

THE FURLEY COLLECTION Its Value and Limitations for the Study of Ghana's History

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The raw material for the historian's craft consists of notes: notes made from books, from archival material or from oral tradition. No essay, dissertation, article or book can be written without the aid of notes, and as a rule the volume of such notes far exceeds that of the end-product. Indeed, sometimes there is no "end-product" at all.

Taking and organising one's notes is something very personal and private. On the rare occasions that historians discuss their methods and techniques of note-taking, they generally do so in a rather light-hearted manner, each priding him- or herself on having designed the most perfect and effective system. Traditionally, the most common form of note-taking is of course copying or summarising texts in what still is appropriately known as a notebook. Notebooks have many advantages, such as being relatively cheap, easy to carry about and "open-ended" in the sense that they offer unlimited space for copying texts. More modern is the use of card-systems, not to mention computers. The cards have the advantage that they can be arranged in several ways, according to the needs of the researcher; but they generally have the disadvantage of being too small for copying texts word for word, a luxury which notebooks do afford. Some researchers use a combination of the two, maintaining a card system for reference to their more elaborate notebooks. The "historical craftsman" may also reserve particular notebooks for specific topics or chronological sub-divisions, keep alphabetical and chronological indexes etc.

The major disadvantage of copying lengthy texts in notebooks is obviously that it is a time-consuming method, because of the time it takes not only to copy, but also to re-read them later on when one is effectively using them. One may of course limit the time one spends in the archives by making use of the various reproduction services nowadays available (xerox, photocopy, microfilm, microfiche), but these too have several disadvantages. Xerox and other reproductions on paper are very expensive, and for microfilm, microfiches etc. one needs special reading equipment. Moreover, retrieving a specific reference on a long microfilm can also be a rather time-consuming matter. Even the frequent dilemma whether it is worth the trouble and expense of making a reproduction may be time- and energy-consuming. If for purely analytical work card-systems may be more effective, for the traditional art of the historian, giving a critical account of events, the notebook still remains preferable. The great advantage of lengthy quotations is also that they may be useful in several different contexts, not only to the person who took them down, but also to others. They become even more useful if they take the form of translations of documents or passages originally written in languages which are not widely understood. The question is, however, whether such documents, collected, copied and translated by other historians, should still be regarded as primary material.

One of the most monumental collections of notes of this kind is the Furley Collection in the Balme Library of the University of Ghana, Legon. John Talford Furley, O.B.E. (1878–1956) was Secretary of Native Affairs in the Gold Coast Colony from 1917 to 1923. He started his career in the Gold Coast in 1902 as a cadet, became successively Assistant District

Commissioner in Tarkwa, full District Commissioner of Wassa, Provincial Commissioner of the Western Province and Senior Political Officer in Togoland before his appointment at first as acting, then as full Secretary of Native Affairs. In 1924 he retired from the Colonial Service.¹ Most of the remaining thirty years of his life Furley seems to have spent in various archives (as well as in antiquarians' shops and at public auctions), collecting documentary material relating to the history of Ghana: old books, maps, engravings, pamphlets and manuscripts, but most of all archival material. As there is no other country in tropical Africa on which there exists so much primary material, this was a truly Herculean task. As a collection of extracts from archival material and other primary documents the Furley Collection is not unique. Several such collections exist, for instance for the study of regional history in Britain; but there cannot be many collections covering material from such a variety of sources in not less than seven different European languages.

It is not certain why Furley decided to devote the rest of his life to documentary historical research, but it is not unlikely that he set out to prepare a kind of coastal "counterpart" – based on written material – to Rattray's works on Ashanti and the North.² Rattray was appointed Director of the Anthropological Department in Ashanti at the time that Furley was Secretary of Native Affairs and Guggisberg Governor. The latter advocated systematic research "into the nature, history, habits and customs of the populations" among whom his officers were posted. Thus, in 1922, all Assistant District Commissioners in the Eastern Province were for instance asked to "write essays on the local history and customs", and the results were so encouraging that the Secretary of Native Affairs – i.e. Furley – planned to publish a series on the histories and constitutions of various tribes of the Gold Coast.³ Eventually, two slim volumes were published by Welman on Ahanta and Peki,⁴ but these may not have satisfied Furley very much, especially as he must have been aware of the fact that there was a wealth of documentary material of which Welman did not make use.

