The idea of compiling a guide to the published original sources that described pre-colonial western African societies arose out of research which I began in 1978-79 with the support of a grant from the U.K. Social Science Research Council (later the Economic and Social Research Council), and to which I owe a considerable debt of gratitude. This research began as an enquiry into the nature and the role of institutions of servitude in traditional sub-Saharan societies though, as I came to appreciate more and more the centrality of dependence in such societies, so the enquiry broadened to embrace other aspects of their structures and their functioning.

As I saw it, enquiries of this kind had hitherto been tackled largely from what might be termed an anthropological perspective. By this I mean one centred on a perception of - and, to some extent, an extrapolation backwards from - situations that had existed, or were supposed to have existed, in the early years of the colonial period. It struck me that the results were likely to have been subject to distortion from the presence of colonial observers and of their states and societies and, indeed, from the growing economic and social pressures on sub-Saharan Africa - including both those of the export slave trade and of the campaigning against it - in the years leading up to the establishment of formal colonial rule. The proper approach for the historian was therefore to seek out evidence from earlier times before such distortions became of major importance.

In order to secure a handy sample of this evidence, I chose to work with material that was available in published form (irrespective of whether the publication was more or less contemporaneous with the collection of the evidence or at some later date). I also decided to restrict myself to evidence from western Africa from about the Senegal in the north to Angola in the south. I chose this area for my enquiry because I had some physical acquaintance with many of its countries north and west from the Bight of Biafra, and because I had long had some familiarity with the outlines of its history. It also seemed to me that the contemporary written sources for this history were probably denser and richer, and more consistent over time, than those available for eastern or southern Africa. This was especially so if the field of enquiry were extended southwards beyond the Bight of Biafra into western Bantu Africa.

It may not be very common for historians to consider a part of Bantu Africa together with the lands and peoples of Guinea and the western and west central Sudan. I think that originally I chose to do this because it so happens that the published accounts of the African

1. Earlier versions of this Introduction were presented as papers to seminars at the University of Birmingham and at the School of Oriental & African Studies of the University of London, and to the Symposium on European Sources for Sub-Saharan Africa before 1900, which was held by the Frobenius Institute of the J.W.Goethe University of Frankfurt and the Werner Reimers Foundation at Bad Homburg in July 1986 (and this was later published in Paideuma, 33 (1987) 207-20).
peoples living on the coast from about Loango in the north to about Benguela in the south, and for up to about 300 miles into the interior, happen to be particularly good from the early years of the sixteenth century to about the beginning of the eighteenth century. This is partly because the Portuguese were then trying to control and colonise substantial parts of this country, but mainly because educated Catholic priests were seeking to penetrate both the interior and its African societies in some depth. They needed some understanding of these societies to facilitate their task of converting them, and in addition they were not averse to gaining publicity for their work through publication. As I see them, the resultant accounts of the Congo-Angola region tend to be more informative than much of what was produced in the same period for Guinea. There for the most part the European observers were traders, often not well educated, and usually with no need to penetrate beyond the coastal societies with which their business was done. Initially too they were sometimes wary of publicising information which might be to the advantage of commercial competitors. After about 1700, however, the balance begins to shift. The Congo and Angola missions faded, while the European commercial activity on the Guinea coast became more of an open free for all and then, with the reaction against the trade in slaves, it began to stimulate great explorations far into the interior.

To this I should add that my reading of what early European observers had to say about the Congo-Angola societies suggests that these were little different in their basic principles from those that were visible to them in Guinea. This would not be surprising granted that the ancestors of the Bantu were originally West Africans, and that there must have been some cultural and commercial continuum round the shores of the Bight of Biafra.2

For my purposes, then, putting West Africa together with western Bantu Africa and calling the whole 'western Africa' made good sense. But it will be seen that I have already begun to discuss the evidence relating to pre-colonial society in this western Africa in terms of what had been written about it by visitors from the outside. This is simply because most of the available written evidence has arisen from the observations of outsiders. It is preserved first in material, for the most part written in Arabic and from about the ninth century A.D. onwards, that derives from trans-Saharan travel to the western and central Sudan, and then in material written in European languages following upon the opening up of sea trade on the western African coasts from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards.

This is not to say that there is no evidence from the western Africans themselves. There is in fact much tradition which - until recent times - was maintained orally. But the oral traditions are rarely descriptive, so that any evidence they can provide about social or economic conditions in the past is largely a matter of interpretation. Such interpretation must be at once highly skilled and highly speculative, and I therefore decided that oral evidence, even when collected, written down and published, should be outside my purview. As far as written evidence is concerned, Africans were not slow to acquire the literacies preferred by their Muslim and Christian visitors (and on occasion they also devised scripts of their own). Chronicles and other material written by West Africans in Arabic have survived from at least the sixteenth Christian century, and they were certainly contributing to the literature in European languages by the eighteenth century. But until the second half of the nineteenth century, Africans who were literate in either the Arabic or the Roman scripts were always a tiny minority. They were also an unrepresentative minority, for they naturally tended to

2. Leo Frobenius sensed such a continuum; in more recent times it has been illustrated, for example, in Jan Vansina, 'The bells of kings', JAH, 10 (1969) 187-97.
acquire with their literacy the attitudes and prejudices of the Muslim or Christian visitors who had brought it to them. The significant expansion of literacy - in both scripts - was largely a product of colonial rule. Thus, ironically, it was not until colonial rule and its systems of education had been established that a properly African voice really begins to appear in the written sources. This of course was a sign that the European presence had induced fundamental change in African societies. Thus if written evidence is to be used as a tool for the exposition and, hopefully, for the understanding of traditional African societies, most of it must have come from visitors to Africa.

