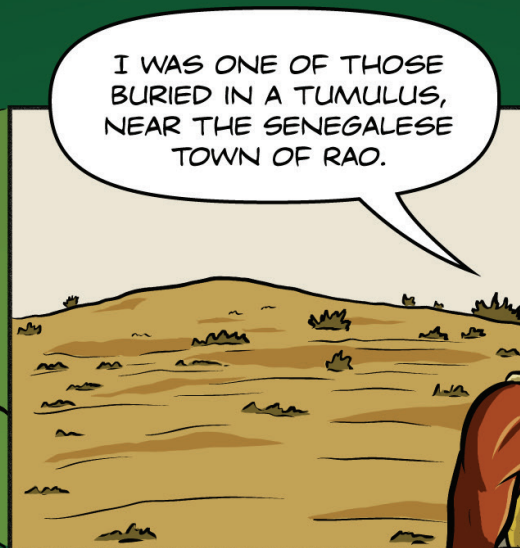
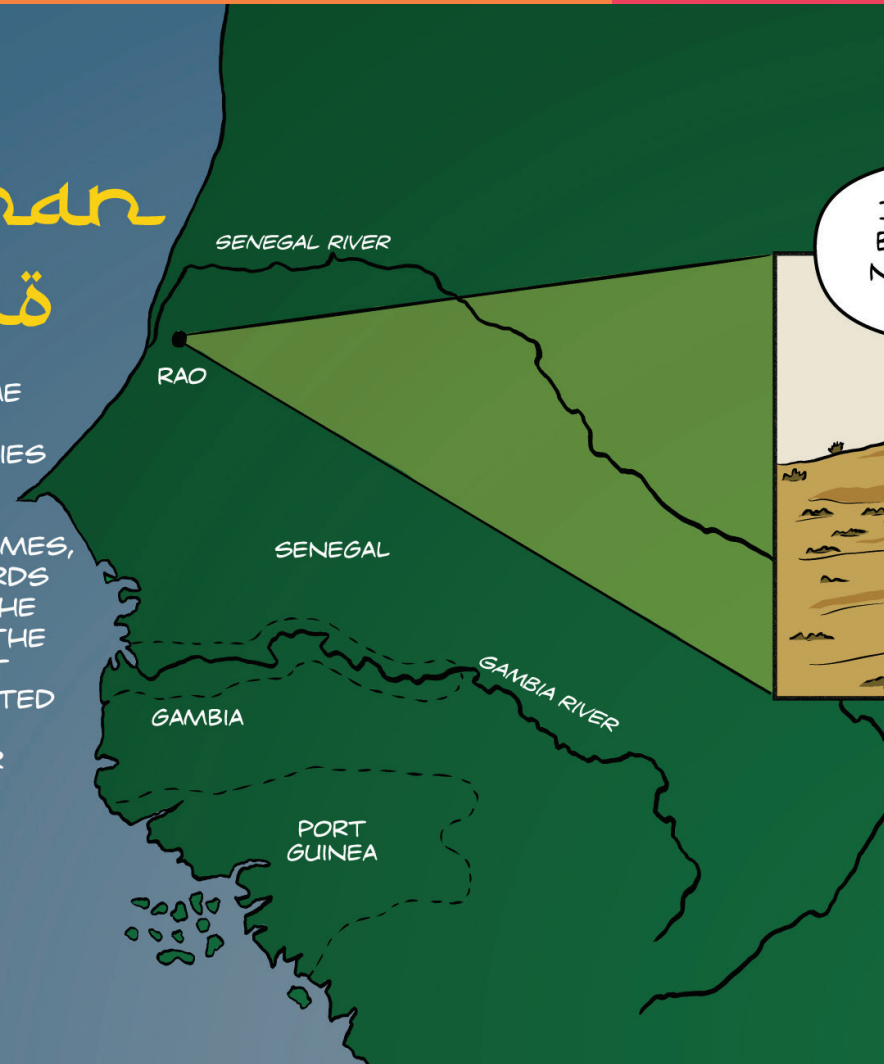


The Nobleman of Rao

WHERE DO STATES COME FROM? HOW DO SMALL, EGALITARIAN COMMUNITIES BECOME HIERARCHICAL AND DEVELOP GOVERNMENT? SOMETIMES, ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDS CAN SPEAK TO US. IN THE 13TH CENTURY, ALONG THE SENEGAL RIVER IN WEST AFRICA, A SOCIETY EXISTED THAT BURIED ITS DEAD UNDER TALL TUMULI, OR MOUNDS OF ROCK AND EARTH.

