

A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545-1800

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the relatively small section of the West African coast between the Gambia and Cape Mount. It seeks to reconstruct a picture of that society in the mid-sixteenth century, while it was still free of profound European influence. Such a picture provides the indispensable basis for analysing the impact of external forces on the narrow coastal strip, 'external' being used to embrace not only the Europeans but also influences from the hinterland and adjacent coastal areas.

In 1545, Sierra Leone (the southern portion of the Upper Guinea Coast) was subjected to invasions from Africans who were called 'Manes'. This is the starting point of the study of the external forces (Ch.II), and the purely African influences are treated once more in Ch. IX. However, it is the presence of the Portuguese (Ch.III) and other European traders, which is the external factor most in evidence; and the European association with the Upper Guinea Coast was based largely on the development of the Atlantic slave trade. This latter topic is treated in Chs. IV and X, while Ch. VI deals with African products other than slaves.

European rivalries as such constitute a very minor theme (as treated in Ch. V), for the aim has been to portray European activity in this region only in relationship to the African rulers, African peoples and African polities. Owing to the great differences

in European and African culture, and owing to the potency and viciousness of the Atlantic slave trade, the Afro-European relationship incorporated violent contradictions, which resolved themselves to the detriment of the society of the Upper Guinea Coast. By 1800, the littoral society was overwhelmed both from the landward and the seaward side by forces set in motion by the Atlantic slave trade.

Preface

The scholarship on the history of the Upper Guinea Coast has faithfully followed the boundaries laid down when the area was partitioned between the English, French and Portuguese. Subsequent to colonisation in the nineteenth century, there is some rationale behind such regional treatment, but to project colonial boundaries into the pre-colonial period lacks all justification. To begin with, therefore, this study concerns itself with a region which appears to be geographically and ethnically a single entity, and which, furthermore, was considered as such by the Europeans who traded there in the period under discussion.

A second limitation of the secondary material on the history of the Upper Guinea Coast is quantitative in nature. The only documented study of the early history of the area that is now Sierra Leone was provided by Peter Kup, in A History of Sierra Leone, 1400-1787 (London 1961). Since André Arcin essayed his Histoire de la Guinée in 1911, nothing else has been forthcoming on that area in the form of a general history. In Portuguese Guinea, the scene is dominated by a single scholar, A. Texeira da Mota, whose two-volume work, Guiné Portuguesa (Lisboa 1954) is essentially a record of more recent years, but which is fortunately deepened by the author's sense of history and intimate acquaintance with historical sources. The Gambia, too, has its single showpiece of historical writing relating to

the period before the British administration, that of J.M. Gray, published in 1940. He managed to spare only 10 pages on the Portuguese epoch in a book which runs to 497 pages.

While it is true that many areas in Africa are no happier than the UGC in the above respects, such paucity is nevertheless striking, because the Upper Guinea Coast has been in long and unbroken contact with Europe since the middle of the fifteenth century, and the records of those centuries survive in considerable quantities - more so probably than for any other section of the West African littoral. Since the purely documentary evidence was available and untapped, there was no need to fraternise with Carbon 14 or tape-recorders; and though every opportunity was taken to utilise the insights from archaeology, ethnography and the like, where these were forthcoming, it remains true that this study is extremely orthodox in its methodology. This reliance on the European written word is not in itself inconsistent with aspiring to the "new orthodoxy" of African history: namely, the writing of the history of Africa as such, and not as an appendage to anything else. There certainly are limitations imposed by the nature of the European sources. Christopher Fyfe, illustrating the Sierra Leone Inheritance by selected documents, rightly contends that "a barrier is set between us and pre-European Sierra Leone. We can only glimpse it through European eyes, and must infer - not learn directly from unmediated African sources - how its people lived!". Yet, stumbling over such barriers is an occupational hazard for those who seek to reconstruct the history not

only of Africa's peoples but also of all the voiceless millions who worked and died.

