



HARRIET TUBMAN CENTRE FOR RESEARCH ON THE AFRICAN DIASPORA



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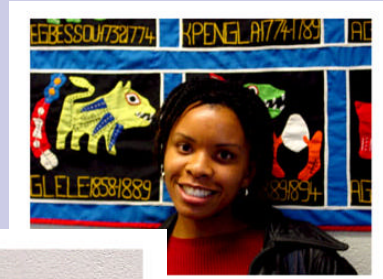
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Dr. René Soulodre - La France

This issue focuses on some of the graduate students who are involved in the York/UNESCO Nigerian Hinterland Project and how their activities are part of the agenda of the Harriet Tubman Resource Centre on the African Diaspora. The following profiles highlight the ways in which graduate students contribute to the research agenda of the NHP and the Tubman Centre. Coming from different parts of the world, these students bring a diversity of experience, culture and perspective to the research team. This wealth of background is reflected in their research interests and in the variety of skills and expertise they have brought to York University. The focus on collaboration is reflected in the methodology revealed in their research, which has enabled them to benefit from each other's experiences. Previously, graduate students have organized conferences on Public Health in the British Empire, All-African Student Association Conference, and are planning a forthcoming conference on Islam, Slavery and Diaspora. Among the collaborative ventures being developed is an ambitious project to collect texts on the abolition of slavery in the Islamic world, and the comparative analysis of these important documents.



Behnaz Mirzai Asl

Ph.D. Candidate

Behnaz Mirzai Asl received her B.A. in Iranian and Islamic History from Shahaid Beheshti University in Tehran, Iran in 1990. In 1994 she earned her M.A. in the same field from Azad University in Tehran, and subsequently came to York University where she earned an M.A. in African history in 1999. She was the recipient of the Stevenson Scholar in African Studies Award in 1999-2000 and has presented her work at several conferences. These include “Zar in the context of the African Diaspora in Persia: an Overview” at UCLA, in 2002, “African presence in Iran: identity and its reconstruction” at the ASA Conference in Houston in 2001, “Slave emancipation in Iran: gender and freedom” l’Université d’Avignon, France in 2001, “The 1848 *farman*, the abolition of the slave trade in Iran: a movement toward modernization” New York University, in 2000 and “The *Sharia* and the anti-slave trade *farman* in Iran in 1848” at l’ Université d’Avignon, in 2000. Behnaz also has published some of her research including “The 1848 abolitionist Farman: a Step Towards Ending the Slave Trade in Iran” In *Slavery and Abolition*. ed. Gwyn Campbell. (London: Frank Cass. Forthcoming), “The Re/Formation of an African Diasporic Identity in Iran: a Cultural and Historical Perspective” In Pule Firuzeh. (Tehran: Cultural Research Bureau. Forthcoming), and “African presence in Iran: identity and its reconstruction,” *Revue française d’histoire d’Outre Mer*, (Paris, forthcoming).

The topic of her Ph.D. dissertation is “The Abolition of the Slave Trade and Slavery in Iran, 1848-1928.”

Slavery and the slave trade had an important impact on the economic and social structures of Iran even before 550 BC. By 634 AD, when the Arabs invaded Persia, war captives, including some of the indigenous people, formed a distinctive social group of *Bandagan* (slaves) used in mining and agricultural plantations. In the ninth century, Turkish slaves were imported from Transoxiana to serve in the military, and gradually, they played a very crucial role in the socio-political system of Iran. Besides the trade in white Turkish slaves, Africans, and Indians were also imported into Iran. In the period of the Great Shah Abbas (1588-1629), Georgian slaves, both female (*kaniz*) and male (*ghulâm*), were imported and used in the *harams*, but, the latter also formed the permanent body of the army.

By the early nineteenth century, the slave trade and slavery were still identifiable features of Iranian society. In this period, by virtue of the internal political transformations and the Russia ban on the exportation of Georgians, Africa became the main source of slaves for Iran. The characteristic feature of the slave system was domestic. The Persian Gulf was the major trade route for the importation of Africans into Iran's ports. Arab as well as Iranian merchants participated in the importation of these African slaves. Another source for obtaining slaves involved the importation of Africans through Saudi Arabia, Mecca, and Medina to Kerbella and Baghdad from where Persian pilgrims brought them to Iran.

