

**PROBLEMS OF PLAGIARISM, HARMONIZATION AND
MISUNDERSTANDING IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN SOURCES
Early (pre-1680s) Sources for the "Slave Coast" of West Africa***

ROBIN LAW

When Thomas Astley, compiling his *Collection of Voyages & Travels* in the 1740s, came to the section of West Africa known as the "Slave Coast" (i. e. that between the Volta and Lagos Rivers), he found himself in some difficulty. In part, the problem was simply lack of information: the geography of Allada, the principal state of the Slave Coast, was "very imperfect, the Europeans being acquainted with only a few Towns, and those near the Sea-Coast". But even the material available was not of good quality, descriptions of Allada being "very confused and uncertain". This was partly due, he considered, to deficiencies in the methods by which information had been collected, "mistaken Notions of Voyagers, who, for want of proper Means of Enquiry, bring home wrong Informations" (1746: III, 80–1). But the confusion was compounded by the tendency of writers to plagiarize from one another, often without acknowledgement and with insufficient understanding of the material. Among earlier writers, Astley was especially critical of John Barbot, whose account had been published (posthumously) in 1732: "this Author, who collects from others, is far from being exact" (III, 5).

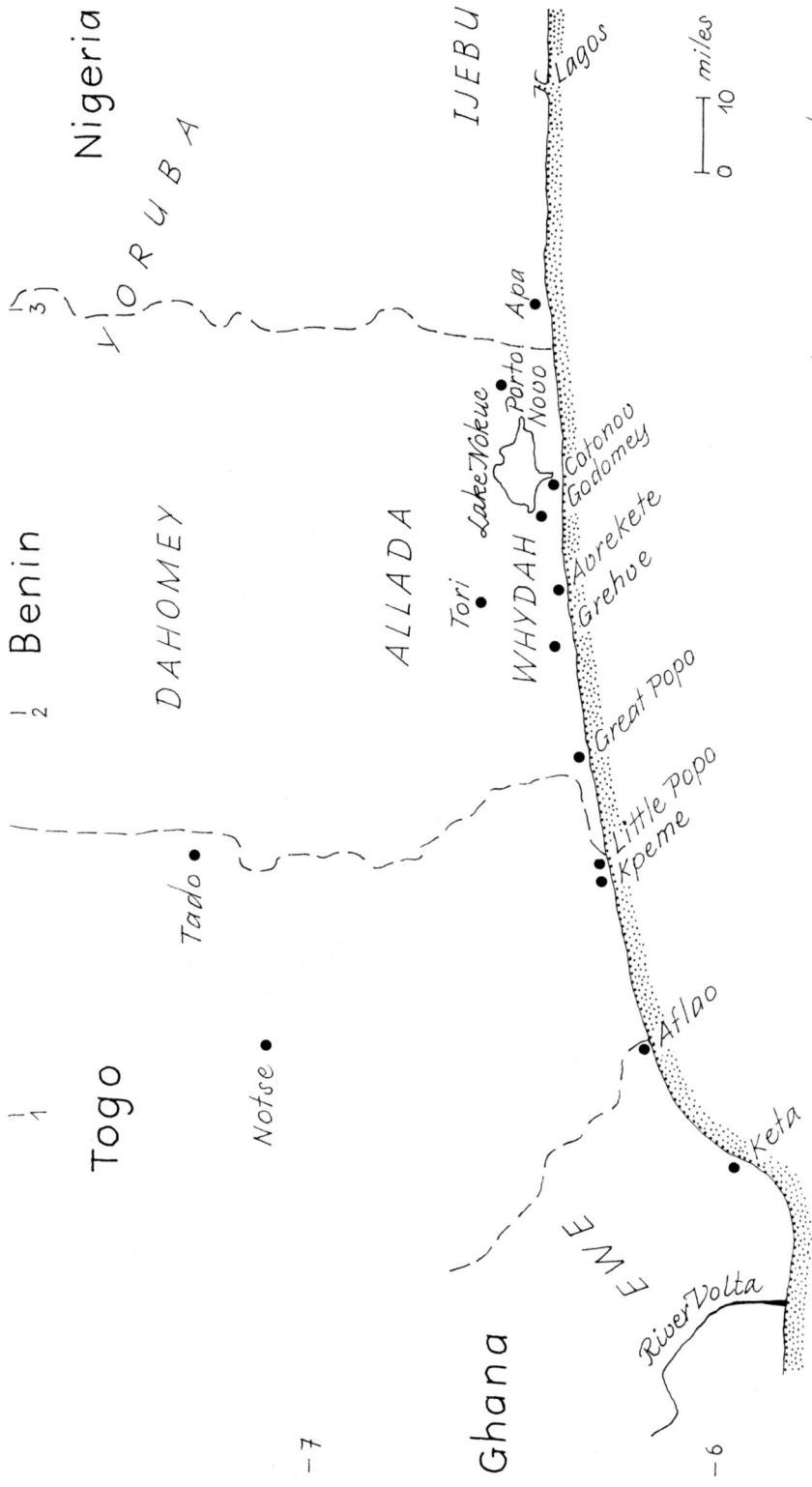
In an earlier article (Law, 1982), I attempted an assessment of Barbot's work as a source for the Slave Coast, finding it indeed to be a conflation of his own original observations on a voyage to the area in 1682, with material derived from several earlier published sources.¹ The present paper extends the work of source criticism backwards in time, by a critical review of earlier contemporary sources relating to the area.² At the same time, of course, this closer study of earlier sources, some of which were themselves used by Barbot, serves to clarify further certain problems in the interpretation of Barbot's own text. I will first review, in fairly general terms, the major available sources down to the 1680s, and then consider a number of detailed problems in the interpretation of these sources. In these detailed case-studies, I build on earlier work on the identification of places on the Slave Coast mentioned in early sources, especially by Hair (1969), Verger (1968 a), and Person (1975).

These detailed case-studies serve to illustrate a further set of problems in the interpretation of early contemporary sources, in addition to those of plagiarism and misunderstanding identified by Astley. The Slave Coast area suffered a series of devastating wars in the late

* The author acknowledges with profound gratitude the assistance of numerous colleagues, especially of Paul Hair, Adam Jones and Roberto Pazzi, who read and commented upon early versions of this paper. Others who have generously supplied material and ideas include Nicoué Gayibor, Beatrix Heintze, Emmanuel Karl, Brigitte Kühn, Alan Ryder, John Thornton, and Jouke S. Wigboldus. My thanks are also due to the Nuffield Foundation, the British Academy and the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland for their financial support of this research.

1 The original French manuscript of Barbot (1688) borrows much material from Dapper (1668) and D'Elbée (1671), as well as from Dutch maps. The published English version (Barbot, 1732) additionally plagiarizes heavily from Bosman (1705).

2 The area of Lagos and Ijebu, at the eastern end of the Slave Coast, is excluded, since I have dealt with this in separate publications: Law, 1983, and 1986 a.



- modern political boundaries
- Ghana** modern states
- EWE** pre-colonial states and peoples
- Keta** towns and geographical features

The "Slave Coast"

seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, associated especially with the rise of the kingdom of Dahomey, which overran the coastal kingdoms of Allada and Whydah in the 1720s. These wars involved the destruction or displacement of several local settlements and political units, and this discontinuity in settlements and political units (and consequently also in the traditions associated with them) sometimes creates great difficulties in the identification of places and states mentioned in early sources. Further, the physical geography of the area itself appears to have undergone significant changes in recent times, with erosion of the coastline and silting up of the coastal lagoons. At least some instances of lack of correspondence between early maps and geographical descriptions and the actual appearance of the land nowadays may therefore reflect such real physical changes rather than merely cartographical errors.³ A clear example of this is the case of the outlet from the coastal lagoon to the sea in the vicinity of Great Popo, known nowadays as the “Bouche du Roi” (a corruption of the Portuguese *boca do rio*, “mouth of the River”): Barbot (1688: III, 131; 1732: 322) places this to the west of the town of Great Popo, and he is corroborated in this by eighteenth century sources;⁴ whereas today it is about three miles to the east. Another apparent example is a headland called Cabo da Mouta, or “Cape of the Thicket” (or alternatively, evidently through miscopying, Cabo do Monte, or “Cape of the Mountain”), regularly shown on maps of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on a section of the coast (between Cape St Paul and Great Popo) where there is today no identifiable headland: in this case, the early maps are supported by local traditions at the coastal village of Kpeme, which maintain that there did indeed formerly exist there a promontory which disappeared several generations ago through erosion.⁵

Early European enterprise on the “Slave Coast”

In order to clarify the context which produced the early European sources on the Slave Coast, I will first briefly summarize the history of European enterprise in the area down to the 1680s.⁶ The Portuguese first explored the coast east of the River Volta in the 1470s, but it was some time before any trade developed with the area between the Volta and Lagos. Pacheco Pereira, writing ca. 1508, describes Portuguese trade at the Lagos channel with the Yoruba kingdom of Ijebu (1905: 117), while Alfonse, ca. 1536, notes the opening of trade at the River Volta,⁷ but neither these nor any other early sources suggest any trade along the intervening coast. The earliest record of Portuguese trade in this area seems, in fact, to be a reference to the sending of ships to “the river called the Papoues” (i. e. Popo, later known as Great Popo) in 1553.⁸ Subsequently, the Portuguese also established contact with the kingdom of Allada, to the east of Popo, which had become the principal centre of trade (principally in slaves) in the area by the end of the sixteenth century.