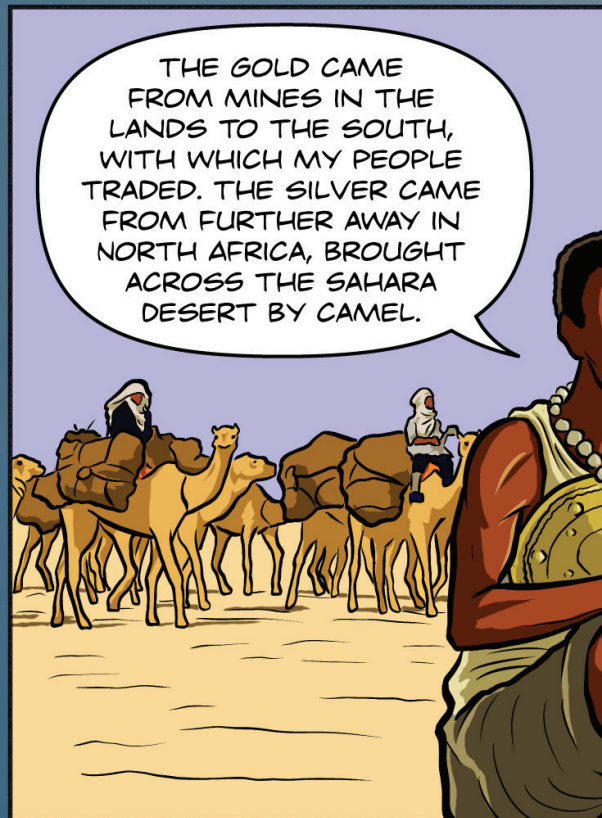
WRITER: TREVOR GETZ
ARTIST: PETER QUACH



I WAS ONE OF THOSE BURIED IN A TUMULUS, NEAR THE SENEGALESE TOWN OF RAO.



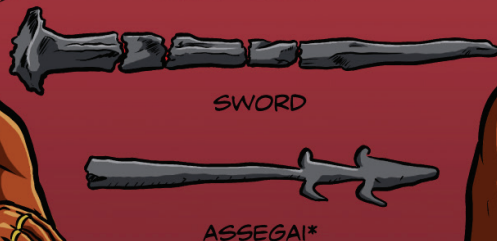
MY PEOPLE BURIED ME WITH MY WEALTH--A SILVER NECKLACE, A GOLD PENDANT, MY RINGS, AND MY PRIZED POSSESSION--A GOLD BREASTPLATE. THIS BREASTPLATE SYMBOLIZED MY RANK AS A NOBLEMAN, A STATUS THAT HADN'T EXISTED IN MY SOCIETY IN THE CENTURIES BEFORE.



THE GOLD CAME FROM MINES IN THE LANDS TO THE SOUTH, WITH WHICH MY PEOPLE TRADED. THE SILVER CAME FROM FURTHER AWAY IN NORTH AFRICA, BROUGHT ACROSS THE SAHARA DESERT BY CAMEL.



IN OTHER TUMULI AROUND ME WERE BURIED MY WARRIORS, WITH THEIR SWORDS AND THEIR SPEARS. EVIDENCE THAT THIS ONCE PEACEFUL PLACE HAD BECOME VIOLENT AND DANGEROUS.



SWORD

ASSEGAI*

* AN ASSEGAI IS A SHORT, STABBING SPEAR.



THE SMALL CITIES AND FARMING COMMUNITIES OF THE WEST AFRICAN SAHEL--SOCIETIES LIKE NOK AND JENNE-JENO--WERE ALREADY BECOMING GREAT STATES AND EMPIRES.



MY SUCCESSORS WOULD BE KINGS, POSSIBLY EVEN THE RULERS OF THE GREAT JOLOF CONFEDERATION, A SOCIETY OF RULERS, NOBLES, CRAFTSPEOPLE, AND SLAVES THAT RIVALED THE EMPIRE OF MALI IN THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES. IT WAS THEY WHO WARILY GREETED THE PORTUGUESE WHO FIRST CAME TO THIS COAST IN 1444.

THE NOBLEMAN OF RAO