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Africa

Sénégal

Three Field Seasons in Search of Tata Fortifications in Eastern Sénégal/Kitali tati e wittougol tatadji to founangué Senegal (submitted by Jacques Aymeric, external collaborator at the University of Geneva and joint fellow at the Harvard University Center Villa I Tatti/Deutsches Historisches Institut in Rom; jacques.aymeric@outlook.fr)

Abstract: Since Raymond Mauny's pioneering studies (1943, 1948), the expression *tata* has become part of the vocabulary commonly used by historians and archaeologists who focus on Senegambia and the former West Sudan from the 17th to the beginning of the 20th century. *Tata* is an expression of Malinké origin used "to designate any construction of a defensive nature, made of stone or clay" (Bah 1985:48). But long before researchers, European explorers and soldiers who ventured into these West African regions had noted the existence of *tata* in many villages (Park 1800; Raffinel 1846; Gallieni 1885; Rançon 1894a, 1894b). Present in almost every inhabited area and serving several functions, *tata*-type fortifications have played a major role in the political and military history of West African communities; their study is, therefore, essential for a better understanding of the history of the polities that have developed in West Africa. Following Mauny, who published a survey of the *tata* walls of Dakar in 1948 in *Notes Africaines*, other studies on the fortifications called *tata* were undertaken in Sénégal. Other studies have since followed, notably those by Ibrahima Thiaw in the Lower Falémé Valley (Thiaw 1999, 2012). This article presents the findings of the extended fieldwork I carried out in the Middle and Upper Falémé from 2015 to 2019 as part of my Ph.D. thesis at the Laboratoire Archéologie et Peuplement de l'Afrique (APA) at the University of Geneva.

Resumen: Desde los estudios pioneros de Raymond Mauny (1943, 1948), la expresión *tata* se ha convertido en parte del vocabulario comúnmente utilizado por historiadores y arqueólogos que se centran en Senegambia y el antiguo Sudán Occidental desde el siglo XVII hasta principios del siglo XX. *Tata* es una expresión de origen malinke utilizada "para designar cualquier construcción de carácter defensivo, hecha de piedra o arcilla" (Bah 1985:48). Pero mucho antes que los investigadores, los exploradores y soldados europeos que se aventuraron en estas regiones de África occidental habían notado la existencia de *tata* en muchas aldeas (Park 1800; Raffinel 1846; Gallieni 1885; Rançon 1894a, 1894b). Presentes en casi todas las áreas habitadas y con varias funciones, las fortificaciones de tipo *tata* han jugado un papel importante en la historia política y militar de las comunidades de África Occidental; su estudio es, por lo tanto, esencial para una mejor comprensión de la historia de las políticas que se han desarrollado en África occidental. Siguiendo a Mauny, que publicó un estudio de las murallas *tata* de Dakar en 1948 en *Notes Africaines*, en Senegal se llevaron a cabo otros estudios sobre las fortificaciones llamadas *tata*. Desde entonces, han seguido otros estudios, en particular los de Ibrahima Thiaw en el valle del Bajo Falémé (Thiaw 1999, 2012). Este artículo presenta los hallazgos del trabajo de campo extendido que realicé en el Medio y Alto Falémé de 2015 a 2019 como parte de mi tesis doctoral en el Laboratoire Archéologie et Peuplement de l'Afrique (APA) de la Universidad de Ginebra.