Long before his death, Furley seems to have realised that he "would not live to complete his project" and presented his enormous collection of documentary material of various kinds to the library of the University College of the Gold Coast.⁵ After his death, his widow added to this some material which Furley had collected in the last years of his life. Furley bequeathed to what is now the University of Ghana in fact much more than what became known as the

1 Gold Coast Civil Service List for 1922–1924.

2 Rattray, 1923; 1932. See also McCaskie, 1983 and von Laue, 1976.

3 Kimble, 1963: 485.

4 Welman, 1925; 1930. These two slim volumes represent probably what was considered to be a good example of the kind of essays District Commissioners were to submit. The historical section of the volume on Ahanta consists largely of lengthy translations from published German sources, but without any source reference. On p. 49 of that volume, Welman suggests that on the departure of the Brandenburgers, there followed "a long period of silence and obscurity", but goes on to admit that "... it is possible that there are in Holland records which will throw light upon this period, if and when somebody considers it worthwhile to seek access to them and search them patiently". Welman even cites, on p. 68, what may have been the occasion which made Furley decide to take up that challenge: in 1921 Furley presided, as Secretary for Native Affairs, over an intricate stool case, in which one of the litigants brought forward a 19th century copy of a Dutch documents written in 1766, which he found to be quite irrelevant; Welman commented, "probably the strangeness and antiquity of the document and the ignorance of the Dutch language in the Colony nowadays account for the veneration with which it has been regarded and the misinterpretation which has been placed on its effect."

5 Obituary of J. T. Furley by J. D. Fage (1956), preceding a "Provisional List of Some Portuguese Governors of the Captaincy da Mina" by John T. Furley, which also constitutes, to my knowledge, Furley's only publication on the history of Ghana.

“Furley Collection”, a large steel book-case in the Microfilm Room of the Balme Library, filled with his notebooks, typescripts and photostats, most of which were bound into volumes. He also collected a large number of very valuable early editions of books such as Bosman, Barbot, Dalzel, Astley etc., most of which are now kept in the Rare Book Room of the library. It is to be hoped that one day a room may be found where all these can be kept together with the other documents and notebooks. In this way, due respect may be paid to the one person who has, perhaps more than anybody else, helped to make the Balme Library the unique institution it is. Its Africana section has a truly international repute, containing some antiquarian volumes which are very hard to find anywhere else. Many European and American researchers go to Africa to do “field work”, leaving their reading to be done at home. Significantly, some come to Legon to do their reading too.

About fifteen years ago, the collection of Furley’s notebooks, photostats and other documents was classified and catalogued by Edmund Collins and myself according to main language and archival source into four sections: P (Portuguese), E (English), D (Danish) and N (Dutch or Netherlandish). My colleague Collins had earlier arranged most of the material in labelled cardboard pamphlet-boxes, largely in chronological order, maintaining a note-book with references to these. It remained, however, rather difficult to find one’s way through the vast mass of material, and there was also a security problem, as there was a lot of unbound material in various kinds of envelopes which could easily be taken away. The boxes were also rather cumbersome in that they took up a lot of space. It was therefore decided to send loose material immediately after classification to the Balme Library’s bindery. Nearly all the loose documents were thus bound in volumes, whilst the original notebooks were as much as possible left in their old bindings.

