

## Identity, Tradition, and Community in Africa (Oxford, 21-24 Sep 20)

University of Oxford, Sep 21-24, 2020

Deadline: Jan 31, 2020

Jacopo Gnisci, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana/Hamburg University

SAfA 2020: The Past Through the Past: Constructing Identity, Tradition, and Community in Africa

In many modern societies identity and social boundaries are often constructed through binary oppositions between “past” and “present” or “us” and “them.” In our “present,” the past is frequently conceptualized through a flux of shifting ideas, images, and categories that are associated with material culture from different periods and regions. Fields such as archaeology, art history, and classics, for instance, use material culture to make sense of the past and present it in a more tangible and imaginable form to the present. Since the start of the twenty-first century, historians have been paying close attention, on the one hand, to the genealogy and underpinnings of these interpretative approaches and, on the other, to the ways in which societies have actualized the material traces of the past for political and socio-economic reasons.

This symposium sets out to explore the ways in which African societies approached their own past, with a focus on the relationship between identity and material culture. Topics of interest include: how did societies forge new connections with ruins and monuments that were present in the territories they inhabited? In which ways was material culture used to support competing interpretations of the past? Is it possible to identify traces of iconoclasm in the historical and archaeological record of Africa? How were human activities shaped by different concepts of time?

How to submit an abstract for your paper:

Please use the form which is available on the Web at <https://www.arch.ox.ac.uk/safa-2020>.

Abstracts should be no longer than 150 words and must be in either English or French. They must be submitted by 31 January 2020. Abstracts submitted after that date will not be considered. Please contact the organizers by email Jacopo Gnisci [jacopo.gnisci@classics.ox.ac.uk](mailto:jacopo.gnisci@classics.ox.ac.uk) and Efthymios Rizos [efthymios.rizos@classics.ox.ac.uk](mailto:efthymios.rizos@classics.ox.ac.uk) well in advance of the 31 January deadline to make sure that your paper fits the symposium’s theme.

Abstracts must be submitted to the Organizing Committee at [safa2020@ox.ac.uk](mailto:safa2020@ox.ac.uk) AND also to the symposium’s organizers. Put the code and the short title of the symposium (= ME-11 - Constructing Identity, Tradition and Community) in the subject line of the email. Please note that symposium organizers may redirect your paper for inclusion in a General Session of their symposium is already full, or if your paper does not make a good fit with their theme.

SAfA membership: a precondition of paper submission

Membership of the Society of Africanist Archaeologists is a precondition of presenting a paper at SAfA 2020. You MUST therefore confirm that you are a member of the Society when submitting your paper's abstract. Membership of the Society of Africanist Archaeologists, which is free for African residents, can be effected via the SAfA website at <https://safa.rice.edu/annual-membership-and-subscription-fees>.

Reference:

CFP: Identity, Tradition, and Community in Africa (Oxford, 21-24 Sep 20). In: ArtHist.net, Dec 6, 2019 (accessed Apr 7, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/22241>>.