The Portuguese dominance in the trade of the area was challenged from the late seventeenth century onwards by the English and (more decisively) by the Dutch. But initially these

3 Cf. Newbury, 1961: 3.

4 Cf. e. g. ‘A Map of the Slave Coast’, in Norris, 1789.

5 Roberto Pazzi, personal communication, 21 June 1986.

6 For fuller references, cf. Law 1986 b.

7 *Les Voyages Avanturoux du Capitaine Ian Alfonse* (Poitiers, 1559), translated in Hair, 1976: 64.

8 Report of Jácome Leite, 8 Aug. 1553, in Brásio, 1952–85: 1st series, II, 292.

nations, being not much interested in the slave trade, showed little interest in Allada, beyond occasional attacks on Portuguese ships trading there. The Dutch, however, took up the Allada trade seriously when they entered the Atlantic slave trade in the 1630s, and dominated it for over 50 years, maintaining for most of this period a resident establishment in the kingdom. The Dutch West India Company first contemplated establishing a lodge at Allada in 1638, but in the event only a stationary ship (*legger*) was placed there, and even this seems to have been withdrawn in 1643.⁹ A lodge was eventually established *ca.* 1649, but again abandoned in 1653;¹⁰ this lodge was apparently located at a place called “Ba”, which seems to be Apa, in the east of the kingdom.¹¹ A Dutch lodge was again established in Allada in 1659 or 1660,¹² and this was maintained until it was destroyed in a local war in 1692. In this second period, the Dutch lodge was at Offra (near modern Godomey), west of Apa. The Dutch also briefly maintained a trading lodge at Great Popo in the 1660s.¹³ With the rise of the Dutch, the Portuguese appear to have withdrawn completely from the trade of the area: there seems to be no clear evidence of any Portuguese trade on the Slave Coast between the 1630s and the 1680s.

During the 1650s and 1660s the Dutch monopoly of the Allada trade began to be challenged in its turn. The Swedish African Company (1649–63) and the Danish African Company (formed in 1659) both apparently did some trade at Allada in this period, but were reported to have lapsed from the Allada trade by 1670.¹⁴ The King of Spain sent a party of Christian missionaries to Allada in 1660, but this mission likewise was unsuccessful and of no long-term significance.¹⁵ Of more lasting importance was the arrival of the English and the French, of whom the first established a factory at Offra in 1663 and the latter in 1670. Soon after, the predominance of Allada in the region’s trade collapsed. The French transferred their lodge from Offra in Allada to the kingdom of Whydah, on the coast between Popo and Offra, in 1671, and the English followed suit in 1682. Only the Dutch stayed at Offra until that town was destroyed in 1692, after which they also transferred their attention to Whydah. The 1680s also saw the opening up of trade along the western section of the Slave Coast, between the Volta and Great Popo, where the ports of Keta (belonging to the Ewe state of Anlo) and Little Popo both appear in the records of European trade for the first time in 1683.¹⁶

9 Ratelband, 1953: p. LXXX; cf. Boogaart & Emmer, 1975: 360.

10 Ratelband, 1953: p. LXXX, n. 3.

11 Cf. Dapper, 1676: 2nd pagination, 119. The name “Ba” here may not represent Apa, since Roberto Pazzi points out that “Ba” is a clan name of the Houla people who occupy the coast in the Popo/Allada area. However, Pazzi’s suggestion (1979: 199–200) that Dapper’s “Ba” is merely an alternative name for Offra (near Godomey), the site of the Dutch lodge in Allada later in the seventeenth century, seems incompatible with the location indicated for it by Dapper, three days’ journey east of Jakin (Godomey), which corresponds rather with Apa.

12 Cf. Wigboldus, 1986: 321; Van Dantzig, 1980: 67.

13 *Ibid.*: 213.

14 Cf. D’Elbée, 1671: 526. As these nations were not at this period involved in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, they presumably came to Allada primarily to purchase commodities such as cotton cloth and *akori* beads for re-sale on the Gold Coast.

15 Labouret & Rivet, 1929; Carrocera, 1949. Much of the documentation relating to this mission is published by Brasília, 1952–85: 1st ser., XIII.

16 An English ship bought slaves at “Quitto”, i. e. Keta, in 1683: Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson C. 745, letter of John Winder, Whydah, 24 June 1683. In the same year, an English ship anchored at “Little Pawpaw” was taken by pirates: Public Record Office, London, CO. 1/53, ‘Narrative of Thomas Phipps concerning Pyracies committed by the Pyrate Hamlyn upon the Coast of Africa’, 24 Oct. 1683. Little Popo is in fact also mentioned earlier, in a Dutch report of 1659, describing trading operations along the coast by African merchants from the Gold Coast: cf. Kea, 1982: 222; Wigboldus, 1986: 321.

The sources

Early Portuguese sources

The earliest Portuguese sources relating to West Africa have little to say of the Slave Coast, reflecting the lack of any trade with the area before the middle of the sixteenth century. The account of Pacheco Pereira (*ca.* 1508) dismisses the coast between the Volta and Lagos very briefly indeed, naming only one feature, Cape St Paul, and observing that further east “There are on this coast certain villages, trees and landmarks which some books of navigation mention, but I omit them because they are difficult to recognise” (1905: 117). Details of these landmarks can be found in an extant early navigational guide (*roteiro*), as well as in early Portuguese maps.¹⁷ They consist for the most part of natural features, such as headlands, trees and thickets, rivers and lakes, though they do include two settlements, Villa Franca and Villa Longa (“Free Town” and “Long Town”), which from their location appear to correspond to Great Popo and Apa. Several of these early toponyms were copied onto later maps, down into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in the process sometimes becoming corrupted and misunderstood. (The term *albufeira*, for example, means “lake”, and from its situation seems clearly enough to be specifically Lake Nokue,¹⁸ but by the seventeenth century it was being shown as a town.) The names used in these sources are virtually exclusively Portuguese descriptive terms, reflecting the fact that these landmarks were known only by sight from shipboard, and that the Portuguese had not yet made contact with the local people. The only suggestion of knowledge of any genuinely local toponyms is the name “Alhandra”, shown on some early maps: this is, of course, the name of a town in Portugal, but its location corresponds more or less with that of Allada, and it seems possible that the Portuguese had heard of this kingdom’s name and assimilated it to one familiar to them.¹⁹

The growth of Portuguese trade along the Slave Coast from the middle of the sixteenth century is reflected in the appearance of genuine local toponyms in contemporary Portuguese maps. Popo first appears (as “Poupous”) in a map of Bartholemeu Velho, of 1561, and Allada (as “Costadarida”, i. e. “Coast of Arida”) in a map of Fernão Vaz Dourado, of 1570; the two names appear together (as “R. dos Poupous”, or “River of the Popos”, and “Arda”) on an anonymous map of *ca.* 1570, attributed to Sebastião Lopes.²⁰ There is little reflection of this, however, in contemporary published Portuguese sources. The navigational guide of Figueiredo, published in 1614, includes an account of the coast between the Volta and Lagos, but this for the most part simply reproduces (in a slightly abbreviated form) the then unpublished manuscript of Pacheco Pereira. The only allusion to more recent experience is the brief phrase “this is the land of Arda [Allada]”, interpolated into Pacheco Pereira’s account of the coast east of the Volta (1625: 69v–70).

17 ‘Roteiro Quatrocentista’, in Peres, 1952: 26; for early maps, see Cortesão & Teixeira da Mota, 1960.

18 Cf. Person, 1975: 718. The suggestion of Verger, 1968 a: 36, that “Albufera” is a version of “Offra”, the name of the port of Allada, is clearly incorrect.

19 Cf. Hair, 1969: 247, n. 59.

20 Cortesão & Teixeira da Mota, 1960: II, 203; III, 266; IV, 407. The name “os Pomtuais” (“the Points”) which occurs in the map of Fernão Vaz Dourado is probably merely a corruption of “os Poupous”; cf. Verger, 1968 a: 36, and contrast Person, 1975: 717–8, who suggests that it is a genuine toponym and perhaps an early name for Whydah.

Early English and Dutch sources

The earliest English and Dutch sources relating to the Slave Coast draw upon earlier Portuguese sources, but they do also offer some original information relating to contemporary Portuguese activities. The only early English source of relevance is the journal of the second (1590/1) voyage of James Welsh, published by Hakluyt in 1600: Welsh records attacking and destroying a Portuguese ship at Allada ("Arda"), and also mentions the names of Popo ("the Papuas") and Villa Longa, which he probably took from Portuguese maps (1904: 464). Early published Dutch maps also include the names of Popo and Allada ("R. dos Poupous" and "Arda"), the earliest instance being a map of Arnold van Langren (1596),²¹ but this information seems clearly derived (as the use of Portuguese forms of local toponyms suggests) from earlier Portuguese maps. Of the early Dutch descriptive accounts of West Africa, the most useful for the Slave Coast is that of De Marees (1602), which, while making clear that the Dutch themselves did no trade in the area, gives a brief account (the most substantial in any surviving source) of the trade of the Portuguese at Allada (1912: 230–1). The other principal early Dutch account of the West African coast, that of Ruiters (1623), however, merely copies its account of the Slave Coast area from Figueiredo's published work of 1614 (1913: 76–7).²² Accounts also survive of two early Dutch voyages to the area: the memoirs of Andreas Josua Ulsheimer, a German surgeon in the service of the Dutch (written in 1616, although not published until the nineteenth century), record a Dutch attack on a Portuguese ship at Allada ("Arden") in 1603,²³ while those of Jacob de Lange (published in 1658) include a note of a visit to Allada ("Ardere") in 1622, when the Dutch declined an invitation to come ashore in the belief that the inhabitants were cannibals (1658: 58).