In choosing Africa as a field of study, I have been inspired by the irridentist masses of the West Indies, who also supplied most of the finances (via the University of the West Indies). The specific choice of the Upper Guinea Coast was due to the direction of my tutor, Dr. Richard Gray of the School of Oriental and African Studies, whose vast knowledge of the disposition of archival sources is equalled by his technical skills as a historian, and surpassed by the personal warmth which went into the supervision of my thesis. My thanks are due also to the Central Research Fund Committee of the University of London, whose generosity permitted me to consult archival material in Portugal, Spain and Italy. Both in England and on the continent, great help was afforded me by a large number of individuals in libraries and archives. Mr. T.M. Milne, Secretary of the Institute of Historical Research was always ready to be of assistance; and I must also single out Senhor Comandante A. Texeira da Mota, who willingly guided me to relevant material in Portugal.

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A HISTORY OF THE UPPER GUINEA COAST, 1545-1800

CHAPTER ONE

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE.

The Land and the People

The spirit of enquiry and discovery of the Portuguese in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries has imparted a distinct geographical flavour to the surviving records of Portuguese activity in Africa in that era. Indeed, whatever shortcomings those records possess must be attributed to the Portuguese preoccupation with the gathering of geographical data, to the exclusion of much else. As the early Portuguese moved south along the west coast of Africa, their main concern was the preparation of navigational aids, necessitating a close attention to detail. Frequent soundings were made off the coast and in the rivers, and wind and weather conditions scrupulously noted. (1) In 1634, the Conselho da Fazenda approved the payment of a pension to Miguel Albernaz, who had been in their service as a cartographer on the Upper Guinea Coast. (2) The result of his work, like the work of so many others relating to Asia and Africa, must have been known only to the Portuguese authorities, since it was the policy to keep such information out of the hands of rivals. Thus, as late as 1607, the English still had no precise idea of the Upper Guinea Coast. (3) The Dutch knew the area around Cape Mount, but when Admiral Schouten was in the vicinity of the Nunez in 1615, he was not at all certain of his whereabouts. (4)

(1) Damião Peres (Ed.) : Os mais antigos Roteiros da Guiné (Lisboa, 1952)

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - Doc.II, Minute of the Conselho, Nov 1634.

(3) Hakluyt Society N^o LVI - Voyages of Sir James Lancaster to the East Indies. William Keeling in Sierra Leone, March 1607.

(4) Samuel Purchas:- Purchas his Pilgrims, London 1624, Part II, Book i, p.87

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The fifteenth and sixteenth century Portuguese roteiros or charts, in spite of their limited objectives, are extremely useful introductions to the geography and the history of the Upper Guinea Coast. More substantial information followed later, as European commercial activities intensified, and forced them to look more closely at the land from which they hoped to reap a profit. Sierra Leone was particularly favoured, since enquiries were conducted with a view to Portuguese colonisation in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, English and French colonisation projects generated similar interest. On the basis of such evidence, and with some recourse to more recent and more scientific studies, one can construct a tolerably accurate geography of the region between the Gambia and Cape Mount, which is the region described by the term "Upper Guinea Coast" in this study. (1)

Much that is of purely geographical value will be omitted. The purpose here is to provide sufficient of the physical background to make meaningful the conduct and pattern of African life in that area during the period 1545-1800.

(1) The designations applied to various sections of the coast of West Africa varied over the centuries. In this study the three relevant geographical divisions will be taken as (i) The Senegambia - between the rivers Senegal and Gambia; (ii) The Upper Guinea Coast - from the Gambia to Cape Mount; and (iii) The Malaguetta Coast, which coincides with the modern state of Liberia.

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Some slight advantage is to be gained by utilising contemporary sources as a base for a purely geographical description. Europeans in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries observed the relationship between human endeavour and physical environment in a context of technical skills, which, in some respects, differs from what prevails on the Upper Guinea Coast to-day. Naturally enough, As Europeans, these observers were primarily concerned with whatever features would most influence European activity, but often they made specific or oblique references to the Africans in relation to the local environment. To fathom this relationship is the first essential in an attempt to recreate the lives of these peoples - as is the case with any given group in any given locality.