Résumé : Depuis les études pionnières de Raymond Mauny (1943, 1948), l'expression « *tata* » est entrée dans le vocabulaire couramment utilisé par les historiens et archéologues qui s'intéressent à la Sénégamie et à l'ancien Soudan occidental du XVIIe au début du XXe siècle. *Tata* est une expression d'origine malinké utilisée « pour désigner toute construction à caractère défensif, faite de pierre ou d'argile » (Bah 1985 : 48). Mais bien avant les chercheurs, explorateurs et militaires européens qui s'aventuraient dans ces régions d'Afrique de l'Ouest avaient constaté l'existence de *tata* dans de nombreux villages (Park 1800 ; Raffinel 1846 ; Gallieni 1885 ; Rançon 1894a, 1894b). Présentes dans presque toutes les zones habitées, et remplissant plusieurs fonctions, les fortifications de type *tata* ont joué un rôle majeur dans l'histoire politique et militaire des communautés ouest-africaines ; leur étude est donc essentielle pour une meilleure compréhension de l'histoire des politiques qui se sont développées en Afrique de l'Ouest. A la suite de Mauny, qui a publié en 1948 un relevé des murs *tata* de Dakar dans *Notes Africaines*, d'autres études sur les fortifications dites *tata* furent entreprises au Sénégal. D'autres études ont suivi depuis, notamment celles d'Ibrahima Thiaw dans la basse vallée de la Falémé (Thiaw 1999, 2012). Cet article présente les résultats du travail de terrain approfondi que j'ai effectué dans la Moyenne et la Haute Falémé de 2015 à 2019 dans le cadre de ma thèse de doctorat au Laboratoire Archéologie et Peuplement de l'Afrique (APA) de l'Université de Genève.

Surveys in the Falémé Valley

Due to the political instability in the Republic of Mali since 2011, the APA laboratory began intensive surveys along the Senegalese banks of the Falémé River as part of the "Human Settlement and Paleoenvironment in Africa" research programme (Huysecom et al. 2014). During the 2013 surveys, the APA laboratory team noted the existence of two fortifications, the *tata*



FIGURE 1. View of the rubble of the Samba Yaye tata after cleaning (the measuring rod on the rubble is 5 m long).

confirmed through satellite images. In addition to these sites, which were described in the reports of the previous campaigns, I worked on sites that had been observed during previous surveys but had not been included in the reports: the *tata* of Samba Yaye, Koussan, and Hamdallaye. The first is located on a hill overlooking the floodplain of the Falémé River. Curiously, the eponymous village is located across the river from the *tata*, on the right bank of the river. Despite the abundant herbaceous vegetation on the site of the Samba Yaye *tata*, the remains of the wall could be clearly distinguished after clearing the grass (Figure 1). Given the overall appearance of the remains, the wall likely had an irregular shape. In Koussan, the configuration was completely different. Instead of rubble, the line of the wall we found was visible at ground level (Figure 2). From this line, it was possible to distinguish the two lateritic block faces that formed the wall. Other defensive architectural elements such as loopholes and redans were also visible on the surface. Finally, the *tata* of Hamdallaye consisted of a site with the remains of a wall that was also flush with the surface but without scree. This last *tata* has a regular shape close to a quadrilateral; it measures about 85 m at its maximum length and 75 m at its maximum width.

After this first field season, I decided to extend the observations beyond the areas previously prospected during the winter field season of 2016–2017. I first looked in the Lower Falémé area, that is, the localities between Kidira and Aroundou where the Falémé flows into the Sénégal River. Whereas the first surveys by the APA laboratory were systematic, we changed our approach and adopted a targeted survey. The survey was divided into three steps, the first of which consisted of a review of the historical and scientific literature on the region. Based on this review, some present-day villages were selected where the probability of finding remains of fortified structures was very high. The second step was to ask the residents of the selected villages about the existence of fortification ruins in their vicinity. The third and last step involved inspection of the field

of Goulounga (SA02) and the *tata* of Dalafi (SA03), as well as of the abandoned site of Koba (SA01), which also has a wall scree (Huysecom et al. 2014:151–152). The discovery of these fortified sites occurred at the initiation of my application for a Swiss Confederation Excellence Grant for a Ph.D. thesis at the University of Geneva with Eric Huysecom as supervisor. The general objectives of this thesis were to continue the identification of fortified sites in the Falémé Valley, to study the architectural remains of the structures, and to examine these sites over time through a historical approach. Upon joining the APA laboratory, my first field campaign in the winter of 2015–2016 was aimed at visiting and evaluating the sites discovered during the previous surveys.