Alonso de Sandoval (1627)

The most substantial information derived from early Portuguese enterprise on the Slave Coast occurs in a Spanish source published in 1627, written by Alonso de Sandoval, a missionary active in Spanish America. The importance of Sandoval's work has been demonstrated, with regard to the Sierra Leone area, by Paul Hair (1975); and it is an invaluable source for the Slave Coast also. Sandoval's account of the Slave Coast area (1627: 7, 51–51 v, 65–66) is based in part on the earlier (1614) work of Figueiredo, but it also incorporates a considerable amount of new information, derived presumably either from correspondence with contemporaries in West Africa or from questioning African slaves in America. Sandoval describes three kingdoms along the coast, from east to west those of Popo ("the Popoes"), "Fulao", and Allada ("the Ardas"); and in the interior between Allada and Benin a people called the "Lucumies". Problems relating to Sandoval's account of Popo and to the identification of "Fulao" will be discussed in detail below. The name "Lucumi" seems to represent Olukumi, a general name for the Yoruba-speaking peoples, to the north-east of Allada.²⁴

21 'Typus Orarum Maritimarum Guineae, Manicongo & Angolae', in Linschoten, 1595–6.

22 Ruiters does include some original material on the Lagos area: cf. Law, 1986 a: 251–2.

23 Andreas Josua Ulsheimer, 'Warhaffte Beschreibung ettlicher Raysen', translated in Jones, 1983: 23.

24 For the name Olukumi, see esp. Hair, 1969: 248, n. 65. This name is attested (in the form "Lucumi") as an ethnonym of African slaves in Mexico and Peru in the seventeenth century (Beltrán, 1946: 133; Bowser, 1974: 41); and there is one instance ("Lucume") from Santo Domingo as early as the 1540s

Leers (1665) and Dapper (1668)

The growth of Dutch trade with Allada after the 1630s is reflected in two contemporary accounts of great importance, both published in the 1660s. The first is that of Arnout Leers, who included some new material on Africa in a translation of Leo Africanus, published in 1665. Attention has been drawn to the value of Leers' work, for the Rio del Rey/Camerouns area, by Ardener (1968): 100–3), and it contains important material on the Slave Coast also. This comprises, first, a brief description of the coast between the Volta and Lagos, naming a headland called Cabo Montego (apparently an alternative name for Cape St Paul) and the two coastal settlements of Popo and Allada; and second, a long 'Description of the Trade at Allada', which includes further topographical information, distinguishing the town near the coast where the trade was done (called *Stokvis-dorp*, "Stockfish Village") from the royal capital inland, as well as an account of the actual conduct of the trade, with details of presents and duties paid to the king and other officials, payments for services, and prices (1665: 301–2, 308–12). This second section describing the trade of Allada appears to be taken from an anonymous Dutch manuscript preserved in the library of the University of Leiden recently discovered by Adam Jones.²⁵ The date of this account of the Allada trade is not clear, but its list of names of Allada chiefs to whom payments were made includes two people also mentioned by the Spanish missionaries who visited Allada in 1660.²⁶

The second account is the much better known one by Olfert Dapper, first published in 1668 (1668: 488–94; 1676: 2nd pagination, 115–21), which was a major source for Barbot's later work. Among earlier published sources, Dapper acknowledged his use of De Marees and of a translation of Leo Africanus which appears to be that of Leers. For the Slave Coast, he does not seem to take any material from De Marees, except perhaps for a probably anachronistic allusion to Portuguese trade at Allada (1668: 494; 1676: 2, 121). He does, however, incorporate most of the Slave Coast material published by Leers, slightly abbreviated (and in the process, slightly garbled).²⁷ In addition, he includes a substantial amount of

(Incháustegui Cabral, 1958: I, 236–9: reference kindly supplied to the author by John Thornton). (In the 1540s, such Yoruba slaves were probably sold to the Europeans through Benin or Ijebu rather than on the Slave Coast.) Sandoval also remarks that the Allada were alternatively known as "Arara", and that slaves from Allada, Fulao and Popo were known generally as "Offoons": the former name is also attested in Peru and Mexico, though its origin is unclear (cf. Beltrán, 1946: 321–2; Bowser, 1974: 40–3); the latter is probably not Fon, the original name of Dahomey (as suggested by Hair, 1969: 247, n. 59), but derives from a common local greeting, *a fon* [*dagbe a*] ("Good morning").

25 'Beschryvinge van den handel tot Arder', in University of Leiden, Bibliotheca Publica Latina, ms 927, ff. 12–13 v. My thanks are due to Adam Jones for kindly loaning me a microfilm of this manuscript.

26 The list includes chiefs called "Supyn" and "Cartte", who seem clearly identifiable with people met by the Spanish missionaries in 1660 called "Capitán Zupi" (Anon., 'Relación de lo que sucedió a los Padres misioneros del reino de Arda', 1662, in Brásio, 1952–85, 1st ser., XII, 379) and "Capitán Carta" (Naxara, 1672: 238); but these might of course be titles rather than personal names, and so valueless as chronological indicators. (Note that there was also a Captain "Charter" or "Carter" later in Whydah: Phillips, 1732: 228; Bosman, 1705: 359). Unfortunately, the account fails to make clear one point which would help to narrow down the date of writing, viz. whether or not there was a Dutch lodge in Allada: Leers says merely that there was "a house for trading" (1665: 308), which might mean one made available by the local people rather than a permanently organized lodge.

27 It is suggested by Ardener, 1968: 100–1, that Dapper may not have drawn directly from Leers, but that both may have used a common source, possibly the manuscripts of Blomert referred to by Dapper. On Allada, however, the recurrence in Dapper of miscopyings by Leers of the Leiden manuscript suggests that Dapper did use Leers' published version. It is perhaps conceivable that the Leiden manuscript formed part of Blomert's papers, but if so these must clearly have included other material, from which Dapper drew his extensive additional information on Allada.

original material. He gives brief descriptions of a village called "Foulaen", on the coast between Popo and Allada, and of a large kingdom called "Ulkami" in the interior to the east of Allada, these names clearly corresponding to the "Fulao" and "Lucumies" of Sandoval. He also gives a much fuller account of the geography of the kingdom of Allada itself, especially of its coastal area, where he distinguishes the landing place on the shore, called "Little Arder" ("Great Arder" being the royal capital inland) from the local administrative centre situated on the bank of the coastal lagoon, called "Jakkein" (corresponding, as will be seen below, to the modern Godomey), and also names two towns further east along the coast, called "Jojo" and "Ba" (i. e. Apa).²⁸ In addition to this topographical information, Dapper also offers a long description of the kingdom of Allada, organized in a standard encyclopaedic format, beginning with its climate and natural resources, proceeding through the housing, food, dress, and national character of its inhabitants, marriage and burial customs, language, trade and agriculture, and concluding with warfare, government and religion. Although the information offered under several of these headings is brief or vague (and sometimes both), much of it is quite substantial, making Dapper's account certainly the most valuable seventeenth century source for the kingdom of Allada.

The source of Dapper's new material on Allada is not indicated. But in the preface to his book, Dapper states that he has made use of the writings of one Samuel Blomert, which described "kingdoms, provinces, towns and villages, previously never mentioned by any writer, or even known from hearsay", a formula which might perhaps (allowing for some rhetorical exaggeration) apply to Allada. Blomert (or Blommaert) is known to have been a Director of the Dutch West India Company and to have died in 1654.²⁹ His writings, according to Dapper, were based partly on his own experiences and inquiries in Africa, and partly on information gathered at second hand from other European visitors. Confirmation that Blomert was Dapper's source on Allada is provided by a slightly earlier work, a map of the French cartographer Sanson (1655), which also cites Blomert as a source.³⁰ This map includes several of the new toponyms in Dapper's account, in some cases with slightly different spellings: "Foulaen", "Jackeyn", "Ioyo", and "Ulcuim" (probably a misprint for "Ulcumi"). Although Sanson omits some toponyms which are in Dapper (notably "Ba") and includes one ("Tary") which does not appear in Dapper, the degree of overlap seems sufficient to support the suggestion that Blomert was the source of much, if not all, of Dapper's new material on Allada.

The precise date of this material is uncertain. Other passages of Dapper's work containing original material thought likely to derive from Blomert suggest divergent dates: his account of the kingdom of Warri to the east is said to relate to the year 1644 (1668: 507; 1676: 2,

28 Neither "Little Arder" nor "Jojo" can be precisely identified. The former, however, is situated by Dapper one mile (i. e. one Dutch mile, or four English miles) to the south-south-west of "Jakkein" (Godomey), and was not as is sometimes suggested (e. g. by Van Dantzig, 1980: 66) in the area of Porto-Novo, over 20 miles to the east of Godomey. The name "Jojo" obviously invites comparison with Oyo, a Yoruba kingdom in the interior to the north-east, which is otherwise not attested in any contemporary source before the 1670s (cf. Pazzi, 1979: 200): from the location indicated by Dapper, "Jojo" is clearly a coastal town and can thus hardly be metropolitan Oyo, but it might possibly be a settlement of Oyo traders on the coast. Since, however, it is described by Dapper as a source of salt, an alternative derivation of the name might be from *jo*, the Yoruba word for "salt": Dapper notes that the "Alkomi" or Yoruba language was widely spoken in Allada (1668: 491; 1676: 2, 118).