The written material that has survived from before the mid-fifteenth century and which is available in published form is not extensive. Indeed it can virtually all be encompassed within each of the single collections of early Arabic sources for West Africa or sub-Saharan Africa that have been produced by Hopkins and Levitzion, by Father Cuoq, and by Koumbe and Mateev, and which appear as the first three entries in the Guide. But with the development of sea trade on the coasts from Senegal to Angola, an ever-increasing stream of material begins to appear in European languages, in particular in Latin, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, French, English, Dutch, German, Danish and Swedish. By the mid-nineteenth century and the eve of the colonial period, the stream has become a flood.

It is always possible, of course, to ask how accurately and reliably outside observers can see and record what exists in the societies of other peoples living in environments very different from their own and with cultures which are also different from their own. This is a big question which cannot be satisfactorily dealt with in a short Introduction. But I can say that my own reading leads me to the broad conclusion that, although Europeans' understanding of what they saw and recorded in western Africa could be deficient, the preconceptions they initially brought with them - deriving perhaps as much from Aristotle as from their Christianity - did not cause major distortions in the reliability and accuracy of what they reported. On the whole I would say that Europeans of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries generally thought of African societies as different from their own but not as inately inferior. Such inferiority as did fall to the lot of African societies was basically a consequence of their lack of the Christian faith, and this was remediable. Things began to change with the Enlightenment: Voltaire and, later, Hegel were both to have uncomplimentary things to say about black Africans and their achievements. Europeans were beginning to assume that they were superior to other peoples, but even so it was not really until the second half of the nineteenth century that practical evidence of this became apparent in the field in tropical Africa itself. In the last resort, superiority there could only be brought about through the application of steam power, scientific medicine, and rapid-firing small arms. Indeed, as Hilaire Belloc put it:

Whatever happens, we have got
The Maxim gun, and they have not. 3

So, by the time of the publication of The Origin of Species (1859), the foundation of the Anthropological Society (1863) and of the Royal Colonial Institute (1868), and - one might add - the departure (1872) from the Secretaryship of the Church Missionary Society of Henry Venn and his vision of a native African Church (to name only British examples), Europeans had generally come to view black Africans as a separate species whose societies were not to

be thought of or studied in the same ways that their own were. From this time on, the majority of European accounts of western Africa are no longer more or less dispassionate. Increasingly they have become reconnaissances preparatory to the establishment of European control, or actual arguments for it.

In 1864, Richard Burton, a founder of the Anthropological Society of London as well as a great traveller in Africa, could remark after a visit to the Kingdom of Dahomey, 'The pure Negro ranks in the human family below the two great Arab and Aryan races', and 'The Negro, in mass, will not improve beyond a certain point, and that not respectable; he mentally remains a child'. Nearly a quarter of a century later, things had gone rather further, and another considerable traveller who was also now a pioneer of empire, Louis-Gustave Binger, was to report following his visit to the Kingdom of Wagadugu in 1888:

If the European should ever come here, he should come as a master, constituting the high class of society, and should not have to bow his head before native chiefs to whom he is in all respects infinitely superior.

By this time, indeed, with the initiation of formal colonial systems in western Africa, after Faidherbe had become governor of a Colony of the Senegal (1854) and the British had annexed Lagos (1861), a whole new literature was beginning to be published which is colonial rather than African in content and tone. In the reports on, or critiques of, this or that colonial administration or activity, the Africans and their societies tend to seep into the background or, if they are the subject of observation and study, it is so that they can be more easily administered or made more useful and productive in the colonial system.

It followed, of course, that western African societies were being radically weaned away from their traditional norms. It was these changes, in the nature of the situation as well as in the character of the evidence, that made me decide not to pursue my original enquiry into slavery beyond the mid 1860s. For the same reason, there are few entries in the Guide after this time: Burton just gets in, Binger does not.

However the volume of the published evidence available for the times before about 1865 is substantial. I became aware that I was sampling a large storehouse of information which could be explored for far more than my own original and relatively limited research project. Furthermore, as I worked at this, I was beginning to acquire some particular knowledge of this material and some experience of the problems involved in using it. It occurred to me that it might be helpful to others if I were to seek to develop this knowledge and experience and produce a critical guide to the published material bearing on pre-colonial western Africa. This revised edition of the Guide has, I think, 833 entries. Seventy-seven of these are collections of documents of or voyages and travels, each of which can embrace a period of many years. If these are excluded, the distribution over time of the entries is shown in the Table on the following page.


