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4.696 A Global History of Architecture Writing Seminar  
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4.696 Global History of Architecture // May 21, 2008 // Nancy Demerdash

***“Before the Scramble for Africa: Tracing African Architecture through Trade, c. 1200 CE”***

**Required Reading:**

\*Robert O. Collins and James M. Burns, Chapter 4 “Crops, cows, and iron,” Chapter 5 “Northeast Africa in the age of Aksum,” and Chapter 6 “Empires of the plains” from *A History of Sub-Saharan Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

\*Jared Diamond, Chapter 19 “How Africa Became Black,” from *Guns, Germs, Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York; London: W.W. Norton and co., 1997).

\*Okwui Enwezor, Introduction from *Snap Judgments: New Positions in Contemporary African Photography* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2006).

\*Peter Garlake, *Early Art and Architecture of Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

\*Peter Garlake, “Pastoralism and Zimbabwe,” *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (1978): 479-493.

\*Mark Jarzombek, “Lalibela and Libanos: The King and the Hydro-Engineer of 13<sup>th</sup>-Century Ethiopia,” *Construction Ahead* (May-June 2007): 16-21.

\*John Adkins Richardson, “Speculations on Dogon Iconography,” *African Arts*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Oct. 1977): 52-92.

**List of Sites (in order of presentation) and Key Terms:**

**1. Casbah Aït-Ben Haddou, Morocco (founded c. 12<sup>th</sup> century)**

**-casbah:** Arabic word for “fortress”

**-Maghrib:** Arabic word for “west”; used to denote the region of North Africa (present-day Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco) of the western-most spread of Islam

**-Imazighen** (instead of “Berber”): peoples from present-day Morocco, Algeria, parts of Mauritania, and Mali who preceded Muslim conquest; they speak the Imazigh language, which is in the Afro-Asiatic linguistic family; “Berber” is derogatory with its etymology linked to Greek “babaros” or barbarian

**-crenellation:** an opening in the top of a castle wall or parapet, used for shooting arrows or other weapons

2. Great Mosque of Djenne, Djenne, Mali (original structure founded c. 13<sup>th</sup> century by Djenne chief, Konboro; French colonial reconstruction 1907; Aga Khan Award for Architecture—conservation 2001)

-**qibla**: wall facing Mecca

-**mihrab**: niche within the qibla wall

-**ferrey**: Bambara word for mud brick

3. Dogon Communities, Bandiagara escarpment, Mopti region, Mali (founded c. 12<sup>th</sup> century)

-**“world egg”**: house plans based on cosmological philosophy that world is a germinating seed

4. St. George’s Church, Lalibela, Zagwe Dynasty, Ethiopia (founded c. 1200 by King Lalibela)

-**cruciform**: in the shape of a cross

-**artesian well**: a pit or hole sunk into the earth to reach a supply of water, generally of a cylindrical form, and often walled with stone or bricks to prevent the earth from caving in

-complex hydro-engineering system designed by Abba Libanos

5. Husuni Kubwa Palace, Tanzania (constructed c. 1320 Sultan Hassan Ibn Suleiman)

-**Husuni Kubwa**: Swahili term for “large fort”

-**diwan**: word of Iranian origin used to describe a reception hall, usually either in a house or a palace; later used to describe courtiers or governmental ministry

-coral building material

6. Great Zimbabwe, Monomopata Empire (c. 1200-1450)

-**mazimbabwe**: “stone wall enclosure”

-cattle herding and gold mining

-composed of the Hill Complex, Valley Complex, and the Great Enclosure