The most striking physical feature of the Upper Guinea Coast is its numerous rivers. The Portuguese referred to the region between Cape Verde and Cape Mount as "the Rivers of the Guinea of Cape Verde"; while the French, viewing the same area from their trade centres in the Senegal, designated it "the Rivers of the South". Flowing in a generally westerly or south-westerly direction, more than two dozen rivers reach the sea independently on the stretch of coast between the Gambia and Cape Mount. Of these, excluding the Gambia itself, the most important were the Casamance, the Cacheu, the Geba and the Corubal (merging into the Geba Channel), the Ria Grande de Buba, the Cumbidjam, the Cacine, the Cogon, the Nunez, the Pongo, the Konkoure, the Greater and Lesser Scarcies, the Sierra Leone (which is really an arm of the sea into which flows the Port Loko Creek

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from the north and the Rokelle from the south), the rivers of the Sherbro estuary, the Moa and the Mano. These rivers, along with their numerous tributaries and streams, constituted a system of waterways, which was of primary importance in the life of the region.

The significance of the rivers can best be assessed in conjunction with land relief and elevation. With the exception of the Sierra Leone peninsula and the region around Cape Verga the whole coast is flat. (1) Low level plains adjoin the rivers, and away from the immediate river banks the ground seldom rises above thirty or forty metres above sea level. A single belt of flat littoral plains can thus be distinguished, the width of this coastal belt being determined mainly by the tides.

An extensive and shallow continental shelf, out of which rises the Bijagos islands and a large number of shoals, is responsible for the fact that the tides here are higher and more powerful than anywhere else on the West African coast. (2) On an average, the amplitude of the tides between Cape Roxo and Freetown is between three and four metres while it is nearly

(1) Early travellers noted the exceptional elevations of the coast.

(a) Th. Monod, A. Texeira da Mota and R. Mauny (ed) : Description de la Côte Occidentale d'Afrique (Sénégal au Cap de Monte Archipels, par Valentim Fernandes (1506-1510) (Bissau, 1951) pp, 36,58,68.

(b) R. Mauny (Ed.) : Esmeraldo de situ Orbis (Côte occidentale d'Afrique du Sud Marocain au Gabon, par Duarte Pacheco Pereira (vers 1506-1508) (Bissau 1956) pp. 68,74

(2) A. Texeira da Mota - Guiné Portuguesa, (Lisboa 1954) Vol.I, p.57.

seven metres on the Geba Channel. These powerful tides, along with the sunken ria character of the coastline, account for the penetration of the sea for considerable distances inland, and the silt deposited in the process has helped to build up the alluvial coastal plain. The penetration by the sea also accounts for the presence of salt marshes, and permits the widespread germination of essentially littoral flora, such as mangrove and palm.

The most characteristic vegetation is the mangrove, which, in the greater and lesser profusion, lines the river banks to the very limit of the tides. (1) The roots of the mangrove have acted as stabilisers of the sediment deposited by the tide, so that this plant is always associated with the richest alluvial soils of the coast. Indeed, the mangrove can be taken as the most easily visible symbol of the complex of numerous rivers, low plains, marshy land and powerful tides: a complex which decisively affected all activity conducted on the Upper Guinea Coast.

