seminar presentation
- As exam preparation
- As a tool for comparative ethnographic studies
- To gain increased awareness of the processes involved in the construction of ethnographic knowledge, in particular the way in which anthropological accounts are constructed from field notes

#### **Themes:**

- African Societies
- History of Anthropology
- Identity/Ethnicity
- Methodology
- Field Methods
- Ethnographic styles/representation

**Reading and Using the element:**

How you read the element will be determined by personal choice and by your specific needs for reading the material. This element however contains a guide and suggestions on reading through the text in the section entitled 'How to use these pages'. You can access this section from the starter page at: <http://sapir.ukc.ac.uk/OBU/>. It is recommended that you read through the first three days of the field diary of Sally Chilver. It is further strongly suggested that you read these diary pages together with the published accounts as a means of coming to terms initially with the detailed ethnographic data.

The diary pages have been further linked to a set of commentaries, notes, questions and exercises.

**Essay and seminar discussion topics:**

A number of (inter-related) topics can be examined in relation to the materials contained in this element. Although by no means exhaustive, the following list contains some issues which may be worth exploring:

How do ethnographers differ from missionary or travel writers? Using Chilver and Kaberry's published account and the early missionary reports, discuss.

How and why have anthropologists tried to incorporate 'native terms' in their accounts? (Are anthropological analyses enriched by such inclusions? What are the problems involved in translating native categories into those of the anthropologist and her audience?)

What is the place of field notes in the anthropological enterprise? What is the relationship between field notes and finished monographs? Compare the field notes of Chilver and Kaberry and their contributions to the final account?

Time depth here, against synchronicity of 'ethnographic present'?

Identity/ethnicity: boundaries, kinship links, trade routes, language, politics of naming, historicity, etc?

## E4

### **Further reading/Web sites:**

<http://www.sil.org/ethnologue/countries/Came.html> (Ethnologue: Linguistic database of all Cameroonian languages)

<http://www.agora.stm.it/politic/cameroon.htm> (Links to sites containing information on the politics of Cameroon)

<http://lucy.ukc.ac.uk/Fdtl/Rehf/> (Archival sources from Farnham Rehfisch's work on the Mambila (1953): Writing the Mambila)

**Element 5****The Ascoli Project: a Puglian town and its hinterland****Introduction:**

This project examines changes in kinship and family forms and in marriage and inheritance strategies during the period 1700-1990 in Ascoli Satriano, a small 'city' in southern Italy. The project seeks to offer a new synthesis of historical and anthropological materials, using a combination of archival material and ethnographic fieldwork while exploring the main documentary research resources available to historically-inclined anthropologists. By focusing on the forms, time-spread, limitations and circumstances of production of these sources, it calls for a more critical analysis of greater time depth than is commonly found in existing historical-anthropological studies of south Italy. It raises issues concerned with the problems in employing historical materials i.e. in understanding the context and methods of their creation for example. This element can be used in a number of ways:

To clarify points from a lecture

To plan an essay or seminar presentation

As exam preparation

To gain increased awareness of the processes involved in the construction of ethnographic knowledge, in particular the way in which anthropological accounts are constructed from field notes

**Themes:**

European Anthropology

Historical Anthropology

Kinship, Family Structure & Inheritance

Peasant Agriculture

Archival Research

Methodology

## E5

### **Reading and Using the element:**

How you read the element will be determined by personal choice and by your specific needs for reading the material. Each unit within this element can be read as a self-contained unit. Check the unit index/table of contents for what is available within each section. Below is a brief guide to the choice of topic one could select within each unit:

*Archival records* Unit One: (See the unit index to select a section of the unit). This unit seeks to illustrate the range of information such documents contain and the ways they can be used in both family and wider kinship reconstruction. It is a good idea to begin with the section 'Find out about the documents' which explains what the records are and how they can be used. This provides a useful introduction to the use of archival sources. 'Read the paper' contains an article which examines kinship and residence patterns in 18th & 20th century Ascoli.

*Research & archival material* Unit Two: This unit focuses on changes over time in inheritance, marriage and dowry patterns seeking to illustrate how notarial contracts can be used to document these processes. This provides a useful indication of the process of research, from initial reading of archival sources to data analysis to the written article.

*Visual representation* Unit Three: This section of the element includes maps from 16th & 18th century and contemporary photographs of the region which together provide an account of the history of the region and its agricultural past. Unit four - similarly uses visual material to complete the narrative account of Ascoli's urban history over the last three centuries. Of particular interest is the section on the procession celebrating a saint's day. Photographs of the procession stand alongside a description of the event giving the reader a clearer picture and feel for the town and its culture.

**Essays/seminars/discussion:**

A number of (inter-related) topics can be examined in relation to the materials contained in this element. Although by no means exhaustive, the following list contains some issues which may be worth exploring:

What are the difficulties in using historical sources in research?