INTRODUCTION

ENTRIES RELATING TO THE YEARS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 1500</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1501 - 1550</td>
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<td>1551 - 1600</td>
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<td>66</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1751 - 1800</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801 - 1850</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 1850</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>12.0</td>
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</tbody>
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When I embarked on the Guide, it was my intention to limit it to accounts of western Africa which were at first-hand, and to arrange the entries in a chronological order according to the dates at which the observers who originated the accounts were actually in the field. In practice, however, it did not prove possible, nor indeed sensible, to stick too rigidly to either intention.

To take first the question of dates. Here my purpose was obvious enough. It was that a user of the Guide who wanted to know about conditions at a particular time or during a specific period could quickly and with some accuracy discover just which accounts actually related to that time or period. This would avoid elementary mistakes of the kind that were once made with Jean Barbot's A description of the coasts of north and south Guinea. This was first published in 1732, and this once led some readers to suppose that the author was describing conditions in Guinea as they had existed about the 1720s. In fact the gist of the book had been committed to paper nearly half a century earlier, about 1685-88, and Barbot's own, not very great, experience of Africa had been secured in two visits earlier still, between 1678 and 1682. The book therefore appears in the Guide under 1678-82 BARBOT, Jean (which in cross-references becomes abbreviated to 1678 BARBOT). A more extreme case - so extreme, indeed, that it is unlikely ever to confuse - is that of Diogo Gomes, who made his pioneer voyages to Guinea between about 1457 and 1460. But his account of them was not written down until some twenty years later, in about 1482, and it was first published as late as 1847, and then in the form of a Latin translation which was probably done about 1500. Needless to say his account is put under c.1457-60 GOMES (or 1457 GOMES for short).

So far, so good; but problems begin to arise when, for example, the author of a piece which has every appearance of having been written at first-hand is unknown, and when neither the text nor its manuscript provide any very precise indication of date. Obviously the best that can be done here is to provide an approximate date - as is done, for instance, with c.1600 GRAN FULU, but it is often difficult to know how good the approximation is. Sometimes there seems no doubt that a known author did have first-hand experience of western Africa, but it is not easy to date this with any accuracy. A case in point is c.1536? ALFONCE, where the date that has been chosen is that for the approximate time when he is thought to have written his book following his African experience. But one could have
have chosen the earliest date at which it is thought possible he was sailing to Africa (and in this particular case there is the further complication of Alfonse's connection with the book which is entered under 1544 FONTENEAU). Then one can have cases in which the actual author never left Europe, but put together original material which reached him from Africa. A somewhat complex example is c.1595/c.1610 VIVES, where the dates represent what are thought to be the dates of completion of two successive stages of the work. But obviously what is recorded in the sources attributed to both Alfonse and Vives must have occurred earlier than the dates at which these sources are placed. Publication of these two sources did not occur until even later - in the twentieth century in the second case. But where the date of publication is reasonably close to the time when the evidence was collected, it has sometimes seemed permissible to use it rather than to embark on complicated research which might not end up with conclusive evidence as to exactly when the author was active in the field. An obvious example is (1851) SMITH, but this device is now used less often than it was in the first edition of the Guide; thus it has seemed sensible to convert (1819) ROBERTSON into c.1801-19 ROBERTSON. But how to deal, let us say, with (1742) CAPITEIN - who was born on the Gold Coast, taken to Europe in his youth and educated there to the extent that he wrote and published a thesis, then went home to die within a few years? It has seemed to me that the date of publication of his thesis is as good as one can get.

But in all cases where dates of publication have been used to place an entry, this fact is signalled by placing the dates in parentheses. Dates of first publication have also been used to place great compilations like Dapper's, which draw on a great variety of sources not all of which may be known or dateable, and for the great collections of voyages pioneered by men like Ramusio and Hakluyt; thus the Guide has (1668) DAPPER and (1550) VOYAGES: RAMUSIO. In the case of collections of voyages, however, it has often seemed sensible to have separate entries under their dates of execution for major voyages which were not separately published; thus 1555-57 TOWERSON for the three voyages to Guinea by William Towerson reported by Hakluyt. Collections of documents produced by scholars also create a problem. I have seen no alternative but to indicate the whole period embraced by each collection, and to place it at the first date; thus 1441-1807 COLLECTION: DONNAN, which is placed at 1441 even though only an infinitesimal part of Elizabeth Donnan's great collection refers to the fifteenth century. More usually, however, this tactic may not be so misleading, e.g. 1450-1560 COLLECTION: BLAKE. Moreover some of the major documents in these collections have also been given entries in their own right; thus, for example, c.1545 ANONYMOUS PORTUGUESE PILOT, first published by Ramusio, and available in English translation in J.W.Blake's collection. Under any one date, the entries are arranged alphabetically by the names of the authors or the other headwords, except that collections of voyages and of documents follow after the individual entries.