A few of the principal rivers of the Upper Guinea Coast originate in the Futa Djalon mountains. The massif of the Futh Djalon, covering some 50,000 square kilometres, is an irregular triangle with the base on the upper Gambia and the apex just north of the frontiers of the modern state of Sierra Leone. (2) But immediately to the south of the Futa Djalon the

(1) Alvares de Almada - "Tratado breve dos Rios de Guiné". In Monumenta Missionaria Africana, Africa Occidental. 2nd. series (Ed. A. Brasio, Lisboa 1964) Vol. III, p.280

(2) Unless specifically stated to the contrary, the term "Sierra Leone" covers that portion of the Upper Guinea Coast which extends from Cape Verga to Cape Mount.

country is mountainous, so there is virtually a continuous range, which is the watershed from which flow the Senegal and the Niger as well as several rivers of the Upper Guinea Coast. (1) Between the Futa Djalou and the coastal plain is a region of hills and plateaux. There, the rivers are swift and shallow, while the edges of the escarpments give rise to waterfalls. The area compares unfavourably with the coast as far as soils and vegetation are concerned. Heavy rainfall leads to the erosion of the soil, which is carried down to the lower reaches of the rivers. Large sections are barren, being covered only with scrub and loose rocks - a landscape which the Susus call oulai and the Fulas bowal. (2) These features predominate in the hinterland north of Cape Verga, especially in the area known as the Badjar, and on large parts of the Futa Djalou itself, while the Sierra Leone hinterland is less arid. There one finds open undulating plains, covered with tall ~~elephant~~ grass, and capable of supporting clumps of forest species.

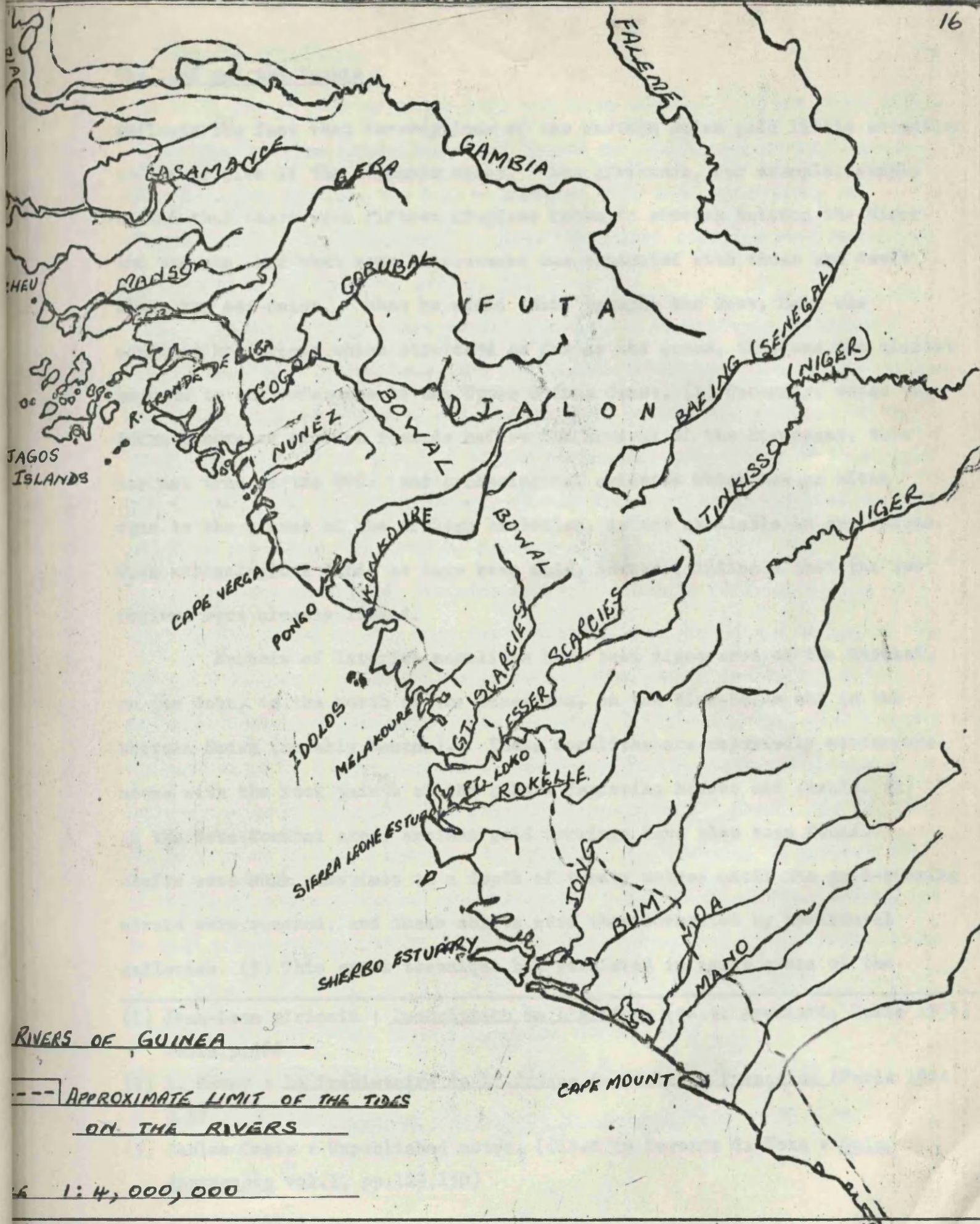
The area which will form the basis of this enquiry comprises the coastal plain and the transitional zone between the coastal plain and the Futa Djalou. But, from time to time, reference must be made to certain developments in the Futa Djalou and beyond, which profoundly affected the history of the coast.