An historical perspective is important to anthropological scholarship. Discuss

\*\*\*Searches of the database are available online only, not on the CD version.\*\*\*

## E6

### Element 6

### Ancestors in Africa: selected readings and Mambila case material

#### **Introduction:**

The materials presented in this element fall into three parts, the first of which presents a number of the ‘classic’ theoretical discussions of African ancestor beliefs, the second of which includes a series of correspondence concerning the subject which appeared in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (then called *Man*) and the third of which includes both published accounts and field note data of a single case study (that of the Mambila of Cameroon). The element can be used in a number of ways to enrich the process of learning and understanding anthropological issues:

To clarify points from a lecture

To plan an essay or seminar presentation

As exam preparation

As a tool for comparative ethnographic studies

To gain increased awareness of the processes involved in the construction of ethnographic knowledge, in particular the way in which anthropological accounts are constructed from fieldnotes

#### **Reading and using the element:**

How you read the element will be determined by personal choice and by your specific needs for reading the material. Here are a few suggested ways you can approach the texts, depending on the context of study:

*A linear reading of the documents* If you are preparing for an essay or seminar on this topic, you may wish to start with Gluckman’s classic account of African ancestor beliefs, which contextualises them within wider systems of beliefs in the dead. Gluckman’s sociological orientation here serves to contextualise the approach to the subject adopted by Fortes and Calhoun, in particular, who both argue that the peculiar sta-

tus of authority held by ancestors derives from their relationship with corporate lineage groupings. It was this type of understanding that Kopytoff (who approached the topic from a more ‘culturological’ perspective) took issue with, as can be seen. In fact the Man debate (section two) resulted largely from theorists’ alternatively defending or attacking Kopytoff’s criticisms, in this regard.

*Reading the sections as self-contained units* The second and third sections of the element, in particular, can be read as self contained units. The former of these provides an opportunity for you to examine a complete academic debate, as it was played out over two years of Man, which enables you to develop an understanding of the ways in which anthropological theories are constructed and received by other academics. The latter enables you to undertake a detailed study of a single ethnographic case, which can be approached through both published sources and the fieldnotes from which these derive (one of the advantages of electronically published documents is that they allow the inclusion of a greater volume of fieldnote materials than would be possible with traditional paper publishing). This allows you to examine the part fieldnotes play in the construction of ethnographic knowledge.

*Moving back and forth between different types of sources* The electronic format of this element enables greater ease of movement between different sections of material. In relation to the Mambila section, in particular, this allows you to move freely between this case study and the wider theoretical accounts of the previous two sections (using a combination of the embedded links in the left hand contents section, and the ‘back’ key on the browser). This enables you to examine the relationship between anthropologists’ detailed studies of single societies, and their more general theoretical pronouncements.

**Essay and seminar discussion topics:**

A number of (inter-related) topics can be examined in relation to the materials contained in this element. Although by no means exhaustive, the following list contains some issues which may be worth exploring:

## E6

How are systems of ancestors best understood? (Does their significance derive from their unique positioning within the social structure of African societies, or simply from the fact that they are the ‘eldest elders’?)

How may we place ancestors beliefs within wider African cosmological systems? (What distinguishes them from other types of ‘spirits’? Why do some African societies have ‘cults’ to both the ancestors and other types of dead?)

How and why have anthropologists tried to incorporate ‘native terms’ in their accounts? (Are anthropological analyses enriched by such inclusions? What are the problems involved in translating native categories into those of the anthropologist and her audience?)

How is anthropological knowledge constructed? (Why do anthropologists place such high value on the close examination of single societies? What are the problems involved when trying to apply wider anthropological theories to such singular studies?)

What is the place of fieldnotes in the anthropological enterprise? (Why have some ethnographers in recent years included fieldnotes in their monographs? Is there a qualitative difference between the type of ethnographic information contained in fieldnote data and that contained in published accounts? What is the relationship between fieldnotes and finished monographs?)

### **Further reading:**

Although extremely comprehensive, the reading materials contained in this element are in no way exhaustive. Students with a particular interest in this topic, and the issues it raises, may also wish to consult these additional sources as well as viewing **Element 4** ‘Working Notes on the Kingdom of Bum: identity and ethnicity and colonial ethnography’ which can be used as complementary material to that contained in this element:

- Bradbury, R. 1966. 'Fathers, elders and ghosts in Edo religion.' In *Anthropological approaches to the study of religion* (ed.) Michael Banton. London: Tavistock Publications. (An examination of the relationship between ancestors and other spirits within an African cosmological system).
- Goody, J. 1962. *Death, property and the ancestors: a study of the mortuary customs of the LoDagaa of West Africa*. London: Tavistock Publications. (A classic ethnographic account of ancestor worship among an African people)
- McCall, J. C. 1995. 'Rethinking ancestors in Africa'. In *Africa* 65 (2), 256-270. (An application of recent theoretical thinking in anthropology to the subject)
- Sanjek, R. (ed.) 1990. *Fieldnotes: the makings of anthropology*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. (A comprehensive collection exploring the place of field notes in the anthropological enterprise)

