Greetings from your ACUA Graduate Student Liaisons!

Hopefully you have been busy with field work or catching up on the latest news in underwater archaeology. We have been diligently searching for some of the newest student research and projects to share with everyone! This issue covers an international project happening in Senegal by a first year Doctoral student, the upcoming 2019 Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) conference in St. Charles, MO, future conferences, and more! We are always looking to highlight student research and projects! Simply email grad-rep@acuaonline.org. We will be more than happy to share your photos and stories on the ACUA Facebook and Instagram. Hope to hear from you soon!
Since 2014, an IFAN / CAD team has been involved in underwater archaeology research in Senegal. These efforts are supported by an international partnership that includes the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), the Slave Wreck Project (SWP), and units of the United States National Park Service. Indeed, our work is specifically designed to support the search for shipwrecks related to the slave trade, and the documentation of maritime traditions from the fishing communities of Senegal.

Formally abolished towards the end of the first half of the 19th century, the slave trade remained a popular activity until the 20th century on the African coast. Indeed, the continuing practice of the maritime slave economy is due to several reasons. First, following abolition of slavery, the warlike elites of Senegambia struggled to find legitimate trade that produced revenue equivalent to that of the slave trade. This crisis of transition exacerbated the arbitrariness of aristocracies towards their peasantry, and lead to civil wars and abuses of all kinds (B. Roger 2000: 1011). This is further explained by modernization of 18th century naval architecture. Indeed, the deportation of blacks during the nineteenth-twentieth century was also facilitated by the ships capable of higher speeds carrying larger loads. This modernization included the use of metal in place of wood in ship’s architecture, but also the use of coal as fuel instead of sails.

One of the objectives of this work is to identify traces of pirates on the coast of Senegal and to show how difficult it was to abolish the slave trade. Among the pirate ships, we find in the archives of Senegal some known examples namely the brig Laleure, the brig Louise, the French schooner called the Curious seized in 1848 by the authorities of the port of St. Marie Bachurst of Gambia, the Portuguese brig Pasha captured in 1840 in the Mozambique Channel by the French naval ship La Prévoyante, and the brig Ilizia. Shipments reported aboard these ships included up to 300 captives consisting of men, women, children as well as various other goods. During this same period (nineteenth-twentieth century), we find in the archives a list of ships sunk off the coast of Senegal. Although the circumstances of the shipwreck are sometimes reported, this is not the case for the human cargo. Here, we can cite as examples French wrecks like Jackal of Nantes, Atlantis from Dunkerque, Juliette from Bordeaux that all wrecked between 1828 and 1829. The American brig Lanne, the Young Amédée, Lucie (1849), and the Caraïbe (1848). The map below shows the harbor of Dakar from a survey in 1875 showing several shipwrecks at that time. The information collected on this map kindles our interest and could make the port of Dakar an important archaeological research site.

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Collection of Maritime Traditions

In this work, we are also interested in the documentation of maritime cultures from Senegal’s fishing community known as "lebbou." Indeed, they engage in maritime practices that are both cultural and religious. These practices are the subject of an annual ceremony commonly called "tour" in which several sacrifices are made in honor of the protective spirits of the community that they believe live in the sea. This day is marked by songs and dances accompanied by a great feast where oxen, goats, sheep, and poultry are roasted and consumed in addition to millet porridge accompanied by curdled milk.

The person in charge of the ceremony accompanied by his close collaborators and the whole of the community will deposit a good part of the meat and the porridge accompanied with curdled milk at sacred spaces marked by the hearths to the spirits both at sea and on land. Part of the meat will be carried using a canoe on the high seas where it will be deposited on the altars to the spirits. The millet porridge contained in a calabash is poured onto a place of memory on the beach by those who communicate with the spirits in the ocean. The image below illustrates this action.

—Pape Laity Diop, First year Doctoral student / UCAD (Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar)

*The original article was in French and was translated by Tara Van Niekerk, Morgan Smith, and Pape Laity Diop. Contact us if you would like to see the original article.*
Help us welcome our newest members for 2019! Aleck Tan is our new 2019-2021 Graduate student Representative for ACUA. She is pursuing a Master’s degree in Maritime Studies at East Carolina University.

Our newest ACUA Board members rotating in for the 2019-2022 cycle are Jean-Sébastien Guibert, Joe Hoyt, and Roberto Junco. We are beyond excited to welcome and embrace these new members into the ACUA network.

SHA 2019 will be held in St. Charles, MO from January 9-12th. The theme for the conference is “Making the most of Opportunities: Education, Training, and Experimental Learning.”

Here are some of the Underwater Archaeology themed talks we are most excited about!

- “A database for the underwater cultural heritage of Portugal” Jan. 10th @ 8:45am
- “Which Software is Better for Underwater Archaeological Recording? A Brief Explanations of Agisoft PhotoScan and RealityCapture.” Jan 10th @ 2:45pm
- “The Wreck Of The Submarine ‘USS H1 SEA-WOLF’ At Baja California, Mexico” Jan 10th @ 3pm
- “Underwater Archaeology of Illegal Slave Traffic off the Coast of Senegal During the 19th-20th centuries” Jan 10th @ 3:45pm
- Submerged Cultural Resources and the Maritime Heritage of the Great Lakes – Symposium Jan 11th, 9-11:15am
- “Submerged but Not Forgotten: Considering Climate Change Impacts on Underwater Archaeological Heritage” Jan 11th @ 3pm
- “The Advice You Were Looking For: The ACUA Mentorship Program Panel Discussion” Jan 12th, 9am-12pm

These are just a few of the talks. There are many more presentations pertaining to underwater archaeology! Keep an eye out for the topics and always remember to look over the SHA Conference Agenda!

Enjoy the upcoming Conference!