As I worked, so it became plain to me that it would be counterproductive to stick too rigidly to the conception that the Guide should be limited to first-hand evidence - which in the strict sense would mean, of course, that it could include only accounts related by persons who had themselves actually seen what was described. In the first place, it seemed desirable to point out that there are some ostensibly first-hand accounts which are not what they seem. The writer who put the name 'Christian Frederic Damberger' on the title page of the account of what he claimed were his travels in Africa had never been to the continent, while to greater or lesser degrees it seems clear that Joseph Hawkins, Richard Drake, Robert Adams, J.- B. Douville, John Duncan, and Paul Du Chaillu all claimed to have done more in Africa
than in reality was the case. The *Nouvelle Relation* by J.- B. Labat is substantially based on an account of real travels in West Africa, but not by the man to whom he attributes them (see 1685 LABAT). Indeed, although Labat has his value as a purveyor of original information about western Africa, the use he makes of what was available to him is generally far from straightforward - as may also be judged from 1721 LABAT and from 1671 G.A. CAVAZZI. Or let us consider again the case of 1678 BARBOT who, though he did twice visit West Africa briefly on trading voyages, drew heavily on other men's work when he came to write his book. Among other things, this means not only that he used material which dated from before he first went to Guinea, but also that he refers to some events that took place some years after he was there.

There is no doubt in my mind that the *Guide* would be the poorer and less useful if the first-hand rule had been narrowly observed. I have in fact included quite a few compilations produced by professional writers who travelled little if at all. The reason for this is that such works may well reproduce original material which is not available, or readily available, elsewhere. A good example is Dapper's *Description of Africa* ((1668) DAPPER), the outstanding general description of the seventeenth century. For the most part Dapper worked from printed sources which - unlike some of his contemporaries - he often acknowledges. But it is also apparent that in a number of places he was using first-hand information - for example that attributed by the Dutch merchant Samuel Blommaert, who was concerned with western Africa from c.1614 to c.1651 - which would not seem to have been published elsewhere, and which may well no longer exist independently of Dapper's book. Blommaert was the source for Dapper's substantial and important account of the Kquoja kingdom and its neighbours in the Sierra Leone - Cape Mount region, and probably too for some of the information on which Dapper based his accounts of Benin and the Congo.

The further back one goes into the past, the more in practice one must depend on compilers for what original material has survived. This is why, for example, I have entries for the fifteenth century chronicles of such as Ruy de Pina and Eanes de Azurara (1438 PINA; 1441 AZURARA) because, although they did not themselves go to western Africa, it was their duty as official chroniclers to be in close touch with, and to record the activities of, those who did. For that matter, Pacheco Pereira, the author of one of the two major early Portuguese accounts of western Africa, the *Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis* (1505 PACHECO), although he had an active African career, and therefore a first-hand understanding of what he was writing about, compiled his account of the western coast in Portugal essentially as an office exercise. Indeed, for the whole fifteenth century there would seem to be only four published European accounts of western Africa which can be directly related to personal visits. Two of these, those by Antonio Malfante (1447 MALFANTE) and Eustache de la Fosse (1479 LA FOSSE) were published as a result of the work of modern scholars; that by Alvise da Ca' da Mosto (1455 CA' DA MOSTO) was first published in what is accepted as the first printed collection of travel literature ((1507) VOYAGES: PAESI); while the survival of the fourth, Diogo Gomes's account of his voyages (1457 GOMES), is to the credit of one of the major collectors and compilers of the early sixteenth century, Valentim Fernandes. Although he was based in Lisbon for the whole of his active career, it is to Fernandes that we owe the other major early Portuguese account of western Africa (1506 FERNANDES), and much of this was apparently compiled from first-hand material which is not known to have survived independently.

6. See (1800) DAMBERGER, 1795 HAWKINS, 1807 DRAKE, 1810 ADAMS, 1828 DOUVILLE, 1845 DUNCAN, and 1856 DU CHAILLU. The conjunction of a Hawkins and a Drake appears to be fortuitous!
As for later times, there is no question that, as there developed a sizeable and lucrative market for books of travel, so quite a few travellers did as Barbot did, and embellished their accounts of their own experience with what they had read or heard. Consider, for example, the relationship between the published texts of William Johann Müller, Hans Jacob Zur Eich, and Nicolas Villault, each of whom was on the Gold Coast in the 1660s and in communication with one or both of the others, and of Father Loyer, who clearly seems to have embellished his account of his visit to Assini in 1701-02 from a reading of Villault. Or if the travellers did not provide their own embellishment, then there were editors, compilers and publishers who would do it for them. As has already been said, Labat was always improving on his sources, while the second book, that of 1744, attributed to William Smith is clearly a publisher's concoction (see 1726 SMITH). So far as I am able, I have sought in notes to explain such authors' connections with western Africa and to give some guidance as to sources and borrowings. In so doing, I have often myself borrowed from the work of other scholars, and I have always tried to provide some acknowledgment of this.

It is in such matters, as also to some extent in my efforts to deal as comprehensively as I can with the various editions and translations in which many of the longer-living works have appeared, that I think my work differs from other guides which deal with early published sources for western Africa. None of the five which essay a general coverage and which immediately come to mind have provided so much critical apparatus. The two pioneer works have no annotation at all.