African slaves were mostly from East Africa and of different origins. Thus, they were made up of Somali, Bambasse, Habashe, and Nubee peoples. The total number of Africans shipped into Iranian ports was much less than the numbers sent to the Americas. In the nineteenth century, they did not exceed more than 2,000-3000 per year. The African slaves were however, numerous enough to form many distinctively African communities in Iran.

In the 19th century, Britain spearheaded the anti-slavery movement, which gradually banned the

slave trade in Africa before calling for an end to the slave trade in the Persian Gulf. In 1845, the British signed an agreement with the Sultan Sa'id to abolish the external slave trade from his African dominions. However, the Trucial Shaikhs continued shipping slaves from Zanzibar, Berbera, Zeila, Tajura. In 1846, in order to discontinue the traffic in slaves, Colonel Samuel Hennell (resident in the Gulf) wrote to Wilmoughby (chief secretary to government) about the significance of the role of Persia and Turkey in prohibiting the traffic in slaves through their ports in the Gulf. In 1847, the British eventually, obtained a *farman* forbidding the trade in African slaves from the Turkish government. During the subsequent period the British continued to exert pressure so that slavery would eventually be abolished in the Persian Gulf. In 1882, a new treaty replaced the previous agreements increasing the British right to search Iranian ships in the Persian Gulf without the supervision of Iranian officials. Nonetheless, slavery and the slave trade continued in Iran until 1928, when Reza Shâh issued a *farmân* prohibiting it not only in the Persian Gulf but throughout the country.

This entire process of the abolition of the slave trade and slavery in Iran from 1848 to 1928 will be examined in Behnaz' dissertation. She will particularly analyze the nature of the abolitionist phenomenon viewing it as a product of both external and internal reformist movements. Muhammad Shâh and his prime minister, Hâjji Mîrzâ Âqâsî, members of the pioneer ruling elite that banned the slave trade had a different ideological background rooted in the *Sufî Ni matullâhî* order. Amîr Kabîr significantly contributed to Iran's modernization. Reza Shâh fostered the idea of nationalism, and the separation of politics and religion. The main policy of this ruling elite was to establish a new order based on civil law while limiting the place of the *sharî'a* that legitimized slavery. Interestingly, the agreements banning the slave trade and slavery were issued by these reformers whose policies were not mainly rooted in religion. In this period the notion of westernization coupled with diplomatic relations with the West significantly blossomed.

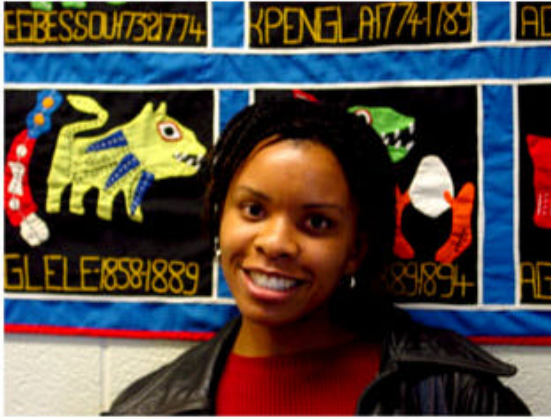
Initially Behnaz will establish the context in which slavery was being practiced in Iranian society, with a brief discussion on the nature of slavery. Next, the abolition of the slave trade and slavery will be chronologically examined emphasizing relevant British diplomatic policy and internal religious and political transformations. Furthermore, she will seek answers to the following questions; to what extent was the abolitionist movement in Iran a result of external forces? To what degree did the separation of state and religion facilitate the abolitionist movement? In tracing out the process of abolition in Iran, she will highlight the relative importance of different variables in bringing this about as well as the impact of these developments on Iranian society.

Behnaz has chosen to undertake this research for several reasons. Her knowledge of Iranian and African history has enabled her to appreciate the historical interaction between the Middle East and Africa. The slave trade was one of the significant factors that connected these two geographical areas. The relationship between African and Iranian history is a totally neglected area of study, which needs to be more deeply explored. She has done preliminary work on the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in Iran based on primary materials obtained from the archives in Iran. It was probably the first time that the historical issue of slavery and the slave trade in Iran was examined.