The P-section consists of 7 volumes, covering the period 1469 to 1657, that is, of course, with many chronological gaps. Much of it consists of photostats of Portuguese archival material, with transcripts and translations by Furley. The E-section consists of 35 volumes – some of them very small notebooks – containing transcripts, photostats and printed material. It covers the period 1615 to 1864, but with some big gaps, e.g. between 1781 and 1816, and again between 1839 and 1850. The D-section consists of 5 volumes and covers the period between 1654 and 1849, albeit with a gap of more than a century between 1702 and 1828. Nearly the entire volume D1 consists of a printed pamphlet in the Dutch language, but this document was classified under “D” because it was found in a Danish archive. The N-section is by far the largest, consisting of 124 volumes, fully covering the period between 1610 and 1874. This section contains most of what one might term “raw Furley”, notes taken by Furley in a kind of shorthand of his own design, full of abbreviations and sometimes richly spiced with un-translated words, phrases or even whole paragraphs. Some researchers need quite a bit of time to get used to reading this kind of material and often have to go through a period of frustration and mental strain before getting the knack of reading and understanding this peculiar script. Much of this “raw Furley”, however, is to be found in a more digested – and digestible – form in other notebooks and typescripts, often with reference to the numbered “yellow notebooks” (now classified as N20 to N30) which contain the “raw” material mentioned above. In the process of this “digestion”, however, some interesting details which can be found in the yellow notebooks got lost, so that the serious student cannot just push them aside and rely on the more digestible material.

Most of the N-section is in English or English spiced with Dutch, but a fairly large part of it consists of archival transcripts in Dutch, in a handwriting quite different from Furley’s.

The whole set of bound foolscap papers numbered N89 to N104 contains transcripts of this kind, mostly 18th and 19th century material; it was obviously copied by a Dutch person whom Furley must have commissioned. Here and there one finds in the margins notes in Furley's handwriting. Furley had an impressive gift for languages, and his understanding of the far from simple Dutch language must have been tremendous. Yet he left a lot of Dutch in his notes. This he must have done partly out of modesty, not being certain that he fully understood a word or a phrase, but partly also for convenience's sake when occasionally he must have been unable to remember immediately the English equivalent of a Dutch word or expression, leaving the translation for later, if and when he would use the passage. Naturally, it takes time to familiarise oneself with a foreign language; one can recognise this in the notes which Furley must have taken in the early stages of his research, when he often left whole sentences or even paragraphs un-translated. Later, when he must have become more self-confident, he did this only with parts of phrases or single words. Unfortunately, however, it sometimes appears in such cases that the translation of the rest of the sentence or paragraph can only be incorrect, as the un-translated part can in no way be fitted in to make sense of the whole sentence.

Not all the material in the Furley Collection is based on documents of ancient date. Incorporated are also some offprints or photostats of relevant articles written by Furley's contemporaries, sometimes with Furley's translation appended. The Furley Collection consists thus of various kinds of material: his own notes, hand- or typewritten, notes taken by others at his request, photostats and photocopies, both of texts and of maps, plans and other illustrations, as well as printed material (pamphlets) in various languages, drawn from various sources covering the whole pre-colonial period of Ghana's history, from 1469 to 1874. The "state of digestion" of this material varies greatly; it reaches its highest stage in the two large, hard-cover foolscap volumes N37 and N38, inscribed "Tribal States", consisting of respectively 257 and 279 pages. In these two volumes, covering the years 1701 to 1715, an extremely eventful and important period in Ghana's history, we find Furley at his very best. He neatly arranged, in alphabetical order, all the material he had found on particular states both on the coast and in the interior, and re-assembled it chronologically, year by year. These two volumes constitute a real jewel of meticulously and consistently organised research notes.