Thus, I worked on the *tata* of Koba, Goulounga, and Dalafi first. The site of Koba is a vast abandoned village, because the descendants of the former inhabitants now live in neighboring villages, mainly in Sansango-to and Madina Foulbé. On a small hill overlooking the Kobakoye marigot, one of the tributaries of the Falémé River, lies the stone scree of what was once the *tata* of Koba. Before its mention by the APA team, the site and its *tata* had been reported by Annie Ravisé (Huysecom 1987:695) and Cameron Gokee (2012:454). As neither of these authors provided a plan of these ruins, I undertook to draw them (Aymeric 2022). In Goulounga, unfortunately, there were no visible surface remains of the *tata* ruins, even though the local inhabitants were certain of its existence and even indicated its possible location. In Dalafi, the *tata* site was not characterized by a stone wall as in Koba, but by a strip of unwooded land in the middle of the forest. This circular strip of land seemed to mark a separation zone between the surrounding forest and a small mound that was probably anthropogenic, because its surface was covered with archaeological artifacts (Aymeric 2019:198). The observation of the shape on the ground was later con-



FIGURE 2. View of the Koussan tata outcrops.

sites alongside interviewed residents to verify the existence of the remains. This type of survey has the advantage of requiring considerably less time and money than a systematic survey. In addition, questions posed to and interviews with the residents in selected villages enable the collection of oral traditions about both the histories of the villages and the riverside fortifications. Clearly, such a method has limitations, most notably that sites in areas that are currently uninhabited may not be located. However, this limitation can be overcome by the extensive knowledge that the villagers have of their environment, as long as they are willing to share such knowledge with the researcher. During this second campaign, I discovered the sites of Boulebane, Som Som, Darra-Lamine, and Demboubé (Mayor et al. 2018:218–226).

Boulebane is a vast village that was abandoned after its destruction by Mamadou Lamine Drame in February 1886 (Nyambarza 1969:140–142; Rançon 1894b:579). The observation of the surface remains gave me a glimpse of the rich archaeological potential of this site. Unfortunately, however, I was unable to go beyond surface observation, because the residents of the neighboring villages were firmly opposed to archaeological excavations. The residents of the village of Samba Kontaye were open to collaboration and led me to the sites of Som Som and Darra-Lamine. Like Boulebane, Som Som is a vast village that was abandoned after its destruction, in this case in 1857 by the French army of Governor Léon Faïdherbe in tandem with the troops of the Almamy of Boundou Boubakar Saada Sy (Faïdherbe 1889:203–204). The remains of the wall consist of perfectly visible stonework along a perimeter of about 310 m. The remains of an entrance vestibule, hut bottoms, granary bases, and other structures are also clearly visible on the surface of the site's interior. Darra-Lamine is located on the road to Gabou, about 5 km from Samba Kontaye. Abandoned like the other sites, the surface of the Darra-Lamine *tata* is covered with various artifacts and features ranging from ceramic sherds to granary and hut bases. The surface of the *tata*'s interior is slightly elevated in comparison to the surrounding area; the rubble of what was once the *tata* is relatively scattered. At Demboubé, I was disconcerted by what I observed, because although I was in the presence of an abandoned settlement site, the base of the structure that was presented to me as the remains of the Demboubé *tata* left plenty of room for doubt. On the surface of the site, in the middle of the other structures, a perfectly circular wall foundation made of stone blocks and measuring 15 m in diameter was visible (Aymeric 2022). In terms of its size and shape, the structure presented as the Demboubé *tata* was completely different from all the other structures hitherto encountered.