29 On Blomert, see Hair, 1974: 35 & 52, n. 91; Ardener, 1968: 111.

30 'L'Afrique, ou Libye Ulérieure' (dated 1655), in Sanson, 1658; cf. also 'La Guinée' (dated 1656), in Sanson, 1656.

134), while his account of Sierra Leone includes a reference to events in 1626.³¹ The Allada material must clearly relate to a period after the beginning of Dutch trade with Allada in the mid-1630s, and presumably (if the attribution to Blomert is correct) before Blomert's death in 1654. The fact that Dapper refers to the existence of a Dutch lodge in Allada, located not (as was the case in the 1660s) at Offra but further east at "Ba" (1668: 492; 1676: 2, 119) suggests that this material relates specifically to the years *ca.* 1649–53. It is quite possible, however, that the account used by Dapper was itself a composite work, combining material relating to different periods: the fact that, despite his reference to a Dutch lodge at Ba, Dapper states in another passage that the Dutch traded principally at the coastal village of "Little Arder", situated much further west (1668: 491; 1676: 2, 118), perhaps suggests this. The chronological relationship of Dapper's material to that published earlier by Leers is also uncertain. In the case of the Rio del Rey/Camerouns area, Ardener (1968: 107) has shown that Dapper's additional material was more up to date than that of Leers, but in the case of Allada the reverse may well be the case. The fact that Leers includes muskets and gunpowder among the goods sold in Allada, whereas Dapper omits them from his list of imports, certainly suggests that the Leers material (although published earlier) belongs to a somewhat later period.

Weickmann (1659) and Müller (1673)

Two other contemporary published works include material derived from European commercial operations in Allada in the 1650s and 1660s which, although much less substantial, is of considerable interest. A merchant of Ulm in Germany called Christoph Weickmann assembled a collection of exotic curiosities during the 1650s, of which a catalogue was published in 1659. This catalogue includes several items from Africa, including four said to come from Allada ("Haarder") (1659: 51–2), and these Allada objects are still preserved in the Ulmer Museum. Weickmann presumably obtained his African objects through his connections with Dutch merchants (or perhaps German merchants associated with the Swedish African Company) involved in the African trade. The important account of the kingdom of Fetu on the Gold Coast by the German clergyman Wilhelm Johann Müller, published in 1673 and based on his observations while in the service of the Danish African Company at Frederiksborg during the 1660s, also includes several mentions of Allada, mainly relating to the importation of slaves and other commodities from there into the Gold Coast.³²

Joseph de Naxara (1672)

The Spanish mission sent to Allada in 1660 produced two important published sources. In preparation for the mission, a statement of Christian doctrine in the language of Allada was prepared, and printed at Madrid in 1658, this constituting the earliest extant text in any Slave Coast language.³³ The missionary principally responsible for this text, Joseph de Naxara, also published subsequently a work of theological reflections, which includes some reminiscences of his experiences in Allada in 1660 (Naxara, 1672). An especially interesting

31 Cf. Hair, 1974: 34.

32 Wilhelm Johann Müller, *Die africanische auf der guinesischen Gold Cust gelegene Landschaft Fetu* (Hamburg, 1673), translated in Jones, 1983: 169, 194, 204, 210–11, 222, 224, 245.

33 *Doctrina Christiana* (Madrid, 1658), reproduced in Labouret & Rivet, 1929.

feature of Naxara's account is that he had, prior to embarkation for Africa, read the earlier Spanish work of Sandoval (1627), and while in Allada he repeated some of Sandoval's material to local informants, for their comments upon it (1672: 204). This suggests that the problem of "feedback" from written sources into local oral traditions, which is familiar enough from more recent times,³⁴ may have a longer history in West Africa than is commonly appreciated.

D'Elbée (1671)

The French expedition to establish a trading factory in Allada in 1670 is described in the published journal of one of its commanding officers, the *Sieur D'Elbée* (1671). This publication also includes a 'Continuation' of D'Elbée's journal (not apparently by D'Elbée himself, to whom it refers in the third person) describing an embassy sent by the king of Allada to France later in the same year. (Both of these items were later drawn upon by Barbot.) D'Elbée's journal gives an account of his voyage to Allada as well as of the French transactions at Allada itself, offering in the process a description of the coast between the Volta and Allada, which although very brief includes some important new material (1671: 380–3). Of especial interest are a vague report of a powerful kingdom in the vicinity of "Cap d'a Monte" (i. e. Cabo do Monte, near Kpeme), which he unfortunately fails to name, but which may possibly relate to Tado in the interior,³⁵ and an account of a visit to a place called "Tary" between there and Allada, whose possible identity will be discussed later in this paper. For Allada itself, in the course of his detailed account of the negotiations for the establishment of the French lodge, D'Elbée includes some topographical details not included in earlier published sources, in particular giving the indigenous names of both the town near the coast where the European trading lodges were situated (called "Stockfish Village" by Leers) and the royal capital inland (called merely "Great Arder" by Dapper) – "Ofra" and "Assem".³⁶ He also offers a brief general descriptive account of Allada, covering its trade, religion, government and dress (1671: 436–51), which forms a useful complement to the earlier account of Dapper. The "Continuation" also includes a little additional geographical information, including in particular the earliest mention in any extant source of the Yoruba kingdom of Oyo ("Oyeo"), in the interior north-east of Allada (1671: 557–8).

³⁴ See esp. Henige, 1973.

³⁵ Alternatively, the kingdom might be Notse, the traditional cradle of the Ewe people who occupy the extreme west of the Slave Coast, including Keta (cf. Pazzi, 1979: 63); but if Cabo do Monte was in the vicinity of Kpeme, this was an area whose traditional connections were rather with Tado (as has been confirmed to the author by Roberto Pazzi, personal communication, 21 June 1986). In 1682 Barbot found Great Popo at war with "the king of a Monte" (1688: III, 132), but it is not clear whether by this he meant the same monarch mentioned earlier by D'Elbée; in the later English version of his work Barbot identified this kingdom at war with Popo with Keta (1732: 323), but this was well to the west of Cabo do Monte (well over 50 miles, if the latter was at Kpeme), and the identification may well have arisen merely from his attempts to harmonize his own information with that in other sources upon which he was drawing (especially Bosman, 1705): it seems possible that the war between Popo and "a Monte" in 1682 was connected with the occupation of Little Popo, just east of Cabo do Monte, by the Accra refugees which occurred about this time.

³⁶ These names were also recorded earlier, in the forms "Ofra" and "Zima", by the Spanish missionaries who visited Allada in 1660: 'Relación de lo que sucedió a los Padres misioneros del reino de Arda', 1662, in Brásio, 1952–85, 1st series, XII, 380.

V o o g t (1 6 8 3)

A final source which warrants consideration in this context is the Dutch navigational guide of Voogt (1683: 10–11), whose Slave Coast material was plagiarized into a second guide by Roggeveen, originally published in 1685 (1687: 32), which was in turn drawn upon by Barbot. Voogt's material on the Slave Coast is preponderantly drawn from earlier published sources, especially from Dapper. (Roggeveen seems also to have drawn upon Figueiredo and D'Elbée.) In the process of combining material from different sources, Voogt fell into some confusion, in particular treating Cape St Paul and Dapper's "Cabo Montego" as two separate headlands, rather than as different names for the same place (and he is followed in this error by Barbot). He does, however, include in his account of the Slave Coast one original item of great interest, being the earliest published source to distinguish the two towns of Popo, "Great Popo" and "Little Popo".³⁷

Case-studies

" P o p o "

As noted earlier, the Portuguese first made contact with the "river of the Popos" in 1553. This certainly alludes to the coastal settlement later known as Popo (and from the 1680s as "Great Popo"), the "river of the Popos" being the outlet from the coastal lagoon to the sea known nowadays as the "Bouche du Roi" close to Great Popo. This town came to be called "Great Popo" in order to distinguish it from a second Popo, "Little Popo" (modern Aneho), a few miles to the west, which became a place of importance (and familiar to Europeans) only in the early 1680s, when it was occupied by refugees from the Gold Coast displaced by the Akwamu conquest of Accra in 1681. In addition to this narrow application of the name "Popo" to two particular coastal settlements, however, there are some grounds for believing that it was also used, at least occasionally, in a more general sense. Phillips, who visited Whydah in 1694, seems to imply that the slaves exported through Whydah were known generally as "Papa Negroes" (1732: 214); and still more curiously, in English records of 1731 the king of Dahomey, who had then conquered both Allada and Whydah (but not Great or Little Popo), is described as the "Emperor of Pawpaw".³⁸

In fact, the very origin of the name "Popo" is somewhat obscure. It does not appear to be indigenous to the area to which it was applied. As late as the 1780s, indeed, Isert reported that it was "unknown" locally at Great Popo (1793: 126). The vernacular equivalent seems to be Houla ("Afla" in Isert): the true indigenous name of Great Popo is in fact Houlagan, or "Great Houla", while that of Little Popo was "Houlavi", or "Little Houla".³⁹ However, the name "Popo" has been used in recent times by the Yoruba-speaking peoples, to the east of Allada, as a general name for their non-Yoruba neighbours to the west. Given that the Portu-

37 Barbot's knowledge of the existence of the two Popos (1688: III, 132) is probably derived from Voogt (via Roggeveen) rather than from his own observations in 1682 (cf. Law, 1982: 168, n. 19). Roggeveen also has some important original material on "Caran", i. e. "Curamo", or Lagos, of which Barbot made some use (cf. Law, 1983: 330–1, where the suggestion that Roggeveen borrowed this material from Voogt is incorrect; also Law, 1982: 171, n. 38).