A random example drawn from these two volumes may illustrate this. On page 163 of N38 we find, for instance, the following entry: "Ahanta 1712. *Relaas* V, 30/19 January 1712/11. Let. Haring + Phipps to Dubois." In the margin of the quoted and translated document we find: "Jan Conny, Priest Apperry (Apree), Obim/Nanta, Badu Bossu, Basjo, Mosoon Denkan." These are all names of persons mentioned in the document, and they can be checked against their re-occurrence on other pages. At first glance, the reference may seem incomplete, but if one turns back, one finds that many entries refer to this *Relaas*. On page 131 one finds it mentioned for the first time. It is to be found in the archives of the Second West Indian Company in the State Archives of The Hague, WIC 101, and the full title of this document appears to be: *Relaas van den opgereesen oorlog, deszelfs oorsprong en voortgaan tusschen de naturellen van de royaale africaansche compagnie van groot Bretagne mitsgaaders van de generaale geoctroyeerde nederlandsche west indische compagnie* ("Narrative of the war which has arisen, its origin and continuation, between the natives of the Royal African Company of Great Britain and of the General Chartered Netherlands West Indian Company"). In this document with its long-blown title can apparently be found a joint letter from the Dutch Director-General Haringh and his English counterpart Phipps, which,

though written on the same day, was dated differently at Elmina and Cape Coast, as the English were still using the “old style” Julian calendar when the Dutch had already adopted the new Gregorian one. The names of the persons mentioned in the margin can be found again in other documents, and the general trend of the immensely complicated story around the “merchant prince”⁶ John Conny and his European and African friends and enemies can be traced through similar entries for other years.

Much of the Furley Collection gives the impression of having been collected not only for the collector’s own use, but also for that of others, possibly collaborators in Furley’s project, whilst there is also a considerable amount in Furley’s “shorthand” which was meant for purely personal use. But N37 and N38 form a category of their own: they represent a kind of half-way house between edited source material and actual article or book. Many people have made use of these invaluable sources of information, and it is to be hoped that one day they may be published, for they show the intricate clockwork connections which can be made through meticulous documentary research and could also serve as educational material to initiate students into intricacies of archival work. It would definitely constitute a departure from the kind of published source material in which Ghana is richer than most other tropical African nations.⁷ By the way in which the collected source material was arranged in these two volumes they constitute that one could term “primary source material in the last stage of digestion”, i.e. before crystallizing into book or article form. But Furley never seems to have taken the next logical step, that is, actually write such an article or book.

If references to archival sources are very elaborate and thorough in N37 and N38, in Furley’s other notebooks they are, or rather seem to be, rather rudimentary; sometimes one really wonders where one could find the complete reference. But never, to my knowledge, did Furley fail to give some indication of his sources.

Impressive though it may be, one can, however, not deny that the Collection also has some important limitations, even if they were imposed by Furley himself. For instance, he must have consciously limited himself in time and space; the accent, in his notes, is on the 17th and 18th centuries. There is also much material on the 19th century, but somehow one can perceive that Furley was rather less interested in that period. He did not collect any material beyond 1874; probably, as a former colonial servant, he wanted to steer clear of a confrontation with former colleagues. Another limitation he imposed on himself is that of space: he constantly left out material relating to areas outside Ghana. Occasionally, this may mislead the reader a little; when, for instance, the Dutch Director-General at Elmina suggests to his superiors in Amsterdam that it is only through the slave trade that the Company can survive, one may get the false impression that he wanted to increase the slave trade (and neglect the

- 6 Daaku, 1970, Chapter VI. I first met Kwame Daaku in the State Archives of The Hague when we were both students, and it was at that time that he confided to me that the material Furley had collected on John Conny had been of immense help to him in understanding the actual documents in Holland.
- 7 Crooks, 1923; Metcalfe, 1964; Newbury, 1965; Jones, 1985; van Dantzig, 1978. The selection of the material published in these volumes is of course to a large extent subjective and biased by the collector/editor’s personal interest and taste. My own publication simply consists of part of the notes which I used to write my thesis in Paris. Furley, on the other hand, seems to have made an effort to reproduce *everything* he could find in the records on each “Tribal State”, leaving out all those parts of the records he used which were not immediately relevant. In this way, his “shredded” records were distributed over a large number of entries on different pages.

traditional gold trade) on the Gold Coast, simply because Furley did not incorporate in his note the large section of that document referring to the Company's interests on the Slave Coast.⁸