For the last prospection campaign, I conducted observations in the Upper Falémé area. Using Saraya as a base, I was able to spread out in the region. I was thus able to locate the sites of Medina Dantila, Tambataguella, Bembou, Kondhokou, and Satadougou. Contrary to what the name Medina Dantila suggests—“medina” means city in Arabic—today it is only a village made up of a single concession. This concession belongs to Ibrahima Danfakha, a descendant of Sokhna Madi Danfakha, the founder of Medina Dantila (Mayor et al. 2019:235–236). At the site of the former village, no remains of the wall are visible on the surface, but other remains are. Bembou, Kondhokou, and Satadougou like Medina Dantila are sites where the remains of the *tata* are not visible on the surface, either because these walls were made of banco brick or because the rubble was stripped away by the local population to reuse the stones in the construction of the present-day huts. It is possible that future geophysical survey will reveal the foundations of the walls below the ground surface. Tambataguella is an abandoned site, located halfway between the villages of Bembou and Medina Dantila on a small wooded hill. The stone rubble that marks the line of the *tata* is visible and is made up of blocks of stone, some of which are 25 to 30 cm long. Due to repeated attacks by African bees from hives on the trees inside the site, I was unable to make an accurate survey of the remains of the Tambataguella *tata*. In the end, the different survey campaigns enabled the identification of 15 sites (Figure 3).

Archaeological excavations of the tata in the Falémé valley

In addition to the surveys, from the second field season onward I began archaeological excavations on the *tata* of the Falémé Valley. Because of the time limits of my thesis, not all the sites surveyed could be excavated and a selection had to be made. Therefore, I mainly excavated sites where the remains of the wall were visible on the surface. The main objectives were to find the foundations under the scree, to study the architecture of the walls, and to reconstruct the techniques used to build them. Albeit interesting, testing for wall foundations on sites without scree, such as Medina Dantila or Bembou, proved too costly in terms of time and resources and presented limited prospects in terms of results.

For all the sections of *tata* excavated, the procedure was more or less the same: cleaning of the surface to be excavated, removal of collapsed blocks, manual stripping of the foundation at arbitrary 20 cm levels, recording of the material as it was uncovered, photographing and recording of the foundation of the wall, protection of the excavated section, and refilling with the excavated material. In two field seasons, winter 2017 and winter 2018, five sites were excavated: Dalafi, Koba, Koussan, Samba Yaye, and Som Som. The excavation involved small areas, generally 3 m wide by 5 m long. Except for Dalafi, where a ditch that had been filled in over time was uncovered, the excavations revealed relatively well-preserved wall foundation bases. In Koussan, Samba Yaye, and Som Som the excavation uncovered layers preserved over about 4 to 5 levels (Figure 4). They consist of blocks of stone rubble varying in size from 15 to 30 cm in length. The blocks are of different types of rock present in the region, notably laterite, granite, and sandstone. I did observe the occasional use of iron slag blocks in the foundation of the Koussan *tata*.

In addition to the wall foundations, the excavation of the *tata* produced contrasting assemblages. The sites of Koussan and Som Som, for example, yielded abundant material, including numerous ceramic sherds, pipe fragments, and imported material such as glass beads and sherds of alcohol bottles. The discovery of archaeological material in deeper levels suggests that some of these sites were occupied well before the construction of the *tata*. In contrast, excavations at other sites such as Koba and Dalafi yielded very few archaeological artifacts, even though the areas surrounding their respective *tata* were covered with archaeological material.