**Element 7****Mambila Riddles****Introduction:**

This element provides an interactive introduction to Mambila riddles as well as providing a more general anthropological context to the study of riddles. The article on the function of riddles by Ian Hamnet suggests that riddles and riddling may illuminate some of the principles that underlie classification in social action and cognition generally and can, in particular, indicate the role that ambiguities play in the classificatory process. This research is situated in more recent anthropological scholarship which has brought classification into the foreground and has aroused an awareness of related problems concerning the mechanisms where by conceptual categories are set up, preserved and mediated. Questions have been either explicitly or implicitly raised as to the role of ambiguous or interstitial items in classificatory schemes; they can be seen as the objects of interdiction (taboo) and as indispensable means for the continued functioning of society.

\*\*\*The interactive 'riddle machine' requires an online connection.\*\*\*

**Themes:**

- African societies
- Sociolinguistics
- Anthropological study of riddles

**Using the element in teaching:**

This material could be read in conjunction with the other elements dealing with this Cameroonian people for a more comprehensive study of the Mambila (cf **Elements 6, 7, & 9**). It could be used to complement (rather than replace) one week's seminar reading for any course on African societies or sociolinguistics.

**Layout of element:**

There are three sections to this element, each can be accessed via the links on the main page:

*An article* first published in *Man* (n.s.) by Ian Hamnet on the function of riddles, including a list of references.

*Bibliography* of anthropological studies of riddles.

*Ask me a riddle* containing a collection of riddles & the riddle machine. Instructions on how to use the riddle machine are listed on the main page of the element. \*\*\*This requires an online connection.\*\*\*

The reader can return to the main page at the end of each section by clicking on the 'back' button of the browser.

**Element 8****Mambila Divination****Introduction:**

This element introduces users to the practicalities of divination systems, and contains two interactive simulations (the 'divining dice' and 'Mambila spider divination'). After a brief introduction, which includes several previously published articles on this topic, users are able to try their own hand at Mambila divination systems, and thereby gain a feel for the processes involved in the formulation of oracular interpretations. This element, as well as providing an additional source of information on the Mambila (complementary to the other elements dealing with this Cameroonian people; cf. **Elements 6, 7 and 9**) also exploits the interactive possibilities of the hypertext format in an innovative way. The element would not so much replace the traditional seminar reading list, as act as a complementary source of material for it, allowing readers who are perhaps grappling with the ideas contained in such classic works as Evans-Pritchard's *Witchcraft, oracles and magic among the Azande* (1937) for example to test these ideas against real (simulated) instances of divination.

**Themes:**

- African Societies
- Ritual and Religion
- Rationality

**Using the interactive parts of the element:**

*The Divining Dice:*

\*\*\*This part of the element may not work with some older versions of Internet Explorer and Netscape, as it requires Java to be enabled\*\*\*

The top of the screen shows a picture of the four 'divining dice' the Venda use for purposes of divination (representing, from left to right - Vhami [old man], Tshilume [young man], Twalima [old woman], Lumwe [young woman]). Clicking on this picture will 'activate' the

simulation, randomly producing one of the 16 possible combinations of the dice (as determined by the number [and order] of dice facing upwards).

You can view the interpretations diviners would give to each of these combinations in the box below the picture. These are given in the vernacular, but also include 'literal' translations. Below this you are also presented with Stayt's own interpretations of these diagnoses, which explain the meaning of the diviners' pronouncements.

*Mambila Spider Divination:*

\*\*\*This part of the element may not work with some older versions of Internet Explorer and Netscape, as it requires Java to be enabled.\*\*\*

Following this link leads you to a page which outlines the processes involved in Mambila spider divinations, and the basic principles involved in their interpretation. You should read this page as an introduction to the simulation which follows (which can be accessed by following the link 'Go to the Spider Divination Simulation' at the end) and which allows them to apply these principles for themselves in a real (simulated) spider divination.

\*\*\*To make the simulation work on older versions of Internet Explorer or Netscape users may have to 'refresh' the screen, by 'resizing' the entire browser window (by clicking on its bottom right corner) after every command sent to the simulation (i.e. every time one of its buttons is selected). This is necessary because a number of the 'buttons' may disappear from view after one has been 'pressed'. These will return to view once the browser window is resized.\*\*\*

To use the simulation, you must first press the 'Spider' button on the bottom left hand corner of the screen. This acts to cover the pot with the lid. From here, the 'Show' button will uncover the pot to reveal the (random) formation of leaves upon which the divination can be carried out. To conduct another 'divination', you should press these same

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buttons again, in the same order. To return to the starting point (i.e. an uncovered pot with no leaves in it) you should select the 'Reset' button.