Another important question which arises concerning the value and validity of the Furley Collection is that of Furley's own bias. We do not know what exactly Furley had in mind when he collected his material, but, like everyone else in his field of endeavour, he must have had some hypothesis, some particular objective in mind which influenced his choice of material. Even though we do not know what exactly he had in mind, it is likely that essentially he wanted to counter-check in European sources what his colleagues and contemporaries discovered through archeological, anthropological, ethnological and sociological research in the field. He pays, for instance, scant attention to the vast amount of statistical material which can be found in the records of the Dutch West Indian Companies, something which has rather disappointed a number of economic historians who have consulted the Collection. It is not unlikely that consciously or unconsciously Furley's choice of documents was influenced by a desire to stress the positive rather than the negative aspects of Afro-European interaction on the Gold Coast.

How reliable are Furley's transcripts and translations? Without wanting to belittle in any way Furley's work, there are several reasons to question the reliability of Furley's handwritten and typed notes; firstly, there is the question of paleography. Ancient scripts of several European languages are often difficult to decipher, and the Dutch in particular developed a large variety of cursive scripts which remained in use till late in the 18th century. Even 19th century Dutch cursive is sometimes difficult to read. In a number of cases, Furley is likely to have been misled, although in most of the cases – especially those of names – several interpretations may be possible, a fact which Furley readily acknowledged. Even the probably professional copyist whom Furley employed in The Hague made mistakes typical for someone not very familiar with the subject. An example of this is that copyist's transcription of "Paay" for what must have been "Zaay".⁹ *Paay* is an old Dutch word for Roman Catholic priest, but the copyist probably did not know that for a long time the Dutch at Elmina used to refer to the *Asantehene* as the *Zaay*. This title has in fact remained one of the appellations of every *Asantehene* since Osei Tutu, the first Asante king with whom the Dutch made contact. Then, there is also the problem of Furley's own peculiar handwriting, shorthand and abbreviations mentioned earlier, which may have led some students astray.

A far greater problem, however, is posed by Furley's translations. Impressive though his understanding of several European languages may have been, he is likely to have relied mainly on modern dictionaries. In the case of Dutch, for instance, not only the script but the language itself has gone through major changes in the past few hundred years; even to a modern Dutch person it is much harder to translate 17th century Dutch into that of our days than modern Dutch into, say, English. In fact, a lot of Dutch idiom which was still commonly used by the 17th century middle class was later relegated to the street, and, curiously, to children's language, which makes one wonder how people who have not had a Dutch upbringing – or indeed people who have not had their upbringing in Amsterdam – can cope with this difficult dialect. There was no single, recognised way of spelling, and

8 Algemeen Rijks Archief, The Hague, WIC 97; W. De la Palma to Assembly of Ten, Elmina, 26 June 1702. The original letter, which covers more than a hundred pages, refers a great deal to the Slave Coast, where De la Palma wanted to establish several "lodges", at Popo, Offra and Whydah.

9 See N92, p. 34. Furley did notice the mistake and wrote "Zaay" in the margin.

social stratification as well as local dialects greatly influenced the way people wrote. The Dutch *Regenten* or aristocratic merchants of the 17th and, in particular, 18th centuries, liked to spice their letters with foreign, particularly French or pseudo-French words to show off. It is not uncommon to read passages like “*Het streckt my tot groot regret dat ik u.e. deesen faveur niet en can doen*” from the hand of a high official. A translator cannot do much more with such a phrase than translate it with something like “I regret very much that I cannot do your honor this favour”, but with this the pretentious, haughty character of the Dutch phrase is completely lost; Gallicisms have ceased to be pretentious in English since 1066! Sometimes Furley left such sentences in their original language, but that is of course not much help to a researcher unfamiliar with Dutch – or French, for that matter. Most of Furley’s notebooks, however – especially those containing 18th and 19th century Dutch material – do not offer translations of full texts but merely summarise the contents of letters or parts thereof, diary entries etc. Even then, the English is often spiced with untranslated words and expressions. A whole letter of several pages may be summarised in a few lines, or one single phrase may be lifted out of the original text, translated or not. General reports on the state of affairs in the various coastal establishments are often cut up and the relevant pieces distributed over the geographical sub-headings in which the notebook may have been divided (N37 and N38). To such notes one could not really refer as translated texts of original documents.