Comparative studies on the process of the abolition of the slave trade in various parts of the world now exist in great numbers. However, the absence of any comprehensive work on the process in Iran limits the possibility of the region being used in comparative studies. A preliminary examination of primary materials indicates that there are similarities and contrasts in the process of the worldwide abolitionist movements. The pattern of the abolitionist movement in Turkey is most likely similar to that of Iran's. In consequence, the study of the abolitionist movement in Iran can be linked to the broader study that explores the global political, social, and economic transformation. It is clear that the nineteenth century was a historic

period that witnessed the worldwide abolitionist movement, spearheaded by Europeans with the entire process coinciding with Iran's drive forwards modernization. Iran was not excluded from external changes forcing it to abolish the slave trade and slavery. Both, internal transformation and external factors were important to move from a traditional to a modern society. By exploring the process involved in the abolition of the slave trade in Iran, Behnaz will contribute to the history of that particular country, and also add to the perception of the global abolitionist movement.

The sources relating to the issue of the abolition of the slave trade in Iran are very limited. Kelly's book "Britain and the Persian Gulf" is one, and perhaps the only significant source in English that briefly discusses this subject with a particular emphasis on the role of Britain. On the issue of the abolitionist movement, he does not refer to Iran's internal transformation. Among Persian sources, books such as: *Tarikhe Ravabete Syasye Iran va Englis* by Mahmmud Mahmmud, *Daryâ Navardye Iranian* by Râin, and *Amîr Kabîr va Iran* by Âdammyat, give a brief discussion on the subject. However, their arguments are similar to each other, and like Kelly, do not analyze the abolitionist movement in the context of Iran's internal transformation. In addition, none of the sources refer to the nature of slavery in Iran. Thus this research will contribute significantly to a historiography that is scarce at best.



Denise Challenger

Ph.D Student

Denise Challenger entered the Ph.D program in history at York University in September 2002. She did her undergraduate work at the University of Toronto and received her MA from the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill. The title of her major research project was “The Contagious Diseases Act in Barbados from 1868-1887.” This work stimulated her interest in questions of gender, particularly regarding the sexual control of women, especially prostitutes in the 19th century Caribbean. Her fascination with Caribbean history was heightened by her participation in various oral history projects and archeological digs that helped bring into sharper focus the material culture of Barbados. Now Denise’s interests have turned to Caribbean connections to Canada, especially within the context of immigrations studies. She will address these issues within a comparative framework examining Irish, Italian, African-American, Chinese and Caribbean, 19th century immigration experiences to Canada. She will specifically examine the narrative portraying immigrants as ‘criminals’ and ‘undesirable’ and their response to this image. In April 2002 Denise presented a paper entitled “Victims of Circumstance or Agents of Destruction? Differing Reactions to the Treatment of Female Prostitutes in 19th century England and Barbados,” at the Milton Plesur Confernece, SUNY at Buffalo State. Denise has published “The Streets of Bridgetown Circa 1765,” in *The Barbados Museum and Historical Society*, 45 (December 1999).



Jennifer Lofkrantz

Ph.D Candidate

Jennifer Lofkrantz, is writing her dissertation under the direction of Professor Paul E. Lovejoy. She earned her Honours degree in history at Simon Fraser University in 1998 and her M.A. from Queen's University in 1999. She has been a teaching assistant in the History departments at York University and at Queen's and has been a research assistant at the Nigerian Hinterland Project. In 1999 she presented a paper entitled "Iroquois and Igbo Domestic Slavery. A Comparison of some Aspects, Before and During the Fur and Slave Trades" to the Canadian Association of African Studies.

The focus of Jennifer's research is "Ethnicity and Gender in the Slave Trade from the Western and Central Sudan to Morocco." Following Paul Lovejoy's lead in reference to the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the study of slavery must be centred on the enslaved individuals who left their home areas since the formation of 'creole' culture in the Diaspora was due to the continuities and disruptions in the lives of these individuals. With this in mind, she proposes, to study issues of ethnicity and gender in the slave trade to Morocco from these two specific areas as they existed in the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. In the mid-nineteenth century approximately 7000-

8000 slaves were imported into Morocco each year. Some came from the Senegambia, and the Middle Niger, due south of Morocco, but in fact a substantial proportion of slaves came from the Western and Central Sudan. In particular, this research will examine issues of identity, gender relations, and social interactions among enslaved people, tying these back to their specific sub-Saharan origin.