\*\*\*The eight 'buttons' on the bottom left hand side of the simulation picture will not work on older versions of Internet Explorer and Netscape, and should be ignored by users. In addition, at this time the 'Log' button is not yet activated, and therefore should not be used\*\*\*

### **Essay and seminar discussion topics:**

This element can be used to complement the study of a number of anthropological themes, and will therefore be of use in preparing for seminar presentations and essays. The element has a bearing, for example, on all of the following topics:

*African societies* In what ways are Mambila divination systems typical of those found throughout the African continent?

*Ritual and religion* To what extent can divinations be termed 'rituals' (is it meaningful to analytically distinguish them from 'secular' activities)?

*Rationality* What similarities/differences exist between such divinations and 'rational' western medical diagnoses?

*Discourse analysis* What can the study of divination dialogues tell us about indigenous power relations and issues concerning the 'control' of meaning?

*Ethnomethodology* What models of knowledge do the actors themselves bring to the experience of divination?

**Further reading:**

For those interested in the topic of divination (or related issues) the element's front page includes links to a comprehensive bibliography (deriving from the Royal Anthropological Institute's [RAI] 'Anthropological Index Online') and also a link to the results of an internet search on 'divination' (which gives details of a number of related web sites).

It would also be a good idea to view **Element 3** which focuses on Blacking's work on the Venda. This would provide a more detailed account of Venda society relevant to the context of Venda divinations as detailed in this element.

An additional reference relevant to this material is a work entitled: *The Bavenda* by Hugh A. Stayt ; with an introduction by A.W. Hoernle. London : Oxford University Press, 1931

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### Element 9

### The work of Farnham Rehfisch and other archival sources on the Mambila

#### **Introduction:**

This element comprises a collection of historical, ethnographic and colonial material on the Mambila and provides an opportunity for critical reading of such accounts as well as showing the importance of historical sources to contemporary scholarship. The colonial officers were concerned with patterns of political power and allegiance mainly because they wanted to simplify the process of tax collection; in the early 1950's when Rehfisch was studying, patterns of power and the organisation of social relationships were the central concerns. By the time Zeitlyn began his studies in Cambridge in the 1980's the role of language and religion had gained far greater prominence. The collection thus allows the reader to trace the changing interests of the writers and to place in an historical context the issues with which this study is concerned. The element can be used in a number of ways to enrich the process of learning and understanding anthropological issues:

- To clarify points from a lecture
- To plan an essay or seminar presentation
- As exam preparation
- As a tool for comparative ethnographic studies
- To gain increased awareness of the processes involved in the construction of ethnographic knowledge, in particular the way in which anthropological accounts are constructed from fieldnotes

#### **Themes:**

- African societies
- History of anthropology
- Critical reading
- Comparative ethnography
- Methodology

**Reading and using the element:**

There are essentially three different types of material in this element. How you read the element will be determined by personal choice and by your specific needs for reading the material:

*Some early documentary sources on Mambila* accessed by its link on the 'main element page' contains archival material, colonial reports, correspondence etc.

*Rehfish's published accounts* accessed by clicking on the links towards the end of the 'main element page'.

*Mambila fieldnotes* containing Rehfish's unpublished work, accessed by the links at the bottom of the main page. This contains fieldnotes, photographs taken in the field & some draft papers.

The reader can return from these links to the main element page using the 'back' button on the browser. An additional link to other sources on the Mambila can be accessed by clicking on the link: *The Virtual Institute of Mambila Studies* at the end of the 'main element page'.

**Essay and seminar discussion topics:**

A number of (inter-related) topics can be examined in relation to the materials contained in this element. Although by no means exhaustive, the following list contains some issues which may be worth exploring:

What is the place of fieldnotes in the anthropological enterprise? (Why have some ethnographers in recent years included fieldnotes in their monographs? Is there a qualitative difference between the type of ethnographic information contained in fieldnote data and that contained in published accounts? What is the relationship between fieldnotes and finished monographs?)

How do ethnographers' writings differ from colonial administration reports/records?

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What is meant by the statement "The essential challenge posed by all texts to any serious reader is how to read the bias"? Discuss with reference to the earlier & later documents on the Mambila.

What is the role of historical sources to a contemporary study of the Mambila?