The Western Sudan forms the deep hinterland of the Upper Guinea Coast, but relations between the two areas are often overlooked. In part, this

(1) J. Machat : Guinée Française - Les Rivières du Sud et le Fouta-Diallon
(Paris 1906) p.95

(2) Ibid : p.93

(First Map to follow)



RIVERS OF GUINEA

--- APPROXIMATE LIMIT OF THE TIDES ON THE RIVERS

1:4,000,000

reflects the fact that descriptions of the Western Sudan paid little attention to the peoples of the Atlantic coast. Leo Africanus, for example, simply stated that there were fifteen kingdoms known to stretch between the Niger and the sea, and that some intercourse was conducted with those who dwelt along the sea-coast. When he added that, towards the west, Mali was confined by forests which stretched as far as the ocean, this was the closest he came to any reference to the Upper Guinea Coast. (1) Secondly, while the Sudan generated written records before the arrival of the Europeans, this was not true of the UGC; and archaeological evidence which has so often come to the rescue of the African historian, is not available in any volume. Such archaeological finds as have been made, however, indicate that the two regions were closely linked.

Numbers of laterite megaliths have been discovered on the Corubal, on the Geba, to the north of the Casamance, on the Sine-Salum and in the Western Sudan (notably Macina). These megaliths are reportedly contemporaneous with the rock ^{ing}paints of the Sahara depicting horses and camels. (2) In the Geba-Corubal area, ancient gold workings have also been found. Shafts were sunk sometimes to a depth of twenty metres until the gold-bearing strata were reached, and these shafts were then connected by horizontal galleries. (3) This exact technique has persisted in large areas of the

(1) Jean-Leon Africanus : Description de L'Afrique (ed.A. Apaulard, Paris 1956) Vol.2,p.466

(2) R. Mauny : La Préhistoire de L'Afrique Occidentale Française (Paris 1944) p.32

(3) Carlos Costa : Unpublished notes. (Cited in Teixeira da Mota : Guiné Portuguesa vol.1, pp.129,130)

Western Sudan as well as on the Gold and Ivory coasts. On the Upper Guinea Coast, they were obviously abandoned before the Portuguese arrived, since, after diligent enquiry, the latter reported only small quantities of alluvial gold. The likelihood is that those gold workings were associated with the medieval Sudanese states. (1)

Quite apart from any possible political or economic relations between the Upper Guinea Coast and the Western Sudan, the connection between the two regions was intimate and fundamental, because the peopling of the Upper Guinea Coast was a result of the continuous dislocation of population from the interior to the coast - a process that was largely precipitated by political events in the Sudanese states.