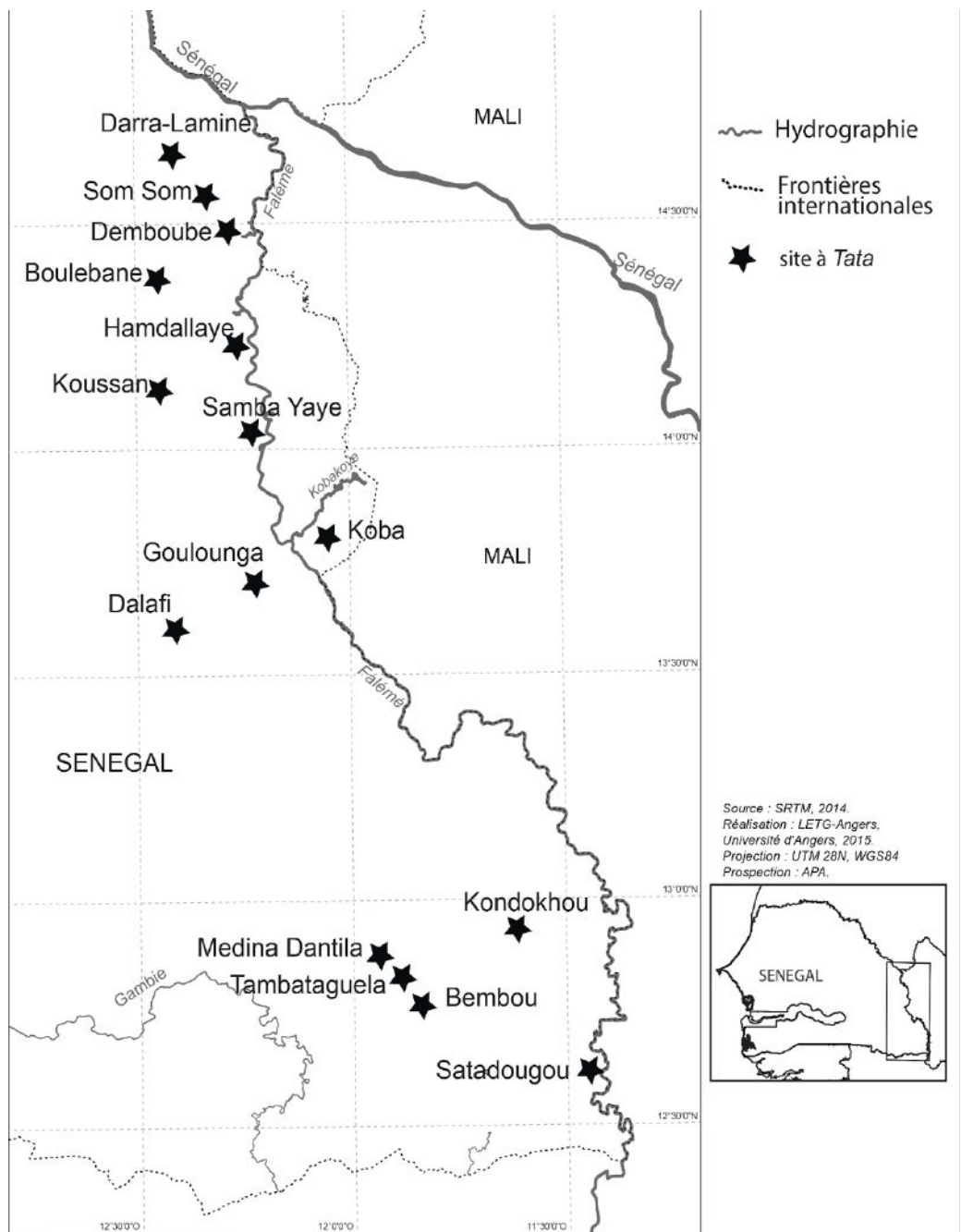


FIGURE 3. Location of the tata in the Falémé Valley.

Conclusion

By continuing the work of the APA laboratory on *tata*-type fortifications in the Falémé Valley, I was able to build up a corpus of 15 sites, 5 of which were excavated in very small sections. These excavations revealed foundations that gave us a glimpse of the structure of the walls of which they were the bases. Of course, these sites are probably only a very limited sample of the fortified sites that existed at one time or another in the Falémé Valley. While for administrative reasons our work has hitherto been limited to the Senegalese bank of the Falémé, intensification, systematization, and the use of geophysical prospecting instruments will certainly enable the discovery of other sites on both banks of the river. Beyond the discovery and uncovering of the *tata*, much remains to be done. Among other avenues of research, it is important firstly to place these sites in the historical and political context that prevailed in the Falémé Valley at the time of their construction. Secondly, Thiaw's work (1999) and some of the sites I have worked on are characterized by a low proportion of archaeological material. This is surprising, considering that these sites often sheltered populations who were under siege. In contrast, other sites such as Som Som have yielded numerous artifacts. It is therefore necessary to know the role these sites played in local history to understand their occupation dynamics. As the habitat associated with the *tata* is still present on most of the sites, a holistic study is essential to complete the picture and achieve an integrated understanding of fortified habitats in eastern Sénégal.

