

### 1. INTRODUCTION

When any mass fatality incidents occur, disaster victim identification must be carried out; and all the legal and humanitarian responsibility befalls the forensic community despite the cause. Identification will always be of prime importance both in life (ante-mortem) and after death (post-mortem) for both judicial reasons and providing closure for family members.

Scarification has prevailed in Africa. The striking visibility and irreversible effects of keloids on dark skin influenced the choice of this body modification. The intricate techniques have created variations among groups in terms of size, types, and body positions. In other African tribes, it is still perceived as wearing your identity card on your face.

### 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To collect, categorise and catalogue cultural markings according to various regions in Africa.
- To adopt a cataloguing system for the markings similar to the ANSI/NIST ITL 1-2000 standard used by law enforcement agencies to identify tattoo patterns.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

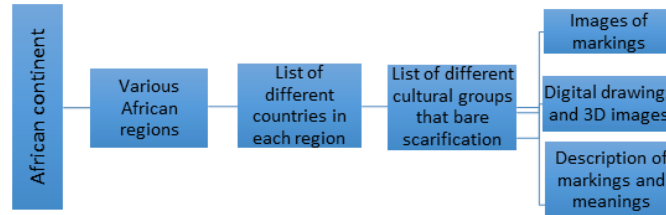


Fig.1 is a summary of the cataloguing methodology to be presented in the form of a website.

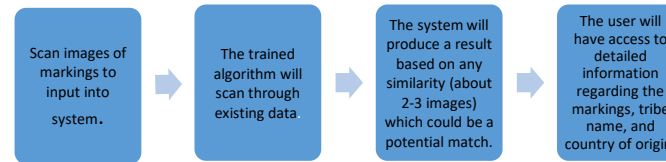


Fig.2 is a summary of how Forensic professionals will use the Scarification app in mortuaries and on the field to aid in the process of human identification.

Recaptive 8555, "Oloma", approx 26, 5'

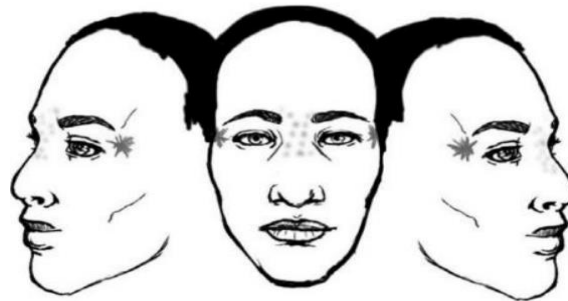


Fig.3 is a visual representation of a re-captive's marks documented in the Slave Trade Register-registers of Liberated Africans (1808-1868). Language is the core factor in developing an efficient and effective cataloguing and identification system. The register was designed to be adapted to read scarification and analogue tattooing within an African context, but it struggled to create an accurate shared descriptive vocabulary. This research will focus on understanding scarification processes and patterns in order to ensure accurate usage of language and uniform descriptions.

### 4. AFRICAN MIGRATION PATTERNS

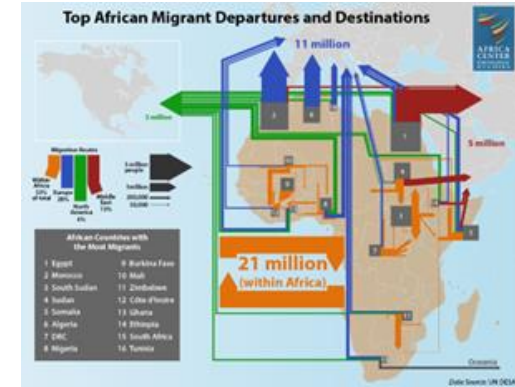


Fig. 4 shows African countries with the most migrants and their top departures and destinations (UN DESA). 53% of total migration is within Africa.

### 5. SCARIFICATION IMPACT ON DECEASED MIGRANTS

There has been an increase in migrants arriving at mortuaries and they are often labelled unknown because of their lack of identification and no one to help them. Through scarification we hope to show how these markings can define origin and how they can link deceased individuals to their families.

### 6. SUMMARY

- Scarification and cultural markings have the cogency of symbolising identity both ante and post-mortem.
- A wealth of knowledge exists locally that has not been fully shared and utilised globally.
- Besides increasing awareness of scarification as a marker of identity, this research aims to make knowledge more accessible and preserve it.