In the opinion of one anthropologist, Mendes Correia, it was as early as the third century that the relatively well-organised states of the Western Sudan began to exert the pressure which led to population drifts in the direction of the Upper Guinea Coast. (2) Richard-Molard also regards the vast majority of the peoples of the Upper Guinea Coast as 'Refoules' - driven back from their original positions away from the coast. (3) Indeed, the only point at issue has been to establish the sequence of arrival of ~~to establish the sequence of arrival of~~ the various immigrants. Discussion on that question has usually centred on identifying the tribes whose tenure

(1) A. Texeira da Mota: Guiné Portuguesa, vol.1, p135

(2) A. Mendes Correia: Raças do Imperio (Lisbon 1943) pp.147-148

(3) Richard-Molard: Afrique Occidentale Française (Paris 1949) p108

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on the coast has been the longest; then, recognising that the Mande and the Fulas were the latest arrivals, the problem can be posed in terms of which groups preceded the Mande and Fulas. (1)

Of the tribes which the Europeans found on the Upper Guinea Coast on their arrival, those who were the oldest inhabitants were the Djolas, Bankuns, Casangas, Papels, Balantas, Bijagos, Bulloms and Limbas. These are generally regarded as the 'Primitives'. Virtually surrounding them by mid-sixteenth century in a large semi-circle stretching from the estuary of the Gambia to the coast at Dape Mount were the Mandingas, Susus, Djalonkes, Korankos, Konos and Vais (all of Mande stock) interspersed with a few Fulacundas, the small settlements of Fulas. The 'Pre-Mandingas' were also contained along with the 'Primitives' in this semi-circle. They can be enumerated as the Nalus, Landumas, Cocolis, Bagas and Temmes. (2)

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- (1) J. Machat: Les Rivières du Sud - This author reviews the differing categories presented by nineteenth century scholars. (pp. 230,232)
- (2) The orthography of tribal names on the Upper Guinea Coast has not been standardised, especially with regard to the formation of plurals. In the "semi-Bantu" languages, the plurals are formed by prefixes and in the Mande languages by suffixes. Some European writers have preferred to pluralise the African singular for both numbers. In this study, the English plural is used. On other doubtful points, the rule which will be followed is consistency. For instance, the same sound is represented throughout by 'Dj', as in Djalon and Djola, instead of 'Di' or 'J', which are possible alternatives.

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Immediately south of the Gambia, on the coast down to the Cacheu river, live a people whom the Europeans originally called the Felupes. The Mandingas referred to them as Djolas, a name which they themselves have progressively adopted, superseding the local variants by which each section of the tribe was known. It has been put forward that the Djolas were the first to people the region of the Casamance, where they are now centred, (1) but the megalithic monuments found in the Casamance, as elsewhere in the Gambia and the Geba, were associated with ceremonies and a cult of the dead - features which are alien to Djola society today - and the sharp difference suggests that a completely different people inhabited the area before the Djolas. (2) At the same time, it is true that the Djolas have no traditions of origin or movement except the memory of purely localised events which occurred during the last few generations. This is a characteristic of the so-called 'Primitives'.

East of the Djolas, forming a parallel belt between the Gambia and the Cacheu, lay the Banhuns. The Seneghe river, which flows southward into the Casamance at about longitude 16°, was their approximate eastern boundary. They call themselves 'Iagar', and say that the Portuguese gave the name 'Banhun' to a number of different groups living in that area. (3) Actually the Portuguese were aware of the local distinctions among them - Habundos, Iziguichors, Chaos - but it was emphasised that the Banhuns were a single

(1) D'Anfreville de la Salle: Notre vieux Sénégal, (Paris 1909) p.251

(Apud L.V. Thomas: Les Diola (Dakar 1959) Vol.1, p.309

(2) Louis Vincent Thomas: Les Diola (Dakar 1959) Vol. 1, p.309

(3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné" pp. 288,304

ethnic and linguistic group. (1)