\*\*\*The material in this element could be read in conjunction with the other elements dealing with Cameroonian people for a more comprehensive study of the Mambila (cf **Elements 4, 6, 7, & 9**).\*\*\*

**Element 10****Ritual spirit possession in the  
Mina Nago of Northern Brazil****Introduction:**

This element is an interactive multimedia ethnography of religious performance in the Tambor de Mina of Northern Brazil. Integrating audio-visual and textual material in an interactive way, it moves away from 'traditional' modes of ethnographic representation, such as, for example, documentary cinema. The introduction provides the background ethnographic context of the Mina Nago people, after which the element explores in detail a single case of ritual spirit possession. The element can be used to complement your reading of text based sources, and in this way will enrich the process of learning and understanding anthropological issues. It will be of use when you are, for example, trying to clarify points from a lecture, plan an essay or seminar presentation, or revise for an exam.

**Themes:**

- Brazilian ethnography
- Brazilian cosmology
- Spirit possession
- Concepts of the person
- Ethnographic representation

**Essay and seminar discussion topics:**

A number of (inter-related) topics can be examined in relation to the case study contained in this element. Although by no means exhaustive, the following list contains some issues which may be worth exploring:

What is spirit possession? (How does it operate, for example, to maintain social structure? What meaning does it have for Brazilian people?)

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How are spirit possession beliefs located within wider cosmological systems? (What is the difference, for example, between possession rituals and other types of 'religious' performance?)

What advantages do multimedia documents have over purely textual ones for purposes of ethnographic representation? (How do they differ, in addition, from documentary films? What role will they play in anthropology in the future?)

### **Layout of the element:**

As stated above, the element falls into three parts, which can be accessed through clicking on the pictures of the 'main' page:

*The introduction* The Tambor de Mina public ceremonies. This section is divided into five pages, which can be navigated using the arrow key at the bottom of the picture, which remains present on all screens. In addition, in the bottom left-hand corner of all screens are links back to the 'main' page, as well as links to a glossary search (this link is called 'abc') and a bibliography search (entitled 'biblio').

*Opening song sequence and ritual features* This section is modelled around a section of video, and textual materials are all linked into this. In the bottom left-hand corner of the screen here, in addition to the 'main', 'abc' and 'biblio' links (see above) is a link entitled 'help'. New users of the element must click this link and read the information it brings up, as this information demonstrates how to use the element in an interactive way, in particular explaining how to bring up supplementary information from the video, (using the 'green rectangles').

*Manifestation of the spiritual entities* The layout of this part of the element is identical to that of the previous section (above).

### **Further reading:**

The element's bibliography contains a comprehensive listing of sources relevant to the study of this topic (and related issues).

**Element 11****Representing Kinship****Introduction:**

As well as several written sections concerning the representational issues involved in the modelling of kinship systems, this element includes two interactive parts. The first of these, the 'kinship editor', allows you to model your own kinship genealogies. Following its simple command instructions, you may wish to construct your own 'family tree', or that of a famous kin group, such as the royal family. This allows you to examine the processes involved in the construction of such diagrams, and also to think about some of the conceptual issues involved. You may, for example, wish to consider some of the following questions:

What is meant by the term 'sibling ship' (does it refer only to 'biological' brothers and sisters)?

Why do different cultural groups have alternative kinship terminologies?

How applicable is the term 'marriage' to unions between same-sex individuals?

**Or** broader questions, such as:

Why have anthropologists 'traditionally' used genealogical charts to map relations within kinship groups?

Why have some anthropologists recently condemned such representational devices as 'ethnocentric'?

What alternative methods of representation can you think of?

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### **Suggestions:**

Before you use the programme it is strongly suggested that you read the section entitled Learning Kinship with with Kinship Editor - this introductory page to the kinship element explains why kinship is important to anthropological research as well as highlighting some of the questions and issues concerned with anthropological research based on kinship. The programme allows any two individuals to be linked in a 'union'. Thus we can explore the variants on 'marriage' unions with other unions and the implications this has for the significance society gives to relationships. For example, how do 'adulterous' relationships differ from those resulting from divorce and remarriage? Or same sex unions. Are these significantly different from mixed-sex ones?

Consider too the case for adoption - under British law it is entirely legal for two full siblings who have been adopted by different families to wed and have children. What can such permutations and variations on kinship patterns tell us about the social construction of marriage, family and kin relationships? The issues raised in this introduction could be used as the basis for seminar discussions and essay topics. Once you have discussed and thought about these issues you can construct your own family genealogy and that of another family group (for example, the royal family) and contrast the two systems.

The second part of the element, the Kinship in Prolog, introduces you to the modelling abilities of computer based programs, and allows you to examine the construction of kin categories (such as son, mother etc.) in terms of the classificatory distinctions (e.g. those based on sex and generation etc.) that define them. The element complements the type of reading material used on courses concerned with the study of kinship, and will therefore be of use to you when preparing for essay or seminar presentations, or when revising for exams.