This brings us to the question whether, or to what extent, the Furley Collection is to be regarded as a primary source. Applying David Henige’s suggestion that a translation cannot be regarded as a primary source “unless the source in its original language is no longer available”¹⁰ would mean that only a few documents which Furley may have collected and translated from archives such as those of Rotterdam, which were partly destroyed in World War II, could be regarded as such. Even so, the sheer mass of the material in the Furley Collection and even the very illegibility of Furley’s “rough” notes, the endless cross-references and detail give one the feeling – and also the frustrations – of archival work. Even though Furley translated most of the material he collected, so much has remained un-translated that one really needs some knowledge of the languages in which it was written to appreciate to the full what the Collection offers.

In recent years, when funds for scholarships and travel grants have dried up in Ghana, dissertations and theses based on material from the Furley Collection have been accepted, implicitly recognising the material as “primary”. Yet the Furley Collection definitely does not constitute more than an archive of one man’s private notes, some printed material and some reproductions. Furley carefully selected, arranged and rearranged, translated and summarised the original primary material, but through each of these processes rendered it less “primary”. And so, the excellent material incorporated in N37 and N38, on which so many scholars have relied, falls into the category of “directory of historical information” rather than that of “primary source”. In style and content it is perhaps comparable to the *Asantesem* project of Northwestern University,¹¹ although it does not in any way offer analyses of the raw material, as the latter does. No matter how much the original material may have been “shredded”, as long as Furley’s notes represent bits and pieces of original

10 See Henige’s contribution to this volume.

11 *Asantesem*, The Asante Collective Biography Project of the Program of African Studies, Northwestern University, Evanston, USA, edited by Ivor Wilks and T. C. McCaskie.

texts – translated or not – they constitute some sort of primary material or “bricks of historical reconstruction”; in the case of N37 and N38 even more than “bricks” – “pre-fabricated panels”, one might say!

Undeniably, several historians have made use of these volumes as if they were a primary source, sometimes using Furley’s carefully reproduced archival references without proper acknowledgement of his work, thus pretending that they themselves unearthed their archival treasures. Furley himself may of course also have been influenced by others in his research. Would Furley have realised the importance of the famous passage about “Affindie Coco”, which was later used by so many historians,¹² if he had not had discussions with people like Rattray? Was it Furley who identified it as Ahwene Koko or was it someone else who asked him if he had ever come across a name like that? In ordinary archival research one has to go through a lot of chaff before finding such precious grains of corn.

Furley always gives some indication of the source of his information, but he clearly hated unnecessary double work and limited these references to the barest minimum, which is, to the user of his material, sometimes most frustrating. One may, for instance, find a mere number as reference at the head of a text. This number may be that of an archival volume in a series which may not even be mentioned in the notebook one is using, but in a preceding one. More often, however, Furley used the first page of each notebook to indicate the archival sources of the archival material reproduced in that notebook. Giving as the reference to a quotation from the Furley Collection merely the index number of the volume consulted, adding perhaps the page number, is not satisfactory. In that way one does injustice not only to Furley, who was so careful in keeping record of his sources of information, but also to the researcher who may one day wish to compare Furley’s transcript or translation with the original. One of the main purposes of giving archival references in footnotes is, after all, to facilitate further research. Scholars who, on the other hand, quote material from the Furley Collection without acknowledging the fact and merely offer the archival reference supplied by Furley not only commit an act of academic dishonesty, but also expose themselves to ridicule if by checking the original it appears that they have repeated mistakes which Furley may have made in translation.