Only a handful of Banhuns have survived to the present day, a drastic decline from their position in the sixteenth century. Two rather unconvincing reasons have been advanced to account for this. Firstly, their practice of burying their dead in their houses; and, secondly, the maltreatment which the young men received during the fanado, the ceremony of circumcision and initiation. (2) Neither of these features were peculiar to the Banhuns, and their presence elsewhere in Africa has not decimated tribes. What must have been decisive was the fact that the Banhuns faced severe challenges from the Djolas to the west, and the ^Mandingas to the north and east - and they lost both territory and men to these two groups. (3)

The Casangas, the eastern neighbours of the Banhuns, have also suffered great numerical and political decline, and they recall their days of puissance, when the Casanga capital lay at Brucama. (4) This is fully confirmed by the Portuguese accounts of the Casangas in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At that time, they dominated most of the Casamance, and their king did live at Brucama, the word 'bruco' meaning "King's court". (5) Their decline can likewise be attributed to assimilation by other groups,

(1) Landerset Simões: Babel Negra (Porto 1935)

(2) A. Nogueira: "Monografia sobre o tribu Banhun" in Boletim Cultural da Guiné Portuguesa, Vol.2, No. 8, Oct. 1947.

(3) A. Nogueira: "Vida familiar dos Cassangas do Sedengal" in Inquérito Etnográfico (A. Teixeira da Mota, Bissau 1947) pp. 118,119.

(4) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné" p.305.

André Dornelas: "Relação em 14 capitulos sobre a Serra Leoa" 1625. In "Relações do Descobrimento da Costa da Guiné". Ms.51-VIII-25.

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though in this case, the process has been determined largely by the willingness of the Casangas to submerge their own identity. (1) This is particularly true in relation to the Mandingas; while a small group, known as the Çobianas or Uboi, who live to the south of the Cacheu, are considered to be the product of Casanga intermixture with the Papels. (2).

Another large group of very early settlers on the Upper Guinea Coast were to be found between the Cacheu and Geba-Corubal. The Papels extended from the Cacheu to the Geba, on the coast, and occupied all but one of the islands immediately offshore. The only island in the Geba estuary which was not inhabited by the Papels was Bolama, belonging to the Beafadas, the tribe which occupied a large extent of territory on the banks of the Geba and the Corubal, proceeding along the length of both rivers until they came up against the Mandingas. They were also concentrated on the shores of the deep bay known as the Ria Grande de Buba. Their neighbours on the Geba were the Balantas, who covered a considerable area east of the Papels and north of the Beafadas.

A caution about nomenclature is necessary at this juncture. The literature on the zone between the Cacheu and the Geba yields at least three other 'tribes' - the Buramos or Brames, the Manjacos and the Mancanhas. Only two names were in use among the Europeans in the sixteenth century - 'Papels' and 'Buramos'. These were considered as a single ethnic group and the

(1) A. Taveira: "Cassangas de Sedengal" Inquérito Etnográfico, p.119

(2) B. Marques: "Familiaridade idiomática entre Cobianas e Cassangas"

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names were used interchangeably. (1) Other titles made their appearance much later, such as 'Manjanos' which is of creole origin, and was in use at the end of the eighteenth century to describe the inhabitants of the island of Jeta, south of the Cacheu estuary. (2) Recent studies have come full circle and confirmed the unity of the peoples of this area, all of whom speak only slightly varying dialects. (3) Thus, in place of the confusing multiplicity of names in the literature of the nineteenth century and for most of this century, the term 'Papel' will be employed. On a similar note, some of the Beafadas are referred to as 'Djolas', a name of Mandinga origin. (4) This shall not be employed, to avoid confusion with the Djolas or Felupes of the Casamance.

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.302,312

André Dornelas: "Relação sobre a Serra Leoa"

(2) Philip Beaver: African memoranda relative to an attempt to establish a British settlement on the island of Bulama in the year 1792 (London 1805)
p.127

(3) A.J. Dias Dinis: "As tribos da Guiné Portuguesa na historia", Congresso Comemorativo do quinto Centenário do Descobrimento da Guiné (Lisboa 1956)
Vol.1, p.253.