The first of these is the Bibliothèque Asiatique et Africaine, ou catalogue des ouvrages relatives à l'Asie et à l'Afrique qui ont paru depuis la découverte de l'imprimerie jusqu'en 1700 by H. Ternaux-Complans, published in Paris as early as 1841 and recently reprinted. The first and last words of his Preface endear him to me by exactly mirroring my own thoughts. He begins

In deciding that I should publish this work, I could not hide from myself
that it doubtless contained many errors and omissions...

and he ends by asking his readers to send him suggestions and corrections so that he can produce a supplement and a list of errata. (Unfortunately I can find no evidence that such a supplement and list ever appeared.) I estimate that 85% of Ternaux-Complans's nearly 3200 entries relate to Asia, but this still leaves something like 500 for Africa. Of these, North Africa and Ethiopia get the lion's share; a rough check through the excellent index suggests


8. The expansion of the market for books of travel is usefully demonstrated in Paul Kaufman, Borrowings from the Bristol Library, 1773-1784 (Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1960), where it is shown that books of travel and of geographical description were the second most popular category of books in circulation towards the end of the eighteenth century. I owe this reference to Professor J.T. Boulton.

9. Amsterdam, B.R. Gruner, 1968. Ternaux-Complans was the author of a number of works of bibliography and history. There is a parallel work which I have not seen, namely Jean Gay, Bibliographie des ouvrages relatives à l'Afrique et à l'Arabie, catalogue méthodique de tous les ouvrages français et des principaux en langues étrangères..., San Remo, 1875.
suggests that western Africa may not have far short of 100 entries, including 29 for Guinea, 24 for Congo and 13 for Angola. However 'entries' is not the same as 'items'; Ternaux-
Complans lists his entries by their dates of publication, and each new edition or translation of
an item that he has noticed involves an additional entry. Secondly there is the somewhat
similar but less polished work by Philip Paulitschke, Die Afrika-Literatur in der Zeit von
1500 bis 1750, published in Vienna in 1882. This is arranged by regions. The section for
West Africa has 182 items, including some extracted from collections of voyages, and it
gives some indication of later editions and of translations.

In 1935 there appeared Edward Cox's A reference guide to the literature of travel,
including voyages, geographical descriptions, adventures, shipwrecks and expeditions. Despite the all-embracing title, this is limited to works published in Great Britain. However
Cox usually mentions the foreign original of a work that had been translated into English,
and he also has an addendum which lists 'some foreign collections' of voyages. The basic
arrangement is by geographical area, but there are also sections for collections,
circumnavigations and 'general travels'. Within each section, the arrangement is chronological
by date of publication. Cox's Africa section has 246 items appearing between 1554 and
1800. But this includes as separate items the abstracts of accounts that were published by
compilers such as Astley and Pinkerton (see 1745 VOYAGES: ASTLEY and 1808
VOYAGES: PINKERTON in the present Guide). On the other hand it is odd that Cox does
not have separate entries for the accounts that were published by the pioneer English
collectors, Eden, Hakluyt and Purchas (1555 EDEN, 1589 HAKLUYT, 1613 & 1625
PURCHASES). About 70 of the items in Cox's Africa section relate to western Africa. He has
missed quite a bit, and though he has provided substantial annotation, it is almost entirely on
bibliographical matters. He has failed to realise, for example, that Damberger is a faux
original; on the other hand, he is shrewd in his judgment on Barbot.

In 1966, consequent upon work previously done for the Twelfth International Historical
Congress (Vienna, 1965), Raymond Mauny produced a considerable Contribution à la
bibliographie de l'histoire de l'Afrique noire des origines à 1850. This has sections on
relevant journals, bibliographies and so on, but the greater part of it is concerned to list
original sources for the pre-colonial history of sub-Saharan Africa. This part of the work has
three sections: 'Classical Antiquity', which runs to A.D.639; the 'African Middle Ages' from
639 to 1434; and 'Pre-colonial tropical Africa from the arrival of the Europeans to the
colonial conquest, 1434-1850'. As an archaeologist, Professor Mauny is probably more at
home in the first two sections; so far as the third is concerned, it is rather as though he is
reminiscing from his life-long enthusiasm for the study of the African past than setting out to
provide an authoritative guide to the sources. Nevertheless his piece does mention a very
large number of original sources, and it provided me with my first references to a number of
them.

Finally, mention should be made of the very substantial work in 800 pages that was
produced in 1972 by a team led by Robert L. Hess and Dalvan M. Coger, Semper ex Africa;
a bibliography of primary sources for nineteenth century tropical Africa as recorded by

10. I was introduced to Paulitschke by Dr Adam Jones.

11. 3 vols, Seattle, University of Washington, 1935. The African material is in Vol.1, which was
reprinted in 1948.

INTRODUCTION

explorers, missionaries, traders, travelers, administrators, military men, adventurers and others. This is a bare catalogue, but it does have the enormous merit of essaying to list all material which has appeared in periodicals as well as that which was published in book form.

There are, of course, published bibliographies for a number of the modern states which today occupy the area of Africa with which this Guide is concerned. Two of these perhaps merit special attention, A.W.Cardinall’s A bibliography of the Gold Coast (Accra, 1931), and E. Joucla’s monumental Bibliographie de l’Afrique Occidentale Française (Paris, 1937). Neither measures up to modern bibliographical standards - indeed, in both of them, a good deal of intuition and experience is needed to identify and make sense of many entries - but both of them are works of vast enthusiasm which cover a great deal of ground, and from which many riches may be discovered by diligent excavation.