38 Johnson, 1978: 346 & 350, n. 10.

39 The modern name of Little Popo, Aneho, is acknowledged locally not to be its original name, but to have been conferred on it after the settlement there of refugees from the Gold Coast.

guese had traded with some of the Yoruba (notably the kingdom of Ijebu) prior to establishing contact with the Popo area in the 1550s, it seems likely that they originally adopted the name from the Yoruba. The ultimate origin of the name is uncertain, but there are grounds for believing that it may originally have related to the kingdom of Tado in the interior, from which the rulers of both Great Popo and Allada traced their descent. The published traditions of Porto-Novo, whose rulers derived in turn from Allada, refer to an early tyrannical ruler in or near Tado, who was killed by an ancestor of the Allada royal dynasty, and who was called precisely “Kpokpo”.⁴⁰

These ambiguities concerning the application of the name “Popo” should be borne in mind in interpreting the problematical account of the “kingdom of the Popos” of Sandoval (1627: 51–51 v). According to Sandoval, the king of Popo resided not at the coast but 60 leagues (180 miles) inland, although he possessed a coastal port, ruled by a chief called “the Fidalgo” (Portuguese *fidalgo*, lit. “nobleman”, commonly applied in West Africa to subordinate governors), situated on a river called “Aguato”. Sandoval also describes a coastal port east of Popo called “Fulao” (whose identification will be considered below) as having been formerly subject to Popo. Fulao had, however, revolted, when the king of Popo had ordered its king to build a palace for him, requiring that he carry the water needed for making the building in his mouth. The king of Popo was killed, and his hand cut off and preserved for display in festivals at Fulao.

The coastal port mentioned here is presumably Great Popo, and the river on which it stands the outlet of the Bouche du Roi, although the name “Aguato” does not appear to be recorded in any other source. The reference to a king living far in the interior, however, suggests some confusion with another state in the area. The traditions of Great Popo do, in fact, acknowledge a connection with a state in the interior, the kingdom of Tado, which is regarded in local tradition as the original cradle of the ruling dynasties of all the major states in the area, including Great Popo, Allada to the east and Notse (Nuatja), from which in turn the Ewe peoples (including Anlo) trace their origins, to the west. The story of the rebellion of Fulao against Popo is a variant of a widespread stereotype, in which a king provokes rebellion by making impossible demands on his subjects. In the Slave Coast area, such stories are related especially in connection with the dispersal of the Ewe from Notse, which is said to have been provoked by the tyrannies of King Agokoli, which included compelling his subjects to work on the construction of his palace, putting thorns in the building mud to injure their feet, and demanding that they make a rope out of clay.⁴¹ Sandoval’s story looks very much like a variant of that of Agokoli’s building enterprise. However, the story of the rope of clay is also told of a king of Tado, Kpo Jen, who is said to have provoked the original exodus of the Ewe from Tado to Notse,⁴² and it may well be that the story of the building of the palace also was once told of Tado.

It is also noteworthy that the Spanish missionary Joseph de Naxara in 1660, having read Sandoval’s account of the rebellion of Fulao against Popo, recounted it to the king of Allada, only to be told that the true hero of the anecdote, who had rebelled against the king of Popo’s building programme, had been an earlier king of Allada (1672: 202–5). (Naxara’s suggestion that Fulao and Allada had once had the same king is clearly an attempt by him to reconcile the two versions, rather than a genuine record of a local tradition.) Naxara’s Allada

40 Geay, 1924: 619–20; Akindélé & Aguessy, 1953: 24–5.

41 Gayibor, 1984.

42 Ibid.: 26; cf. Pazzi, 1979: 169–70.

informants, in fact, gave a more elaborate version of the story, according to which the king of Allada had been taken captive to Popo and was obliged to work on the royal palace there while in captivity; he was able to escape home through a stratagem of one of his sisters, who was married to the king of Popo, before killing him in battle. It seems probable that the king of Allada, rightly or wrongly, interpreted Sandoval's story as a version of the tradition of the killing of the tyrannical king "Kpokpo" by one of his ancestors. The story of the king's sister, married to an enemy king, who assists the hero to defeat the latter, is another traditional stereotype found locally: in versions of the "Kpokpo" story told recently, it is rather a daughter of the enemy king married to the hero who provides the critical assistance.⁴³

'Fulao'

A second problem in Sandoval's account is the identity of the kingdom which he calls "Fulao", situated on the coast between Popo and Allada. Corroboration of the existence of a port of "Fulao", adjacent to Allada, in this period is provided by a Portuguese document of 1625,⁴⁴ and what may be a variant of the same name, "Faloim", occurs in an earlier document, of 1607.⁴⁵ "Fulao" it also appears later in Portuguese maps, beginning with that of António Sanches (1641),⁴⁶ and additionally, as has been seen, in the form "Foulaen" in the map of Sanson (1655) and in the account of Dapper published in 1668. There is also a record of a place near Allada called "Farahu", whose king sent a request for Christian missionaries to the island of São Tomé in 1691, which may be a further version of the same name.⁴⁷ The name does not appear independently, however, in any source after the seventeenth century, and Burton, who made inquiries in the 1860s, found it "impossible to find" (1966: 102). It is, of course, quite possible that such a settlement might have been destroyed in the wars of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. But it is also possible that the kingdom known in early sources as "Fulao" was known later under a different name.

It has, in fact, been suggested by Verger (1968 a: 37) that "Fulao"/"Foulaen" is an early name for Whydah, which appears in contemporary sources under this name only after the French established their trading lodge there in 1671. The main ground for this suggestion is the fact that Barbot in the 1680s states that the coastal village of the Whydah kingdom where the European lodges were situated was called "Pelleau" (1688: III, 133; 1732: 324), which

43 Another early recording of this traditional stereotype can be found in the account of the escape of the Little Popo chief Ashangmo from Dahomey in 1737, allegedly through the assistance of a sister married to the king of Dahomey, as reported by Norris, 1789: 50. In recent tradition the king of Dahomey's conquest of Whydah in 1727 is likewise attributed to the assistance of one of his daughters who was married to the king of Whydah (e. g. Gavoy, 1955: 54–5).

44 Letter of Fernão de Sousa, 25 March 1625, in Heintze, 1985–: II, doc. 53. My thanks are due to Beatrix Heintze for supplying the text of this document to me in advance of publication.

45 Anon., 'Relação da Costa da Guiné', 1607, in Brásio, 1952–85: 1st ser., V, 381; cf. Hair, 1969: 247, n. 59.

46 Cortesão & Teixeira da Mota, 1960: V, 530.

47 Letter of Francesco de Monteleone, São Tomé, 12 June 1692, in Brásio, 1952–85: 1st ser., XIV, 249. This states that "Farahu" was adjacent to Allada *on the north*, which should perhaps be understood in this context as *further up the coast* from the direction of São Tomé, i. e. *west* of Allada.

looks very much like a variant of "Fulao".⁴⁸ Barbot's statement is not without difficulty, since the name "Pelleau" is not recorded independently in any other source, and Burton in the 1860s found it "now unknown" (1966: 81); the village in question was more commonly called Grehue, and this name was certainly already current in Barbot's time, being attested (in the form "Agriffie") already in a document of 1681.⁴⁹ The equation of "Fulao" and Whydah is, however, given some circumstantial support by a statement of the king of Whydah in 1720, that the Portuguese had been the first Europeans to trade in his kingdom.⁵⁰ If correct, this would imply that Whydah was known to the Europeans before the establishment of the French there in 1671. Unless this earlier European contact is presumed to have left no trace in surviving records, it must be presumed that Whydah had been known before 1671 under a different name, and the principle of Ockham's Razor would suggest that this name was indeed that which we find applied to a port of trade in the same general area, "Fulao".

Against this identification, however, is the fact that Barbot himself describes "Foulaen" as a distinct place from "Pelleau", the coastal village of Whydah, placing the former two leagues (6 miles) further east and describing it as the port of the small kingdom of Tori ("Torry"), which lay between Whydah and Allada (1688: III, 132, 139; 1732: 345). This would suggest that "Foulaen" was a coastal settlement between Whydah and Allada, possibly Avrekete.⁵¹ The value of Barbot's testimony is admittedly questionable, since his description of Foulaen is evidently copied from the earlier work of Dapper, and he was quite capable of making two villages out of one, by failing to recognise slightly different names as variant spellings of the same word.⁵² His statement that "Foulaen" was the seaport of Tori, however, does look like a genuine piece of original information, which he obtained presumably by inquiries at Whydah, and in itself would tell against the proposed identification of Foulaen and Whydah.

There is, moreover, a further complication, in that in Sandoval's account the name "Fulao" is strictly given as the name of the *ruler* of the kingdom, and this is given some support by the fact that the António Sanches map gives the name in the form "o Fulao", or "*the* Fulao". The description of the trade of Allada in the Leiden manuscript utilized by Leers does in fact refer to a *person* called "Foulla" or "Afoula" (miscopied by Leers, from whom the error was repeated by Dapper, as "Foella" and "Foelo"), described as "Captain of the Whites", who was one of the Allada chiefs to whom European traders were obliged to make

48 It is sometimes suggested that the name "Pelleau" derives from Pillau, near Königsberg (in Poland), and was given to the port of Whydah by Henri Carolof (alias Heinrich Caerlof), the renegade German trader (formerly in the service, successively, of the Dutch, Swedes and Danes) who assisted in the establishment of the French lodge there in 1671, and who was supposedly a native of Pillau (e. g. Van Dantzig, 1980: 38, n. 56); but this derivation seems not to occur in any source earlier than Dunglas, 1957-8: I, 118, and appears to be based merely upon antiquarian speculation. In fact Carolof came from Mecklenburg: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, mss. Morel de Thoisy 52, folio 265, petition to Colbert (reference supplied by Adam Jones).