The basic sources for this study include trade documents, from the House of Igh, an important trading family located in southern Morocco; Moroccan government records, from the Bibliothèque Hassaniya and the Direction des Archives Royales; French diplomatic and military records concerning Morocco located in the Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer in Aix-en-Provence and the Centre des Archives Diplomatiques in Nantes; and the D,G, and K series of the Gouvernement General AGF, Archives Dakar. The Moroccan material contains information on the importation of slaves into Morocco, laws and norms governing slavery, the nature of slavery and the selling of slaves, and the Moroccan response to European pressure on the issue of slavery. The Dakar archive has a wide-range of material on French West Africa from the mid-nineteenth century to the pre- World War II period. It contains correspondence from all levels of officials in West Africa and in Paris, and reports on topics such as conquests, agriculture, trade, geography, slavery, the slave trade, and discussions on ethnicity.



Mohammed Bashir Salau

Ph.D. Candidate

Mohammed Bashir Salau a Ph.D. candidate with the York History Department and the Nigerian Hinterland Project received his B.A from the University of Jos and his M.A from Ahmadu Bello University. His MA thesis was “A political and economic history of an urban settlement: A case study of Kawo, Kaduna 1913-1980”. He has presented the following conference papers: "Some observations on farm slavery in 19th century Ibadan, Nigeria," at the Canadian Association of African Studies, Université Laval, Quebec, May 2001 [with Olatunji Ojo] and "Colonial urbanization in an African diaspora: The case of Kawo, Kaduna 1913-1960," at the 7th Blacks in the Diaspora Student Academic Conference, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, February 2001. His research interests are in the Hausa diaspora, slavery and the socio-economic history of the Sokoto Caliphate and urbanization in Northern Nigeria. Mohammed Bashir has worked in the National Archives, Kaduna, Nigeria and in the Arewa House Kaduna archives. His Ph.D. research, under the supervision of Paul E. Lovejoy, is on “Hausa ethnicity in the period 1780-1880: A historical analysis of its place in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade”.

José “Tufy” Cairus

Ph. D. Student

José “Tufy” Cairus has been accepted to the York University History Department in the Ph.D. Program. He comes to York and the Nigerian Hinterland Project from the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where he has written a Master’s thesis dealing with the Muslim diaspora in the Atlantic and more specifically in Brazil during the nineteenth century. The objective of his doctoral research is to deepen his knowledge of the Muslim communities that were created in Brazil due to the Atlantic Slave Trade and to analyze the issues and themes pertinent to this topic on both sides of the Atlantic. His research will focus upon two regions in Brazil, Bahia and Rio de Janeiro, but also on West Africa, particularly the Central Sudan, Haussaland and Yorubaland. This study will take on Transatlantic dimensions, but will also extend to North Africa and the Middle East. The work will give preference to supra-geographic concepts of the “Black Atlantic” and “Dar al-Islam” as opposed to focusing upon purely local phenomena. Within this context, cultural, religious, ethnic and economic concepts will be used as the analytical categories to be examined. The logic behind the larger focus will be to examine the long-term development of the regions of origin of individuals so that the Atlantic diaspora can be added as one more element in the dynamic development of their structures. It is argued that the Muslim diaspora had a particular ideological structure that was maintained in the Americas, though conforming to pragmatic strategies of confrontation and

accommodation. Viewed from an Africanist and Islamic perspective, emphasizing the sophisticated structures that had come out of established legal bodies, the object of this study is to determine how apparently antagonistic structures were able to co-exist through negotiation or confronted each other at particular moments in Brazil.

Thus far the documentary focus of this research includes the Annals of the Law Suits related to the Malê Revolt of 1835 in Bahia. These criminal records have already been organized into a large database that includes much information about the daily life of Muslim individuals in their most visible moment on Brazilian soil. “Arab” manuscripts found in the archives of Bahia and of Rio de Janeiro have been digitalised and have been the object of previous studies. (Translated from the Arabic by Ibrahim Hamza/York University). Reports by the chief of police of Rio de Janeiro from 1835 (Arquivo Nacional do Rio de Janeiro/National Archives of Rio de Janeiro) and documents related to the revolts of the Muslim slaves in Bahia, 1814. (Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro/National Library at Rio de Janeiro) will also be included. An account by a Muslim traveller, Al-Baghdadi, from the second half of the nineteenth century (Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz-Berlin, Biblioteca Nacional do Rio de Janeiro, Biblioteca do Ministério das Relações Exteriores do Rio de Janeiro/Library of the Ministry of Foreign Relations of Rio de Janeiro), translated from the Arabic by Yacine Daddi Addoun/York University, will also be analysed.