In this Guide, I have tried throughout to give guidance to the various, and sometimes numerous, editions, adaptations and translations that exist for many of the items. It is important to do this because none but the largest libraries are likely to have more than one or two versions of the older and rarer books, and these versions may not be identical or all of equal value. In this field I have become more and more conscious that there are many traps for the unwary. Before the establishment of modern copyright laws, in effect before the nineteenth century, a printed work might be copied, adapted, abbreviated, summarised, quoted, plagiarised and translated more or less ad infinitum. Before Germany was unified, it was common for two or three publishers in different states to issue translations of the same foreign language original, and odd things could also happen in unified countries. Thus two English translations of 1666 VILLAUT were put out by London publishers in the same year, while in 1695 two to all intents and purposes identical editions of 1682 LE MAIRE appear to have issued from the one publisher in Paris!  

The consequence of continual copying, adaptation, translation and so on is that what was originally written could be changed almost beyond recognition, and that what was originally reliable might be seriously distorted. I am conscious that I have not reached finality in some of the more difficult cases, nor have I essayed to rival the meticulousness of professional bibliographers. In some cases, of course, even these have not reached finality: 15 (1507) VOYAGES: PAESI provides an example of this. I must also confess that I have not held in my hands, let alone read, all the various items and their variants and translations that I have mentioned in the Guide. In theory this is inexcusable. In practice it may not be quite as bad as it seems; many of the names which appear in the list of Acknowledgements immediately following this Introduction are those of colleagues who are more experienced than I in certain sections of the literature and who have read or seen things that I have not. Without their help the Guide would be both less complete and less accurate than it is. In addition, I have always tried to check entries against the information given in national bibliographies or catalogues.

14. The second point would seem to have escaped the notice of the cataloguers of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. It was investigated by Yves St-Martin in BIFAN, B, 26 (1964) 709-13 (a reference I owe to Adam Jones), whose conclusion was that the most likely explanation was that one edition was pirated, probably in Amsterdam.

15. One quite admirable bibliography which was very useful to me is Peter C. Hogg’s The African slave-trade and its suppression; a classified and annotated bibliography (London, 1972).
In this respect I have realised how lucky we are in the English-speaking world to have two such great, comprehensive, painstaking and complementary works as the British Library’s General Catalogue of Printed Books and the United States National Union Catalog. Compared with these giants, the Catalogue Général des Livres Imprimés of the French Bibliothèque Nationale hardly rates more than B-. As for the German Gesamtverzeichnis des deutschsprachiger Schriftums, 1700-1910, the best that can be said is that it tries hard; it is not all that gesamt even within its limited chronological range. However in recent years knowledge of early books in German relating to West Africa has been greatly advanced by the meticulous research of Adam Jones - e.g. his article in History in Africa, 13 (1986). In this context it is also worth remarking that the catalogue of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna is available on microfiche. Scandinavian and Dutch items posed particular problems; for the most part I had to depend on the cooperation of colleagues who could check them in libraries in their countries of origin. However a computerised Netherlands Short Title Catalogue for books published during 1540-1800 is in progress (and by 1991 could be questioned in respect of the 1540-1700 holdings of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek and some of those of the Library of the University of Amsterdam). In the case of Italian items - particularly important for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries - it has not seemed practical to do much more than to check them against the great catalogues from London and Washington.

In the case of English-language items, I hoped for help and contributions from the computerised Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue produced by Dr R.C.Alston and his colleagues in the Reference Division of the British Library. The computer was asked to produce for me lists of all the titles it had which contained appropriate key words. The ones I chose that produced some results (I give the number of their occurrences in the STC in parentheses) were Africa/African/Africk etc (570), Guinea (102), Sierra Leone (14), Gold Coast (11), Senegal (9), Gambia (4), Dahom(e)y (3), Angola (2) and Cape Verde (1). I undoubtedly missed some variations in the spelling of these names; on the other hand, I also had some key words - such as Benin, Calabar and Congo - which produced no occurrences at all. In all there were 716 occurrences, though this did not mean that there were 716 relevant titles because, of course, more than one key word could occur in a title. Nevertheless at first sight there did seem to be the prospect of finding a considerable amount of material previously unknown to me. In practice this was not so. For example, most of the occurrences of ‘Guinea’ related to the coin rather than to West Africa. Furthermore - as indeed was expected - the key words led to the extraction of the titles of a great number of pamphlets and fly-sheets which dealt with the controversy over the African trade and the Royal African Company in the early years of the eighteenth century, and with the arguments about the abolition of the slave trade at the end of it. There were something like 150 in the first case and 30 in the second, and few of these dealt at all directly with situations in Africa itself. There was the further complication that the computer recognised any slight variation in a title, author’s name, place and date of publication etc as constituting a separate item. The end result was that the STC produced the titles of only a handful of works bearing usefully on western Africa that were not already known to me.