49 Bodleian Library, Rawlinson, C. 745, letter of John Thorne, Agriffie, 24 May 1681.

50 Letter of King of Whydah to Viceroy of Brazil, 26 Oct, 1720, in Verger, 1968b: 132.

51 Cf. Person, 1975: 717, 720.

52 For an illustration, cf. Barbot's confusion over Ijebu, which he mentions under three different spellings ("Jaboe", "Jabum" and "Iubu") derived from three different sources (Dapper, Roggeveen, and Portuguese maps), without realizing that these all referred to a single place: cf. Law, 1986a: 254.

gifts.⁵³ This might suggest that the name “Fulao” was associated with the coastal port of Allada itself, rather than (or perhaps as well as) with a separate kingdom to the west.

There is, in fact, a hypothesis which would make at least some sense of these obscurities. The most likely local toponym which might explain both “Fulao” and “Pelleau”, and indeed also the Captain “Foula”, is Houla (sometimes pronounced Fla, or Pla), the indigenous name of Great Popo, which is also applied to various communities tracing their origins from Great Popo, settled along the seashore to both the west and east. What seem to be versions of the name Houla were in fact applied in the seventeenth century to at least two settlements on the coast, Aflao to the west of Great Popo,⁵⁴ and (as will be seen below) “Offra”, the coastal port of Allada. (The Captain “Foula” of Allada in the 1650s could well, indeed, have been the Governor of Offra.) The name Houla or Pla might well have been applied also to Grehue and Avrekete, since both contained Houla elements in their populations.⁵⁵ But given the large number of Houla villages along the coast, it seems very likely that there has been some confusion among them in contemporary European sources.⁵⁶ The “Fulao” or “Foulaen” of Sandoval and Dapper, described as an independent state west of Allada, is most likely to have been Whydah (or at least the port of Grehue, perhaps in early times not yet subject to Whydah). But it seems quite conceivable that Barbot in the 1680s, inquiring about “Foulaen” and being understood to mean “Houla” (even if this was not in fact the origin of the name), was given information about a quite different village from that described by Sandoval and Dapper. Barbot’s “Foulaen” may therefore be (or at least incorporate material relating to) Avrekete, even if the place known by this name earlier was Whydah.

“T a r y”

The journal of D’Elbée’s voyage of 1670 records that, before arriving at Allada, the French party called at a town called “Tary” (or “Thary”), situated on a river of the same name, twelve leagues [36 miles] west of Allada, where there was a resident Dutch agent (1671: 382–3). Identification of this place is problematical. D’Elbée himself remarks that “Tary” was “marked *Terra* in maps”, but this is clearly a confusion: what had appeared in earlier maps were names such as *Terra Anegada* (“Flooded land”) (and also *Terra Gazellas*, “land of Gazelles”), which were certainly Portuguese descriptive terms and not attempts to render any

53 The title “Capne van de Blancke” clearly translates the indigenous title *Yevogan*, attested later in Whydah and in Dahomey, and refers to the chief principally responsible for relations with the Europeans.

54 Bosman appears to be the earliest source to record the name of Aflao, which he gives in the form “Verhou”, but seems to have confused Aflao with Keta (1705: 329).

55 Published versions of Whydah tradition claim that Grehue was founded by Passe, supposedly the second king of Whydah, in whose reign European traders first came to the kingdom (e. g. Gavoy, 1955: 48–9); but it appears that this “Passe” (otherwise “Kpossi”) was in origin a figure in Houla tradition, who is said to have ruled initially at Great Popo (where he first encountered the European traders) and to have founded various villages along the coast to the east, including Avrekete and Godomey (Jakin) as well as Grehue (cf. Mouléro, 1966: 42–4). The Whydah traditions recorded recently seem to represent a conflation of traditions of the Whydah kingdom destroyed by the Dahomians in 1727 with others relating rather to the settlement of Grehue which survived under Dahomian rule.

56 It may also be noted, as a further possible source of confusion, that in Portuguese the term *fulano/fulão/fulão*, means roughly “So-and-so”, and that conceivably non-Portuguese Europeans might have heard this phrase used locally and mistaken it for a proper name. My thanks are due for this point to Beatrix Heintze.

local toponym.⁵⁷ The name “Tary” had, in fact, as noted earlier, already appeared on the map of Sanson (1655).⁵⁸ Sanson places it in the interior to the north of the coastal village of “Foulaen”; and in this position it can hardly be other than Tori, a small kingdom situated between Allada and Whydah, which is first clearly described (under the name “Torry”) by Barbot in the 1680s (1688: III, 132; 1732: 345–6). Since Barbot, as has been seen, was apparently told that Tori controlled a coastal village east of Whydah (possibly Avrekete), which Barbot identified with “Foulaen”, it might be supposed that it was to this coastal dependency of Tori that D’Elbée came in 1670.

The details of D’Elbée’s account of “Tary”, however, seem more applicable to Great Popo, to the west, than to Tori or “Foulaen”. The distance given to Allada certainly fits Great Popo,⁵⁹ while the reference to a river makes best sense as an allusion to the Bouche du Roi near Great Popo; although it is possible that the term “river” here is used of the coastal lagoon, without implying any outlet to the sea. The reference to a Dutch agent also points to Popo, where the Dutch are known to have maintained a trading lodge in the 1660s. Barbot in the 1680s did in fact identify D’Elbée’s “Tary” with Great Popo (1688: III, 131; 1732: 322), though a map in Roggeveen (1687) distinguishes them, marking “Tary Anegada” (evidently an emendation of the “Terra Anegada” of earlier maps, and an echo of D’Elbée’s observation that “Tary” was “marked *Terra* in maps”) as a distinct place east of Popo.

It seems clear that the place visited by D’Elbée in 1670 was in fact Great Popo, but the question remains why he should have confused it with Tori.⁶⁰ A possible explanation is provided by the fact that a branch of the coastal lagoon system ran behind Whydah to pass Tori, where it was apparently known (at least in the nineteenth century) as the “Tori Water”.⁶¹ Nineteenth-century maps depict this lagoon as running westwards past Whydah to rejoin the coastal lagoon towards Great Popo⁶², although this connection appears to have been destroyed, or at least severely attenuated, by subsequent silting. It is therefore conceivable that D’Elbée, visiting Great Popo, heard the lagoon there described as the “River of Tori”, and mistakenly assumed that this was the name of the settlement also.

“Rio de Ardra”

A map of Luis Teixeira (1602) marks, in addition to “Costa Ardra” (i. e. “Coast of Allada”), a “R. de Ardra” (“River of Allada”) further west.⁶³ It is doubtful whether these were two separate places, and perhaps more likely that Teixeira had merely combined alternative names for a single port from different sources; but it is not impossible, since later in the seventeenth century Allada certainly had two coastal ports, at Offra and Apa. A “Rio de Ardra” is also mentioned by De Marees (1912: 230–1), though he might be merely echoing Luis

57 From the location given in the ‘Roteiro’ in Peres, 1952: 26, it seems likely that the name “Terra Anegada” was originally applied to Lake Nokue; the assumption that it can be equated with Great Popo in Person, 1975: 718, is based on no more than the confusions of D’Elbée and Barbot.

58 “Tari” is also known as an ethnonym of slaves in Mexico: Beltrán, 1946: 320.

59 Sandoval, 1627: 51, also gives the distance from Popo to Allada as 12 leagues (36 miles); Dapper, 1676: 2, 115 gives it as 8 Dutch miles (32 miles); the actual distance is about 29 miles.

60 Contrary to the suggestion in Law, 1982: 158, it was clearly D’Elbée and not Barbot who was responsible for this confusion.

61 Burton, 1966: 101; “Lagune de Tori” on twentieth-century maps.

62 E. g. ‘The Slave Coast’, by Father Borghero (1865), reproduced in Newbury, 1961: opp. 76.

63 Cortesão & Teixeira da Mota, 1960: III, 362.

Teixeira, whose map he apparently copied into his own work. A river running through Allada to the sea is also marked on some later maps, such as that of Sanson (1655), and is described by Barbot (1688: III, 139; 1732: 345); but these, again, might be copying earlier sources rather than providing independent corroboration of them. A further allusion to a river in Allada which does seem clearly independent occurs in a Portuguese document of 1678, suggesting the construction of a trading factory "in the Kingdom of Arda, next to the River of Ooloa [*rio da Ooloa*], where it is called Apa", implying (in contrast to the Luis Teixeira map) that this river was in the east of Allada territory, near the port of Apa; but the name "Ooloa" does not seem to occur in any other source.⁶⁴

These references to a river at Allada are problematical, since in recent times there has been no natural outlet from the inland lagoons to the sea anywhere between the Bouche du Roi near Great Popo (the "River of the Popos") and that at Lagos. Person, indeed, has suggested that "Rio de Ardra" was merely an alternative name for the "River of the Popos" (1975: 716), but this is improbable. The fact that later sources distinguish the rivers of Popo and Allada is not a decisive argument, since this could arise merely through duplication due to the combination of material from different sources. But the distances given by De Marees from the Volta to the "Rio de Ardra" and from thence to Lagos are clearly inconsistent with identification with the Bouche du Roi, and place the "River of Allada" much further east.⁶⁵

Perhaps the simplest solution to this problem is to suppose that it arose out of a misunderstanding. Reports of coastal towns of the Allada kingdom being situated on "rivers" were clearly, at least on some occasions, intended to refer to the inland lagoon, which runs parallel to the coast: this seems obvious, for example, in Dapper (1668: 488; 1676: 2, 115). Cartographers or compilers who had no first-hand acquaintance with Allada, however, might easily have misunderstood such reports to refer to a "river" in the more conventional sense, with an outlet into the sea. Alternatively, however, there may have been in the seventeenth century an outlet from the lagoon system to the sea which has since disappeared.⁶⁶ At Cotonou, east of Allada, for example, a branch of Lake Nokue approaches very close to the sea; the French cut an artificial channel (since blocked again with silt) to connect the two in 1885. It seems quite possible that at an early period the Nokue had in fact been open to the sea at Cotonou.

