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This *Very Short Introduction* looks at Africa's past and reflects on the changing ways it has been imagined and represented, both in Africa and beyond. The author illustrates important aspects of Africa's history with a range of fascinating historical examples, drawn from over 5 millennia across this vast continent. The multitude of topics that the reader will learn about in this succinct work include the unity and diversity of African cultures, slavery, religion, colonial conquest, the diaspora, and the importance of history in understanding contemporary Africa. The book examines questions such as: Who invented the idea of "Africa"? How is African history pieced together, given such a lack of documentary evidence? How did Africa interact with the world 1,000 years ago?

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About the Author

John Parker teaches African history at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He specializes in the history of Ghana and is the author of *Making the Town: Ga State and Society in Early Colonial Accra* and (with Jean Allman) *Tongnaab: The History of a West African God*. He is currently researching a book on the history of death and burial in Ghana.

Richard Rathbone is Honorary Professor of History in the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, and Emeritus Professor in History at the School of Oriental and African Studies. Other books include *Murder and Politics in Colonial Ghana* and *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*.

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