**Layout of the element:**

\*\*\*The interactive parts of the element may not work with some older versions of Netscape and Internet Explorer, as they require java to be enabled.\*\*\*

**Kinship editor**

The layout of this element is somewhat self-explanatory. It is worth pointing out, however, that the instructions for using the 'editor' are included underneath the editor itself, on the same page. Following these instructions, you can 'create' individuals of either sex, and then link them together in terms of two types of relationship ('marriage' and 'sibling ship'). The editor also allows you to enter biographical information (DOB etc.) on each of the individuals in the diagram, and to manipulate/'move around' whole nuclear family groups. Using these simple tools, you are able to create highly complex and detailed models of kinship groupings.

There are two sections contained within the editor:

*The blue panel at the top of the page* This contains boxes where one enters information about the people in your kinship model. At present only the Name, Comment, Birth Year and Death Year fields are operative. Information can only be entered once you have placed a person symbol in the white panel.

*The white panel* This is the middle section of the page and it is where your kinship diagram is created. By clicking in the blank area of this panel a menu will appear with a person or marriage link for selection. This is how to begin drawing your kinship model - by choosing a person or marriage symbol from the menu. Once you have a symbol you can enter information on the person or marriage in the blue panel above. This is done by clicking once on the symbol which will turn red. You can now enter the information.

'*Help*' Clicking on the help button at the centre of the blue panel opens a new window which contains detailed instructions on how to create

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kinship structures. For example, how to create a sibling relationship or marriage link between two people, how to move an entire nuclear family within the diagram, and how to delete symbols or links where necessary. Before attempting to draw up a diagram you should read these instructions carefully.

### **Calculating Kin**

This section is divided into six interrelated parts accessed by the following links:

*Culture and classification: Models and systems* This provides an introduction to the use of models within anthropological research & scholarship. Models are based on systems which we use to understand societies. One of the responsibilities of the anthropologist is to identify these systems of reduction and organisation, these indigenous models of the world and their experience in the world, and to attempt to understand the basis by which these models are constructed.

*Modelling kinship* This section explains the importance to anthropologists of understanding and analysing kinship terminologies. It deals with how kinship terminologies are organised through providing a means of classifying relationships with other people, for every person in the society, and how genealogical relationships are different from kinship relationships.

*Computers and Kinship* A survey of the history of the use by anthropologists of kinship-related computer applications. Anthropologists have shown considerable interest in the use of computers for analysing kinship and genealogical data.

*Defining conceptual requirements* Here we consider defining the conceptual terms to which we shall apply the computer-based analytic procedures. The conceptual terms must be determined, in whole, by analytical requirements rather than computing requirements. The structure and definition of conceptual terms are independent of whether or not a computer is to be used.

*Specifications: modelling kinship terminologies* Using English Kinship Terminology (EKT) as the example it illustrates how to analyse a terminology. For a terminology to be useful there must be a systematic way to assign kinship names to individuals, e.g. match up genealogical positions to kinship terms.

*Programming our terminologies* Prolog is a good computer programming language for dealing with complex structural systems such as that presented by kinship. The instructions for the 'Kinship in Prolog' part are located above it, again on its page. It is recommended that users of this latter interactive part first read Fischer's paper 'Computer Representations of Anthropological Knowledge' as an introductory passage, which can be accessed through the link 'paper' located just above the engine itself.

**Other sites of interest:**

*Tutorial on Kinship Terminology* (Brian Schwimmer)

(An excellent online interactive tutorial session, introducing the basics of kinship study [especially good for complete beginners.]

at: <http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/anthropology/kintitle.html>

*Yanomamo Interactive Web Version* (Contains much information which is useful for thinking about the construction of kin diagrams) at:

<http://www.anth.ucsb.edu/projects/axfight/prep.html>

## E12

### Element 12

### Computer-based Simulation Modelling for Anthropologists

#### **Introduction:**

This element comprises a number of different sections relevant to the use and study of simulation and knowledge representation in anthropological research. Simulation is a kind of modelling which is useful for a wide range of problems and situations. It has applications to both quantitative and qualitative problems with either very good data, or very little data. It has important implications for disciplines such as social anthropology which are basically non-experimental, providing a means of exploring problems which could never be observed to order. Simulation can be an important tool for the social researcher aware of its limitations.

#### **Themes:**

- Representation
- Methodology
- Using models
- Simulation
- Authority

#### **Reading and Using the element:**

The way you read the element will be determined by personal choice and by the specific needs of the reader. For example:

Each link except for 'Examples' is based on Michael Fischer's chapter on Computer-based Simulation and Modelling. These could be read as an introduction to the issues and theories surrounding simulations & modelling. This provides a comprehensive overview of the meaning and use of simulation in anthropology, and is well referenced throughout the text. Thus suggesting further reading, as well as providing ideas for essays or seminar discussions.