"Jakin" and "Offra"

Dapper refers to a town in the coastal area of Allada, apparently the local administrative centre, one Dutch mile (about 4 miles) north-north-east of the seaside landing place of "Little Arder", called "Jakkein" or "Iakkijn" (1668: 488, 493; 1676: 2, 115, 120). This town is also referred to (usually as "Jakin" or "Jacquin") in many later sources; it was eventually destroyed by the Dahomians in 1732. Current tradition in the coastal area also recalls the existence of a small state in the coastal area called "Jeken", whose capital is identified with

64 Letter of unidentified Jesuit priest to King of Portugal, 17 Oct. 1678, in Brásio, 1952–85: 1st ser., XIII, 452.

65 De Marees places the "Rio de Ardra" 40 Dutch miles (160 miles) from the Volta, and 10 miles (40 miles) from Lagos; by contrast, the Bouche du Roi is roughly midway between the Volta and Lagos, about 80 miles from each.

66 Cf. Van Dantzig, 1980: 66–7.

the modern town of Godomey.⁶⁷ Interestingly, it is said that “Jeken” was strictly the title of the ruler of the state, which corroborates Dapper’s statement (1668: 488; 1676: 2, 115) that Jakin was “so called by us, after the Nobleman (or Governor) who formerly ruled over it”. The correct name of the state was apparently Pla, a variant of the ethnonym Houla, its inhabitants being Houla who claimed to have migrated eastwards along the coast from Great Popo.

According to Leers (1665: 308), European traders in Allada went to conduct their trade at a village called “Stokvis-dorp” (“Stockfish Village”) one Dutch mile (4 miles) north-east from the landing place on the shore; while d’Elbée in 1670 records that the European’s trading lodges were at a town called “Offra”, two leagues (6 miles) from the shore (1671: 388). It seems reasonable to assume here that “Stokvis-dorp” and “Offra” were alternative names for a single place. The location indicated also clearly corresponds to that given by Dapper for Jakin; and the identity of “Offra” with Jakin might seem to be confirmed by its name, which must surely be a version of Pla, the strictly correct indigenous name of Jakin.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, it is clear that Jakin and Offra were in fact distinct communities. Dapper himself, although saying most about Jakin, also mentions Offra (as “Offer”, a common Dutch form of the name), though merely as a place noted for its excellent beer and without making clear its situation (1676: 2, 116); and D’Elbée, who stresses rather the importance of Offra, does also mention Jakin (“Jaquin”), although only casually, as a place from which labourers might be obtained for work in Offra (1671: 416). Later sources also present Jakin and Offra unambiguously as two separate communities: according to Bosman in the 1690s, for example, Offra was “a little lower [i. e. further east], but farther inland” than Jakin (1705: 398).

It seems likely that the names “Jakin” and “Offra” were originally interchangeable in local usage, their use to designate two different settlements being probably in origin a purely European convention, but the distinction is generally clear enough in the sources. One may surmise that “Offra” was originally a dependent market-village of Jakin, though it seems eventually to have acquired some degree of administrative autonomy from it. The rise of Offra to prominence had occurred by 1660, when the Spanish missionaries record being taken there after landing in Allada.⁶⁹ Its rise was probably associated with the establishment there of the European trading lodges: Dapper’s information, on the other hand, relates to a period when the Dutch lodge was situated rather at “Ba”, or Apa. Offra was destroyed, together with the Dutch lodge which by then was the only remaining European trading establishment there, by raiders from Little Popo in 1692, and local tradition nowadays seems to preserve no recollection of any such settlement. After the destruction of Offra in 1692, its commercial role seems to have passed back to Jakin: when European trading lodges were again established in Allada, in the 1710s, these were at Jakin. This circumstance appears to have led to some confusion between Jakin and Offra. Labat in 1730 noted that “many people confuse Jaquin with Offra”, and explained that since the two towns were situated very close together and Offra had grown in size the two towns came to be “united and to form a single town, which the Europeans call indifferently Offra or Jaquin, and more commonly Jaquin

67 Mouléro, 1966. The identity of Jakin and Godomey is already reported in the 1860s by Burton (1966: 321).

68 Cf. Pazzi, 1979: 38.

69 ‘Relación de lo que sucedió a los Padres misioneros del Reino de Arda’, 1662, in Brásio, 1952–85: 1st ser., XII, 380. Offra is apparently also referred to in a Dutch report of 1659 (Kea, 1982: 222).

than Offra" (1730: II, 284). But circumstantial and plausible as this statement appears at first sight, it seems clear that it is no more than an attempt by Labat to rationalize the obscurities he found in earlier sources.

Conclusion

The early sources relating to the Slave Coast serve to illustrate a number of problems which arise very generally in the interpretation of contemporary European accounts of Africa. Above all, there is the enormous scale of copying from one source to another. Leaving aside those sources which are (for this area) entirely derivative (such as Ruiters; and, of course, many maps), many sources containing important original information (such as Sandoval, Dapper and Barbot; and again, several maps) combine this original information with material copied from earlier sources; and even those who essentially reported their own observations and experiences (such as D'Elbée and Naxara) had looked at earlier sources and made some attempt to relate their own first-hand information to them. This of course necessitates careful textual comparison, in order to identify and isolate the genuinely original material. It would be foolish, for example, to assume that everything in Barbot's manuscript written in 1688, far less in the greatly expanded English version published in 1732, can be taken as reflecting conditions when Barbot was himself on the coast in 1682 – though sadly, more than one historian has committed precisely this folly.⁷⁰ Moreover, in many instances material from disparate sources was not merely juxtaposed, but harmonized, not always felicitously, sometimes introducing distortions even into the genuinely original material which these sources have to offer. There must often be uncertainty as to whether a particular statement which appears to record interesting new information is in fact anything more than a guess by which the author sought to reconcile the contradictions in his own sources.

In addition to problems of plagiarism, there are those of misunderstanding. The very process of borrowing material tended to generate errors, as unfamiliar names were miscopied and obscurities in narratives or descriptions misinterpreted. Misunderstanding was especially likely to occur when an author was attempting to make sense of an account of something he had not himself seen – and it needs to be remembered that some of the most important early accounts of the Slave Coast were written by people, including Sandoval and Dapper, who had never set foot in Africa. (Historians intending to make use of such material might find it an illuminating, if chastening, exercise to study some of the attempts to draw an elephant, on the basis merely of verbal descriptions, in the medieval bestiaries.) The possibility of miscomprehension arose, moreover, not only for the armchair compiler in Europe, but also for the first-hand field researcher in Africa. Europeans might misunderstand what they were told, and indeed Africans might misunderstand what they were being asked. The transmission of information presumably normally involved translation between African and European languages, not always very well understood – with Dutch and French traders, for example,

70 Cf. Law, 1982: 164. Instances of chronological confusion due to uncritical reading of Barbot can be found e. g. in Newbury, 1961: 21; Akinjogbin, 1967: 33, 36.

conversing with their Allada and Whydah informants in Portuguese.⁷¹ Given further the frequent currency of various names for a single settlement, and conversely the application of some general names (like “Popo” and “Pla”) to a multiplicity of settlements, some degree of mutual incomprehension might well seem inevitable. Would Europeans have recognised “Houla” and “Pla” as variant pronunciations of the same word? And would Africans have recognised even their own local toponyms when they were presented to them under the disguise of European mispronunciations derived from written texts? Several of the obscurities in the sources seem best explicable as arising out of such confusions and misunderstanding between European inquirers and African informants. The historian of the early Slave Coast, therefore, has not only to apply to his sources the traditional methods of textual criticism, but also in many instances to attempt to reconstruct the mental and social processes by which the material embodied in the texts was created and moulded.