Tufy has presented papers at the conferences “Slavery and Religion” in Essaouira, Morocco as well as “Islam in Africa: a Global, Cultural and Historical Perspective” in Binghamton, NY, where he presented “Jihad, Captivity and Redemption: Slavery and Resistance in the Path of Allah, Central Sudan and Bahia, 1835.”

Brigitte “Khadija” Grossman

M.A. Student

“Although part of the African Muslim’s legacy is tangible, much cannot be counted. Yet the intangible is probably the most inspiring.”- Sylviane A. Diouf

Brigitte “Khadija” Grossmann, an incoming MA student, has a Bachelors Degree in the Plastic Arts from the State University of Santa Catarina, Brazil. During her undergraduate studies, she was quite fascinated by, and paid close attention to, themes related to Art History, semiotics, iconography, iconology and the relationships between Art and Religion. Since then she has dedicated herself to the study of Islam and to the presence of African Muslims in Brazil in the nineteenth century. For the past three years she has participated in History congresses and conferences in Brazil and abroad.

Her attraction to Arabic manuscripts began 10 years ago, when she first visited the National Archive at Bahia. Since then she has been interested in specializing in these documents and their consequent symbolic, social, cultural and religious characteristics. She hopes to contribute to a better understanding of this separate world that the Malês, Muslim African slaves, persisted in maintaining in Brazil in the midst of an already fragmented Atlantic world, based on an Afro-centric and Islamic perspective.

The goal of this research is to analyse principally the political and religious aspects of the

Malês, and the possible influence of Tariqa Qadiryya among them. These elements will be raised for a comparative analysis between Africa and the Americas, through the historiography, beginning with the ethnic, cultural and religious origin of these individuals in Africa, principally in Haussaland, Yorubaland and the Central Sudan, the locations of origin of the slaves.

The second goal is to study the influence of Qadiryya tariqa on West Africa, and verify the strong probability that there are similar theological concepts in Bahia or Rio de Janeiro such as obedience and submission to masters, hierarchy, disciplinary injunctions and fidelity, transmission of knowledge from masters to students, and voluntary initiation, as in the example of Qadiryya in Western Africa. There, the formation of these organisations did not take place by chance, but through the decisions of the Sufi leaders who saw in them a potential not only for a religious change, but also for political-social transformations. We can cite for example the cases of the famous leaders Sidi al-Mukhtar Al-Kunti and Shaikh Uthman dan Fodio who implanted social and political models of organisation that strongly contrasted with the existing models of secular authority in the region.

Since these political aspects were motivated by religiosity among the Malês, it is necessary to analyse data that demonstrates an opposition to police authority, to determine whether or not there was an intention to launch a jihad and establish an autonomous state through the consecutive revolts in the nineteenth century culminating with that of 1835 in Bahia.

In relation to the Arabic manuscripts found in the archives in Bahia and in Rio de Janeiro, Brigitte intends to analyse the style of calligraphy and its origins from an iconographic perspective, as well as their content as *surahs* (chapters of the Koran), prayers, and symbols, seeking signs of Tariqa Qadiryya in comparison with other manuscripts from Africa and the Americas.

Through the calligraphy and the content, she will analyse the various levels of knowledge of

the writers and determine how this knowledge was passed on through writing, while verifying who were the masters, and who were the disciples. She will also analyse the importance that they gave to the maintenance of knowledge and in what way this declined in quality and quantity. She will pay special attention to amulets, since they signify protection and motivation for internal and external changes, among individuals and the group as a whole.

It is of great importance to identify the varieties and differences, based on studies of amulets and African gri-gri in Islamic contexts and of animist influence, principally among the Hausa and Yoruba, since there is still a vacuum and confusion of concepts concerning Afro-Brazilian amulets of Malê origin.