Alternatively if the reader is already familiar with these issues and wants to view an example of a simulation then you could go directly to the 'Examples' link to view for example: A description of a simulation - this provides the background to a simulation and is a simulation model which attempts to describe the particular agricultural land allocation for the production of sweet potatoes among the Kapauku of W. Irian as described by L. Pospisil in *Kapauku Economy* in 1956; similarly A simulation of foraging and movement by the !Kung (based on R. Lees paper) provides an example and opportunity to see how a simulation works. Other examples include two interactive simulations - the 'divining dice' and 'Mambila spider divination'. Users are able to try their own hand at Venda and Mambila divination systems, and thereby gain a feel for the processes involved in the formulation of oracular interpretations.

**Essays/seminars/discussion:**

What purpose do models serve for anthropological analysis? In your discussion include at least three examples of models.

Evaluate simulation as a means or aid for anthropological research. What is a simulation attempting to represent? What are its strengths and weaknesses?

What is the expertise that is represented by an 'expert system'? How do expert systems relate to the anthropologist's conception of knowledge and expertise?

Discourse analysis - What can the study of divination dialogues tell us about indigenous power relations and issues concerning the 'control' of meaning?

Ethnomethodology - What models of knowledge do the actors themselves bring to the experience of divination?

## E13

### Element 13

### A day in the Life ... Somié Village, Province de l'Adamaoua, Cameroon (April, 1999)

#### **Introduction:**

This element comprises a series of video clips of Somié village, Cameroon, taken by the ethnographer David Zeitlyn at approximately one hour intervals, throughout a twelve-hour period. The clips were shot in three locations - a residential setting, the village square, and a cross-roads near a dispensary. This element is primarily visual although it also includes reflections from the ethnographer on the use and techniques employed in the filming, as well as several exercises for students to aid their learning of anthropological methods through visual representations. This element could well be used in conjunction with the other elements on the Mambila (**Elements 6,7,8,9**).

This element can be used in a number of ways to enrich our learning and understanding of anthropology:

- As exam preparation

- To gain increased awareness of the process of ethnographic research

- As a tool in comparative studies

- To study & learn about anthropological field methods

- To experience cultures in a more direct way through visual material & ethnographic accounts

#### **Themes:**

- Representation

- Methodology

- Visual anthropology

**Reading & using the element:**

The data in this element is presented in two ways:

*Short texts* which provide a context to the research and to the village. Text is both above and below the table containing links to the movie clips. The section entitled 'Exercises for students' could form the basis of learning with this element as it provides detailed exercises which cover the main issues and themes pertaining to the element.

*Visual material* each movie clip can be viewed by clicking on the selected link within the table. When a link has been activated a small movie screen will appear and the video may be viewed by clicking on the 'play' button which is located on the left hand side of the tool bar below each movie screen. Also on this page there are a number of links to the other video clips (the links shown as hours) as well as the option of returning to the main page 'A day in the life...'

**Essays/Issues:**

There are a number of issues relating to the topics under 'Themes' above. These are best represented within the *Exercises for Students* section which could be used as the basis for essay topics as well as seminar discussions.

## E14

### Element 14

### Forty-five years in two Turkish Villages, 1949-1994

#### Introduction:

This element can be used in a number of ways to enrich our learning and understanding of anthropology:

- To plan an essay or seminar presentation
- As exam preparation
- To gain increased awareness of the process of ethnographic research
- To study & learn about anthropological field methods
- To experience cultures in a more direct way through visual material & ethnographic accounts

This element comprises data collected by Prof. Paul Stirling during his ethnographic research in two Turkish villages between 1949 and 1994. It is rare for an anthropologist to provide a more-or-less complete record of their field research. This element therefore is most valuable as a teaching and learning resource as it provides an example of how ethnographic research can be presented to encourage greater transparency and depth rather than presenting fragments of data from which the student must theorise. This element includes field notes, photographic images, articles, unpublished papers, Stirling's book *Turkish Village* as well as his Ph.D thesis.

#### Themes:

- European anthropology
- Field methods
- Methodology
- Peasant societies

**Reading and Using the element:**

There are several ways of reading this element depending on personal choice and the student's specific requirements. It is advised to begin with the 'Background' information which provides a context to the material presented here. Other sections to access, depending on your reasons for reading the selected materials include:

*Field notes* Two sets of field notes are accessible based on Stirling's research in the 1950's and the 1970's. It would be interesting to compare the 2 sets to gain an idea of the progression of his field work. They are also useful when reading his papers and published articles which will have been based upon these initial field records.

*Photographic data* Around one hundred pictures taken in the 1950's and a further hundred pictures taken in the later period of study are presented here. Students can view these in conjunction with the field notes to gain a greater understanding of both the changes within the societies under study as well as how this data contributes to a broader perspective and understanding of the society.