This experience would seem to suggest that my Guide may be pretty exhaustive. I doubt whether this is really the case. I suspect that there may be a substantial number of items, particularly if written in languages other than English or printed and published in provincial

16. There are already standard guides to Dutch books published up to 1540 (and after 1800): few if any of the early Dutch books say anything relevant to western Africa.
towns, that I have yet to discover. The reasons why I decided to make my work public were that the search for each new item was becoming more and more difficult and time-consuming, and that - like Ternaux-Complains - I hoped that publication of what I had so far been able to achieve might stimulate more people to contribute to the work. I must also admit that, even before I was very close to my cut-off point in the mid 1860s, I was experiencing increasing problems of deciding whether certain categories of material should be included and, if so, how far to go with them.

In general I have sought to include publications concentrating on European activities in, or in respect of, Africa only when it seems to me that a seeker after knowledge of western Africa and its inhabitants would have a reasonable chance of finding in them at least some of the particular information he is seeking. There is clearly a subjective element in such judgments. I have already explained that I have included only a handful of the titles in the *Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue*, most of them no more than pamphlets, which treat of England's or Scotland's trade with Africa, because most of these are no more than contributions to a purely domestic controversy. On the other hand, entries have been given for the *Proceedings*, from 1790 onwards, of the African Association, and the *Reports* of the Sierra Leone Company, from 1794, and of the African Institution, from 1807, all of which seem to me to include original material relating to western Africa. For the same reason, I have included entries for British parliamentary papers dealing with the Atlantic slave trade and with western African affairs, from their beginnings in the 1780s. I have also essayed to mention early runters, *roteiros* and pilot books, accounts of the pioneer hydrographic surveys of the west coast of Africa, dictionaries and grammars of the languages of western Africa, and descriptions of its medical situation (a particular group of which is listed under 1822 STORMONT).

So far as newspapers are concerned, there are entries only for the two *Royal Gazettes* of early nineteenth century Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast. In any modern sense, newspapers began to be produced in West Africa itself only at the very end of the period covered by the *Guide*, and most of the pioneers were rather ephemeral both as regards their publication runs and the survival of copies for posterity. There is, of course, much useful information about western Africa to be found in periodicals published outside Africa. I have not thought it feasible to search out all the items that might be relevant; it would require an enormous slice of any individual's time and energy. Entries for journal articles have been provided only when I was already aware of them, or came across them in the course of other enquiries, and when the pieces in question were substantial and seemed to me to contain important information which was not available in book form. Other people may well quarrel with my judgment here. However I do not believe that my approach has serious inconveniences before the eighteenth century - indeed, probably before the last quarter of that century. The reason is that the publication of what may be variously termed periodicals, journals or magazines does not really begin before the later seventeenth century and, so far as I am aware, there is not much African material in such publications before the end of the eighteenth century. For the most part in the *Guide*, periodical items relating to western Africa in times previous to about 1780-1800 derive from the discovery and publication of relevant manuscripts by modern scholars, and I have endeavoured to cover the appropriate historical journals.

The earliest periodicals known to me which contain material of importance relating to western Africa are *The Gentleman's Magazine* (which began publication in 1731) and *The
Monthly Review (1749-1845). 17 Outside Britain, I know of little of this generalist kind of journal of comparable date except the Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung (1785-1849). The great age of literary and political journals for an educated middle and upper class public really only blossoms with the nineteenth century, and these journals do reflect a new 'modern' interest in Africa which had begun a few years earlier with the anti-slave trade campaign and the beginnings of scientific exploration. Certainly any scholar looking for published material bearing on his interests in western Africa in the early nineteenth century would do well to explore such journals as The Edinburgh Review (began 1802), The Quarterly Review (began 1809), Blackwood's Magazine (began 1817), The Athenaeum (began 1828) and La Revue des Deux Mondes (began 1829). By this time, more specialised journals were also under way. The periodical publications of the major missionary societies, especially those of Britain, Germany, Switzerland, France and the U.S.A., are obviously of major importance, and many new societies were founded at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. Beginning a little later, the geographical journals also provide a rich mine to quarry. The Bulletin of the Paris Société de Géographie begins in 1822; the London Society's Journal in 1832; Petermanns Mitteilungen in 1855. Also important are the Annales des Voyages and the Nouvelles Annales des Voyages which between them ran from 1808 to 1870 with a gap at 1815-17. Then there is a class of specialist journals in which the British were perhaps less strong than some other imperial nations, 18 those specifically concerned with what were becoming colonial affairs. Of particular importance, it seems to me, are the French journal which began in 1848 as Revue Coloniale, then became Revue Algérienne et Coloniale, and finally in 1861 became Revue Maritime et Coloniale, and the non-official sections of two Portuguese publications, Annaes Maritimos e Coloniaes (1840-46?) and Annaes do Conselho Ultramarino (1854-67). Furthermore in the Portuguese sphere no one interested in the history of Angola can afford to ignore the publication of documents by Archivos de Angola (1933-39 & 1943-).

There are several guides to 'periodicals for African Studies', 19 but I must confess that I found few of these very helpful for my purposes. They seem for the most part to concentrate on modern rather than historical studies, to list current journals rather than those of the past and those published in Africa rather than those outside it, and to stress the Africa-oriented journals at the expense of more general ones which do not consistently publish African material. From my point of view, the most useful guide I have found is the list of the publications from which the Hess and Coger team tell us they had extracted their periodical pieces (see p.xv above) - though it must not be forgotten, of course, that they were looking only for material relating to the nineteenth century. There are, however, useful guides to missionary periodicals, for example that by David P. Henige to those of the Catholic societies and that by Benoit Girardin to those of the Swiss Protestant societies. 20 But in

17. However the Guide does list two pieces that appeared in the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society for 1697; see 1686 HILLIER and 1694 PETIVER.