But what of photocopies and printed material collected by Furley? Nobody can prove that the historian concerned did not discover such a source independently, and, surely, if one uses for instance the copy of William Bosman’s *Description* which happens to be the one bestowed by Furley on the Balme Library, one need not acknowledge that fact. Yet Furley went to great lengths to track down every possible documentary reference and certainly did not limit his research merely to the archives of the various countries he visited. It would therefore be misleading to claim that one found some rare documents oneself without acknowledging Furley’s involvement. In order to give a complete version of the very abbreviated references which Furley offers, one may use the copies of some archival inventories included in the Collection of modern guides¹³. If one finds, for instance, a translated extract of an Accra journal

12 Ozanne, 1966; Daaku, 1968; 1970: 116; Fynn, 1971: 42. Ahwene Koko was the traditional capital of the Wenchi state, to the North-West of Kumasi, straddling the all-important trade route through Begho-Nsoko to Djenna. It was not only important as a trading centre, but also for gold mining and weaving. Its most treasured stool, the beaded *Ahwenedwa*, was lost in the Asante attack on the Wenchi state, during which part of the Asante army, laden with a rich booty from Ahwene Koko, defected to Aowin, which led to a series of campaigns to the South-West and the ultimate establishment of an important new Asante trade-route to Nzema.

13 E.g. Carson, 1962; Roessingh and Visser, 1978.

of 1858 captioned "G564 Accra Journal Nov. 3, Letter V. Hien to Nagtglas", the correct reference should be: "Algemeen Rijks Archief (ARA) The Hague, Archives of the Dutch Possessions on the Guinea Coast (NBKG) 564, correspondence with the outer forts, Accra Journal, entry for 3 November 1858, extract of letter Van Hien to Nagtglas, in F(urley) C(ollection) N82". Similarly, one should refer to a 17th century English pamphlet entitled *Reply of Sir George Downing to the Remarks of the Deputies of the States General upon his Memorial of 20 December 1664 o.s. dated 7th April 1665* as: "photostat in F.C. E5".

In conclusion, we may say that the Furley Collection is a still insufficiently explored and exploited treasure trove of information on the pre-colonial period of Ghana's history. It constitutes both an excellent guide and a challenge to those who have the opportunity to consult various European archives, but it would really be wrong to regard the Collection as a kind of surrogate international archive in its own right; it is not more than an – indeed great – collection of private notes and extracts from documents, printed material and photographic reproductions. Much of it was translated and arranged in a specific order with a specific project in view, probably the collector's un-accomplished ideal of writing a history of pre-colonial southern Ghana.

One can recognise a certain evolution in Furley's own approach to the documents he gathered: the quotations he made from 17th-century material are much more elaborate but also less systematised than those of later periods. After compiling the material for his two monumental volumes "Tribal States" he seems to have changed his method of research, and made his notes in such a way as to fit into this kind of scheme.

Much of the Collection cannot really be regarded as primary material in the true sense of the word, and though Furley was an excellent linguist, he was of course not infallible. In fact, he was so much aware of this that he left more material un-translated than many a researcher making use of his Collection would have liked him to do. He was meticulous in supplying archival references, and anyone making use of the Collection finds these extremely useful for later reference in European archives. The Furley Collection has served as an important source of inspiration for a number of historians;¹⁴ and Ghanaian historians should consider themselves very lucky indeed to find at home such an elaborate "shrine of initiation" before setting out on expeditions into the jungle of the European archives.

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14 One of the first historians to make intensive and extensive use of the Furley Collection was Ivor Wilks, when he prepared his *Akwamu 1650–1750. A Study of the Rise and Fall of a West African Empire*. Naturally, a number of Ghanaian scholars, like Daaku, Fynn and others were encouraged to study this material before setting out for research overseas, but quite a few non-Ghanaians too have found a lot of information in the Collection, which, without Furley's translations, might well have remained inaccessible to them. Among them are Walter Rodney, Margaret Priestley, Marion Johnson, Jack Goody and many others.

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