*Turkish Village* Stirling's book published in 1965. Any student interested in research in Turkey will find this invaluable as an ethnographic resource.

**Essays/Seminars/Discussions:**

What is the place of field notes in the anthropological enterprise? (Why have some ethnographers in recent years included field notes in their monographs? Is there a qualitative difference between the type of ethnographic information contained in field note data and that contained in published accounts? What is the relationship between field notes and finished monographs?)

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What are peasants today? Are the classical models of 'peasant society and peasant economy adequate tools of analysis today? Have modern lifestyles made it impossible to make a clear distinction between 'urban' and 'rural' society?

What use is pictorial data for understanding social phenomena? Can they be used as 'stand alone' evidence or do they need to be contextualised?

### **Web sites:**

<http://lucy.ukc.ac.uk/Stirling/MA/>

<http://safir.ukc.ac.uk/SLyon/>

<http://lucy.ukc.ac.uk/index.html>

**Element 15****The Powell-Cotton Museum  
at Quex Park****Introduction:**

This element is both a display and an account of the Quex House museum established by Major Powell-Cotton, originally to display to the public his collection of hunted wildlife which had been obtained on his expeditions to Africa and the Indian sub-continent. As technologies such as television have come into being, ideas about the presentation of natural history have changed. It is with this in mind that the authors of this presentation have viewed Quex Park as a 'museum of a museum'. This emphasis therefore provides value not only in informing us about the wildlife and people of Africa but also more significantly, about the culture of those who established the museum and those who would have visited in the past. The Powell-Cotton Museum represents an ethnological and natural science interpretation from another era. It shows not only images of Africa, but by its presentation and visual content is representative of a specific perspective from our own culture. There are several sections to the element containing archive film material, photographic presentations, as well as contemporary perspectives on the museum, its collections and owner via a video interview and commentary by the present assistant curator.

**Themes:**

- Visual anthropology
- Material culture
- Ethnographic museumology
- Visual anthropology methodology
- Archival Research

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### **Reading and using the element:**

How you navigate this element depends on personal choice and on the specific requirements for viewing the element. There are ten parts to the element containing a variety of material, from photographic and movie images to recorded interviews and short texts explaining the material.

*Suggestions:* Begin with the 'Introduction' link to get an idea of the project and the history of the Powell-Cotton museum. The four links on the right hand side of the main element page provide a contemporary context and perspective for the viewer. It is a good idea to view these links in conjunction with the more visual aspects of the presentation.

### **Essay and seminar discussion topics:**

A number of (inter-related) topics can be examined in relation to the materials contained in this element. Although by no means exhaustive, the following list contains some issues which may be worth exploring:

How may anthropological knowledge be constructed from the examination of museum collections? (Why do different museums display such collections in different ways)?

What can artifacts tell us about the societies from which they derive? Can an examination of such objects tell us anything about mankind as a whole?

How have anthropological attitudes towards the study of material culture changed since the nineteenth century? What factors account for this change? Will such studies continue to have relevance for the discipline in the future?

It is suggested to read this element in conjunction with **Element 1** of the ERA project.

**Web sites:**

Students interested in issues pertaining to museum ethnography may wish to visit the following (related) web sites:

Links to the web sites of all the museums at the University of Oxford at: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/museums.html>

The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, The University of Harvard at: <http://www.peabody.harvard.edu/>

The Hunterian Museum University of Glasgow at: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/Museum/>

SCRAN (resource base of Scottish material culture and human history) at: <http://www.scran.ac.uk/>

University of Cambridge Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology at: <http://cumaa.archanth.cam.ac.uk/museum.html>

## **Working Example**

## **ERA in Action: Social Organisation, Economy and Development in Pakistan**

This project was not prepared for ERA, but it probably represents one of the best marriages of research with teaching and learning materials. Stephen Lyon prepared this site on an ongoing basis while doing active doctoral research in a village in northern Punjab, Pakistan. As this Guide goes to press (August 1999) Stephen is still in the field, so there is more to come! While in the field he will be examining the relationship between social organisation, economy and development in an agricultural community. His website is designed with two goals in mind. Firstly, to make available some of the field data as it is being collected - an experiment in 'open' ethnography. Secondly, to encourage users to comment on ongoing research offering alternate explanations or examples of their own experiences. Comments on the website from non-anthropologists as well as anthropologists, and, in particular, Pakistanis living outside of Pakistan are welcome: a selection of users' comments are made available periodically.

This project therefore makes it possible for students to see a research project develop over its full course, not simply a writeup after it is complete. When Stephen Lyon returns he intends to continue to update the online site (<<http://sapir.ukc.ac.uk/SLyon/index.html>>) as he analyses his material and writes his thesis, which should provide some informative moments, as well as some amusing ones.