20. David P. Henige, Catholic missionary journals relating to Africa (Waltham, Mass., Crossroads Press, 1980); Benoit Girardin, Périodiques missionnaires protestants et romands (Basel, 1982).
this connection mention must be made of the six magnificent volumes of the Bibliotheca Missionum, begun by Fr Robert Streit and continued by Fr Johannes Dindinger, which deal with the literature relating to the mission of the Catholic Church in Africa up to 1940. These volumes, Nos 15 to 20 of the whole work, seek to list all publications relating to Catholic missionary activity in Africa, books as well as periodical articles, and they include historical and second-hand references as well as those which are contemporary and first-hand. The entries are arranged chronologically by the dates of the original activities. Substantial biographical data and excellent indexes are provided - to subjects, places, ethnic groups and languages, as well as to authors and the active individuals.

Maps and atlases have not been included in the Guide. There is, of course, an enormous field here (it is interesting to note that about a fifth of the items in Joucla's A.O.F. bibliography are cartographical), but it was by no means obvious to me that the acquisition of the rather special skills required to exploit it would be justified by the likely results. Properly dated maps, and especially series of them over time, do convey important information about the changing patterns of human occupation and exploitation of the earth's surface (and also, of course, about the extent and quality of geographical knowledge). But I have supposed the Guide to be primarily an aid to the better understanding not of people in space, but of people in societies. I would certainly not go so far as to say that the maps and atlases that touch on western Africa from about 1450 to about 1865 never provide information about its human societies. Sometimes they certainly do, especially perhaps in the texts with which they are occasionally embellished. But since it is not the purpose of most maps and atlases to convey such information, it would be necessary to sift through large numbers of them for relatively little result, and this I have not done.

So far as collections of voyages are concerned, I cannot claim to have noted them all, and some of them are purely derivative. But I trust that I have included those which contain significant material for western Africa. Nevertheless it is important to appreciate that what is printed in a collection in respect of any particular traveller is often only a précis of an account which may have been more completely published elsewhere, e.g. as a book in its own right. Often too such a précis will concentrate on the travails of the traveller and say rather little about the people he was journeying among. Where I am conscious that a major account which has been published independently also appears in some form in one or more of the collections of voyages, this is indicated by a bare mention of the name of its collector or publisher after the publication details of the independent account. See, for example, 1682 LE MAIRE, where it is indicated that some account of his voyage may also be found in the Harleian Collection and in the collections of Astley, Prévost, Schwabe and Walckenaer.

The fact that I have confined myself to works published in European languages means that works originally published in other languages - Arabic is far and away the most important - are included only when I know that they are available in some translation. Moreover, since few scholars can be equally at home in all the European languages which have been used to write about western Africa (Magyar is probably the most exotic), I have always tried to indicate whether a work first published in one European language has been translated into others and, if so, which ones. But it is important to appreciate that no translation can be as authentic as the original. Some of the earlier translations mentioned in the Guide are really more adaptations than translations, in which whole sentences or sections

21. These volumes were published for the Institut für Missionwissenschaftliche Forschung by Verlag Herder, Freiburg, 1951-54.
can be inserted or omitted to meet the supposed taste of readers in the new language or simply the whims of the new editor or publisher or bookseller.

Where I know that the necessary work has been done, I provide indications of the reliability of particular translations, and I also try to indicate where full critiques of a translation may be found. If, for example, a user of the Guide follows up the reference to Professor Hair's work on the translations of (1668) DAPPER, he will be told that, while the German text is virtually a word for word translation of the original Dutch, albeit with sometimes confusing respellings of African names and terms, the commonly used French translation is so incomplete and inaccurate that "its continued referential use by scholars cannot be justified". Interestingly enough, the English adaptation which was put out by John Ogilby without any mention of Dapper on its title page - and which therefore appears in the Guide as (1670) OGILBY - comes out rather better in Hair's critique. Few translations have been put to the line by line scrutiny that Dr Albert van Dantzig has given to the English translation of 1688 BOSMAN (commonly accepted as a good translation for its time). A salutary article on the dangers of relying on translations is that by Dr Beatrix Heintze to which reference is made in the entry for 1671 G.A.CAVAZZI, in whose work she has a special interest. As she points out, even modern translators can mislead or make major errors of understanding or of translation. Perhaps the only good translations are those which also provide a copy of the text in the original. In any case, the golden rule must be that, when it comes to precise points, or when there is need to quote from a text, any translation must always be rigidly compared with its original.

In conclusion I should say that although - as may be seen from the following list of Acknowledgements - many other individuals have been kind enough to help in the preparation of the Guide by sharing with me aspects of their particular knowledge and expertise, it must continue to contain many errors of commission and omission, and for these I must remain entirely responsible. However I have believed - as Ternaux-Complains did more than a century ago - that the best way to secure further improvement is to submit my work to the test of publication and to the criticism that should follow from it.