Nadine Hunt

We at the Nigerian Hinterland Project and the Tubman Resource Centre on the African Diaspora would like to welcome our new Administrative Assistant, Nadine Hunt. Nadine graduated from York University in 2002 with an Honours Degree from the Faculty of Arts, with a combined major in History and Film/Video. She has previously worked as administrative assistant for several Toronto non-profit organizations. She is currently the editor of the Glen Oaks Coop Newsletter and is interested in community work such as tutoring elementary school children. Of Jamaican background, Nadine plans to undertake graduate work in history, studying family and social relations in pre-emancipation Jamaica. She intends to study the influence of the African background on Jamaican beliefs and practices. At the Tubman Centre, Nadine will be responsible for monitoring the e-mail account of our website, Nigerian@yorku.ca, and she will provide administrative assistance for the various seminars, workshops, and conferences at the Tubman Centre.



CAAS Conference Report

Several members of the Nigerian Hinterland Project and the Harriet Tubman Resource Centre participated in the Canadian Association of African Studies (CAAS) conference “The Global and the Local. Africa in the World and the World in Africa” that was held at the University of Toronto, May 29-June 1, 2002. Some of the graduate students attended the Graduate Methodology Workshop and many also presented papers on various panels. Olatunji Ojo and Mohammed Bashir Salau presented a co-written paper entitled “Panyarring in South Eastern Yorubaland, 1880-1900” and Mariana Candido presented “Portuguese and African Encounters in Trading Spaces: A demographical Analysis of Caconda, 1820-1870.” Ismael Musah Montana discussed his research in “Surviving Diaspora: West and Central African Communities in Early 19th Century Tunis.” A panel was organized by Research Coordinator Renée Soulodre-La France entitled “The Power of Music. Identity in the African Diaspora” where Yacine Daddi Addoun presented “Images de la ‘Barbarie’ dans les opéras du XIX^e siècle,” Thor Burhnam spoke about “Singing Duvalier. Singing the Nation: Contesting Marine Masculinity through Popular Song” and Renée Soulodre-La France presented “‘Music of the Devil’: Afro-Colombians and Instruments of Hegemony.” Finally Jennifer Lofktranz presented “Manding/Bambara Ethnic Identity in the 18th and 19th Centuries.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Awards

Thorald Burnham, Ph.D. candidate, has been awarded the Ontario Graduate Scholarship for the third year in a row.

Tara Innis, a former York undergraduate in Caribbean history, is now completing her M.A. at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill. Tara has just been awarded a Split-site PhD Commonwealth scholarship that will allow her to study in the UK for up to a year. She has chosen to attend the University of Manchester Centre for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine. She will be conducting research all over the UK, but particularly in London and Edinburgh. Tara's study, "The Health and Welfare of Children in a colonial society: the Barbadian child in the 19th century" will concentrate on the social history of health care and medicine with regards to children in this colonial society.

Appointments

Professor José C. Curto has been named Associate Editor of the Portuguese Studies Review which is published out of Trent University

(See: <http://www.trentu.ca/psr/editors.html>)

Conferences:

**New Frontiers in Graduate History
6th Annual Graduate Student History Conference
Friday, March 15 - Saturday, March 16, 2002
York University, Toronto, Canada**

Several of the Nigerian Hinterland Project's graduate students participated in a Graduate Student History Conference held at York University. These included:

Thor Burnham, York University
Competing Songs, Competing Masculinities: Contesting Marine Masculinity in Post-War Haiti

Ibrahim Hamza, York University
Theory of Imperialism and the British interests in northern Nigeria c. 1897-1903

Ismael Musah Montana, York University
Abolition of Slavery, British Diplomacy and Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the Ottoman Empire, 1838-1857

Publications:

Numbers 25 and 26 of the Revista Afro-Asia, published by the Centre of Afro-Oriental Studies and the Graduate Program in History of the Federal University of Bahia, Salvador Brasil are now available. For copies please contact <mailto:afroasia@ufba.br>

This issue includes:

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A metrópole dos escravos.

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Candidacy Announcement

Four of the Nigerian Hinterland Project graduate students were advanced to candidacy in the Ph.D. program in April of 2002. These include: Thorald Burnham, Oscar Grandio Moráquez, Mohammed Bashir Salau, and Mariana Candido Pinho. Congratulations to all of you!

Database Seminar

May 2 2002 a Database Seminar was held at the Harriet Tubman Resource Centre. Several of the Ph.D. students participated in an exchange on how to craft historical databases using Microsoft Access. Webmaster Eugene Onutan directed the technical side of the seminar while Renée Soulodre-La France lead the discussion on the nature of the historical documentation that each student has encountered or might find in their research and the how the disparate information can be incorporated into a database format.