Bibliography

- Akindélé, A. and Aguessy, C., 1953: *Contribution à l'Étude de l'Histoire de l'Ancien Royaume de Porto-Novo*, Dakar.
- Akinjogbin, I. A., 1967: *Dahomey and its Neighbours 1708–1818*, Cambridge.
- Ardener, Edwin, 1968: Documentary & linguistic evidence for the rise of the trading polities between the Rio del Rey & Cameroons, 1500–1650, *History & Social Anthropology*, ed. by I. M. Lewis, London: 81–126.
- Astley, Thomas (ed.), 1746: *A New General Collection of Voyages & Travels*, 4 vols., London.
- Barbot, Jean, 1688: Description des Côtes d’Afrique (ms in Public Record Office, London: ADM. 7/830).
- Barbot, John, 1732: *Description of the Coasts of North & South-Guinea*, London.
- Beltrán, G. Aguirre, 1946: Tribal Origins of Slaves in Mexico, *Journal of Negro History*, 31: 269–352.
- Boogaart, Ernst van den, and Emmer, Pieter C., 1975: The Dutch participation in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1596–1650, *The Uncommon Market: Essays in the economic history of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, ed. by Henry A. Gemery & Jan S. Hogendorn, New York: 353–75.
- Bosman, William, 1705: *A New & Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*, London.
- Bowser, Frederick P., 1974: *The African Slave in Colonial Peru 1524–1650*, Stanford.
- Brásio, António (ed.), 1952–85: *Monumenta Missionaria Africana*, first series, 14 vols.; 2nd series, 5 vols., Lisbon.
- Burton, Richard, 1966: *A Mission to Gelele, King of Dahome*, ed. by C. W. Newbury, London.
- Carrocera, Buenaventura de, 1949: Misión Capuchina al Reino de Arda, *Missionalia Hispanica*, 6: 523–46.
- Cortese, Armando, and Teixeira da Mota, Avelino, 1960: *Portugaliae Monumenta Cartographica*, 5 vols., Lisbon.
- Dapper, Olfert, 1668: *Naukeurige Beschrijvinge der Afrikaensche Gewesten*, Amsterdam; 2nd ed., Amsterdam, 1676.
- D’Elbée, 1671: Journal du Voyage du Sieur d’Elbée & Suite du Journal du Sieur d’Elbée, *Relation de ce qui s’est passé dans les isles et terre-ferme de l’Amérique*, ed. by J. de Clodré, 2 vols., Paris: II, 347–473 & 495–558.
- De Lange, Jacob, 1658: *Daemonomanie ofte der Moore wonderheden*, Amsterdam.

71 Portuguese remained the *lingua franca* of the Slave Coast long after the eclipse of the Portuguese from the trade of the area in the 1630s. In Allada, for example, the Dutch in the 1650s and the French in 1670 were both communicating with the local people in Portuguese (Leers, 1665: 308; D’Elbée, 1671: 395, 398–9, 405, 430). Whydah later seems to have been more multilingual: by the 1690s, at least, there was an English-speaking interpreter, who had learnt the language in the service of the Royal African Company on the Gold Coast (cf. Phillips, 1732: 219), and by the 1700s an official charged with the affairs of the French nation in Whydah (Captain Assou) who had learnt French in the French factory at Whydah itself (cf. Doublet, 1883: 254); the Dutch, however, who were latecomers to the Whydah trade, seem still to have been using Portuguese there in the 1690s (cf. Bosman, 1705: 352).

- De Marees, Pieter, 1912: *Beschryvinghe ende Historische Verhael van het Gout Koninckrijck van Gunea*, ed. by S. P. L'Honoré Naber, The Hague.
- Doublet, Jean, 1883: *Journal du Corsaire Jean Doublet de Honfleur*, ed. by Charles Bréard, Paris.
- Dunglas, Édouard, 1957–8: Contribution à l'Histoire du Moyen-Dahomey, 3 vols., *Études Dahoméennes*, 19–21.
- Figueiredo, Manoel de, 1625: *Hydrographia, Exame de Pilotos*, 2nd ed., Lisbon.
- Gavoy, 1955: Note Historique sur Ouidah, par l'Administrateur Gavoy (1913), *Études Dahoméennes*, 13: 47–70.
- Gayibor, Nicoué, 1984: Agoköli et la dispersion de Notsé, *Peuples du Golfe du Bénin. Aja-Ewe (Colloque de Cotonou)*, ed. by François de Medeiros, Paris: 21–34.
- Geay, J., 1924: Origine, Formation et Histoire du Royaume de Porto-Novo d'après une légende orale des Porto-Noviens, *Bulletin du Comité d'Études Historiques & Scientifiques de l'A. O. F.*, 7 (4): 619–34.
- Hair, P. E. H., 1969: An Ethnolinguistic Inventory of the Lower Guinea Coast before 1700, Part II, *African Language Review*, 7: 225–56.
- , 1974: Barbot, Dapper, Davity: a critique of sources on Sierra Leone and Cape Mount, *History in Africa*, 1: 25–54.
- , 1975: Early Sources on Sierra Leone: Sandoval (1627), *Africana Research Bulletin*, 5 (2): 78–92.
- , 1976: Some Minor Sources for Guinea, 1519–1559: Enciso and Alfonse/Fonteneau, *History in Africa*, 3: 19–46.
- Heintze, Beatrix (ed.), 1985–: *Fontes para a história de Angola do século XVII*, 2 vols (vol. 2 forthcoming), Stuttgart.
- Henige, David, 1973: The Problem of Feedback in Oral Tradition: four examples from the Fante Coastlands, *Journal of African History*, 14 (2): 223–35.
- Incháustegui Cabral, J. Marino, 1958: *Reales Cédulas y Correspondencias de Gobernadores de Santo Domingo*, 5 vols., Madrid.
- Isert, Paul Erdman, 1793: *Voyages en Guinée et dans les Isles Caraïbes en Amérique*, Paris (German original: 1788).
- Johnson, Marion, 1978: Bulfinch Lambe and the Emperor of Pawpaw: a footnote to Agaja & the Slave Trade, *History in Africa*, 5: 345–50.
- Jones, Adam (ed.), 1983: *German Sources for West African History 1599–1669*, Wiesbaden.
- Kea, R. A., 1982: *Settlements, Trade, and Politics in the Seventeenth-Century Gold Coast*, Baltimore.
- Labat, Jean-Baptiste, 1730: *Voyage du Chevalier des Marchais en Guinée, isles voisines & à Cayenne*, 4 vols., Paris.
- Labouret, Henri, and Rivet, Paul, 1929: *Le Royaume d'Arda & son évangélisation au XVII^e siècle*, Paris.
- Law, Robin, 1982: Jean Barbot as a source for the Slave Coast of West Africa, *History in Africa*, 9: 155–73.
- , 1983: Trade & politics behind the Slave Coast: the lagoon traffic & the rise of Lagos, 1500–1800, *Journal of African History*, 24 (3): 321–48.
- , 1986 a: Early European sources relating to the Kingdom of Ijebu (1500–1700): a critical survey, *History in Africa*, 13: 245–60.
- , 1986 b: Dahomey and the Slave Trade: reflections on the historiography of the rise of Dahomey, *Journal of African History*, 27 (2): 237–67.
- Leers, Arnout, 1665: *Pertinente Beschryvinge van Afrika*, Rotterdam.
- Linschoten, J. Huygen van, 1595–6: *Itinerario, Voyage ofte Schipvaert van J. H. van L.*, 4 vols., Amsterdam.
- Mouléro, Thomas, 1966: Histoire et Légendes des Djêkens. *Études Dahoméennes*, new series, 8: 39–56.
- Naxara, Joseph de, 1672: *Espejo Mistico, en que el hombre interior se mira prácticamente ilustrado*, Madrid.
- Newbury, C. W., 1961: *The Western Slave Coast and its Rulers*, Oxford.
- Norris, Robert, 1789: *Memoirs of the Reign of Bossa Ahadee, King of Dahomy*, London.
- Pacheco Pereira, Duarte, 1905: *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis*, ed. by A. E. da Silva Dias, Lisbon.
- Pazzi, Roberto, 1979: *Introduction à l'Histoire de l'Aire Culturelle Ajatodo*, Lomé.
- Peres, Damião (ed.), 1952: *Os mais antigos roteiros da Guiné*, Lisbon.
- Person, Yves, 1975: La toponymie ancienne de la côte entre la Volta et Lagos, *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, 15: 715–21.
- Phillips, Thomas, 1732: A Journal of a Voyage in the Hannibal of London, Ann. 1693, 1694, *Collection of Voyages & Travels*, ed. by Awnsham & John Churchill, London: VI, 173–239.
- Ratelband, K. (ed.), 1953: *Vijf Dagregisters van het Kasteel São Jorge da Mina (Elmina) aan de Goudkust (1645–1647)*, The Hague.
- Roggeveen, Arent, 1687: *The Burning Fen, Second Part*, Amsterdam (Dutch original: 1685).
- Ruiters, Dierick, 1913: *Toortse der Zee-vaert*, ed. S. P. L'Honoré Naber, The Hague.

- Sandoval, Alonso de, 1627: *Naturaleza, policia sagrada i profana, costumbres i ritos, disciplina i catechismo evangelico de todos Etiopes*, Seville.
- Sanson, Nicolas, 1656: *L’Affrique en Plusieurs Cartes Nouvelles et Exactes*, Paris.
- , 1658: *Cartes Générales de Toutes Parties du Monde*, Paris.
- Van Dantzig, Albert, 1980: *Les hollandais sur la Côte de Guinée à l’époque de l’essor de l’Ashanti & du Dahomey 1680–1740*, Paris.
- Verger, Pierre, 1968 a: Les Côtes d’Afrique Occidentale entre “Rio Volta” et “Rio Lagos” (1535–1773), *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, 38 (1): 35–58.
- , 1968 b: *Flux et Reflux de la Traite des Nègres entre le Golfe de Bénin et Bahia de Todos os Santos du XVI^e au XIX^e siècle*, Paris.
- Voogt, Claas Janszoon, 1683: *De Nieuwe Groote Ligtende Zee-Fakkel, ’t Vyfde Deel*, Amsterdam.
- Weickmann, Christoph, 1659: *Exoticophylacium Weickmannianum*, Ulm.
- Welsh, James, 1904: The Second Voyage to Benin, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation*, ed. by Richard Hakluyt, 12 vols., Glasgow 1903–5: VI, 461–7.
- Wigboldus, Jouke S., 1986: Trade and Agriculture in coastal Benin c. 1470–1660: an examination of Manning’s Early-Growth Thesis, *A. A. G. Bijdragen* (Agricultural University, Wageningen), 28: 299–383.