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FIGURE 4. View of the foundation of the Som Som tata.

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Australasia and Antarctica

Australia

The Historical Archaeology of Powered Landscapes, South Sea Islander Identities, and Queensland's Sugar Industry at Pioneer Mill, Queensland (1881–1906) (submitted by Adele Zubrzycka, Ph.D. candidate, University of Queensland, a.zubrzycka@uq.net.au; Dr. James Flexner, University of Sydney; Dr. Kelsey Lowe, University of Queensland; Associate Professor Jon Prangnell, University of Queensland; Imelda Miller, Queensland Museum; Dr. Geraldine Mate, Queensland Museum; Zia Youse, University of Sydney; Dr. Eve Haddow, University of Sydney; Professor Thomas Baumgartl, Federation University; Dr. Francis Bobongie-Harris, Queensland University of Technology; and Professor Andrew Fairbairn, University of Queensland)

Abstract: In April 2022, the Australian South Sea Islander Lived Identities project concluded its first archaeological field season at Pioneer Mill, located near Brandon, a small town in the Burdekin District of Northern Queensland, Australia. The Lived Identities Project is a collaboration between Australian South Sea Islander organizations in Ayr, Mackay, Rockhampton, and Joskeleigh and researchers from selected universities and museums across Australia. It integrates the perspectives of historical archaeology, museology, cultural landscapes, and heritage studies to deepen and reinforce our understanding of Australian South Sea Islander heritage and experiences in the country. South Sea Islanders were integral to the development of Australia's sugar industry in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This paper presents the preliminary findings of excavations at the site of a South Sea Islander dwelling built on the Pioneer Sugar Estate and occupied between ca. 1881 to 1906.

Resumen: En abril de 2022, el proyecto Australian South Sea Islander Lived Identities concluyó su primera temporada de campo arqueológico en Pioneer Mill, ubicado cerca de Brandon, una pequeña ciudad en el distrito de Burdekin en el norte de Queensland, Australia. El Proyecto Identidades Vividas es una colaboración entre organizaciones australianas de isleños de los Mares del Sur en Ayr, Mackay, Rockhampton y Joskeleigh e investigadores de universidades y museos seleccionados de toda Australia. El proyecto integra las perspectivas de la arqueología histórica, la museología, los paisajes culturales y los estudios del patrimonio para profundizar y reforzar nuestra comprensión del patrimonio y las experiencias de los habitantes de las islas de los Mares del Sur de Australia en el país. Los habitantes de las islas de los Mares del Sur fueron parte integral del desarrollo de la industria azucarera de Australia en el siglo XIX y principios del XX. Este artículo presenta los hallazgos preliminares de las excavaciones en el sitio de una vivienda de los isleños de los Mares del Sur construida en Pioneer Sugar Estate y ocupada desde alrededor de 1881 hasta 1906.

Résumé : En avril 2022, le projet Australian South Sea Islander Lived Identities a conclu sa première saison archéologique sur le terrain à Pioneer Mill, situé près de Brandon, une petite ville du district de Burdekin dans le nord du Queensland, en Australie. Le projet Lived Identities est une collaboration entre des organisations australiennes d'insulaires de la mer du Sud à Ayr, Mackay, Rockhampton et Joskeleigh et des chercheurs d'universités et de musées sélectionnés à travers l'Australie. Il intègre les perspectives de l'archéologie historique, de la muséologie, des paysages culturels et des études du patrimoine pour approfondir et renforcer notre compréhension du patrimoine et des expériences des insulaires australiens de la mer