(4) Antonio Carreira: O Fundamento dos Etnónimos da Guiné Portuguesa ('Djola' is a Mandinga word without any ethnic significance. In the period of Mandinga expansion and dominance, it was used to designate individuals under obligation to pay tribute. From this it is easy to see how a number of people, ethnically distinct, could be said to be Djolas.)

The two types of traditions of origin which are recounted by these three tribes are those which suggest close family relationships, such as the Balanta account of descent from a Beafada hunter who acquired a Papel wife; (1) and those which simply state that God made them descend to earth in the region where they are now to be found. (2) Yet a number of factors indicate that these groups were all littoral 'Refoulés', pushed onto the coast, mainly through the action of the Mandingas. This can be illustrated by taking as a point of departure, the residents of the Bijagos islands.

There are some seventeen islands outside the estuary of the Geba channel and the Ria Grande de Buba. Both the islands and their inhabitants are known as the Bijagos. The bulk of the population appears to have originated from the adjacent mainland, inhabited by the Beafadas in the sixteenth century, but still considered as "the patrimony of the Bijagos". (3) However, all the islands were not peopled by the same tribe, especially those of later settlement. Some show close affinities to the Djola, some to the Papels and some to the Nalus. (4) Most important of all is a tradition linking the inhabitants of the largest of the islands with the Coniaguis, a 'Paleo-Negritic' people of the plateau hinterland of the Upper Guinea Coast. (5)

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- (1) J. Pinto Bull: "Balantas de Mansoa", Inquérito Ethnográfico, p 140
 - (2) J. Estevão dos Reis: "Manjacos de Calequisse", Inquérito Etnográfico, p.14
 - (3) Manuel Alvares: "Ethopia Menor e Descripção Geografica da Provincia de Ser Leoa" 1616. Ms.141-C1-, Biblioteca da Sociedade de Geographica de Lisboa.
 - (4) A.J. Santos Lima: Organização economica e social dos Bijagos
(Bissau 1947)
 - (5) D.A. Gomes Alves: "Bijagos da Ilha Roxa", Inquérito Etnográfico, p.134

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Only recently have ethnic groups like the Coniaguís been the object of attention and study. Several others have been distinguished - the Badjaranca Bassaris and Tendas, with the last being a Fulani word, referring to peoples who originated from the middle Gambia or to the product of miscegenation which occurred during the first Fula occupation (in the fifteenth century). (1) The Tenda country, as described by Mungo Park at the end of the eighteenth century, was still a vast tract of land along the Gambia, between 10° and 14° West Longitude, (2) and, before the arrival of the Mandingas and the Fulas, the whole extensive interior plateaux must have been the preserve of these 'Paleo-Negritic' tribes.

The connection between the Bijagos and the Coniaguís is not the only link between the "littoral Refoulés" and the "Refoulés sub-guinéens" (As Richard-Molard classifies the 'Paleo-Negritics'). Very close linguistic similarities have been uncovered between the Beafadas, Tendas, Coniaguís and Badjarancas. (3) It has been advanced by A. Texeira da Mota that the existence of these pockets of 'Paleo-Negritic' peoples, and their very probable connections with the peoples of the coast may well be the key to the whole problem of origins and affinities of the tribes north of the

(1) A. Carreira: O Fundamento dos Etnónimos na Guiné Portuguesa, p9

(2) Mungo Park: Travels in the interior districts of Africa in the years 1795, 1796 and 1797. (London 1799) (See Maps of Park's journey)

(3) A.A. Wilson "Uma Volta linguística da Guiné" in B.C.G.P. Vol.15
No. 56, 1959

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Corubal. His very credible hypothesis suggests that the Mandinga population movements drove a wedge between the 'Paleo-Negritics' whom they encountered on the higher reaches of the rivers. Some were pushed on the coast, and those who were left behind either underwent assimilation or took refuge on the inhospitable bowal zones, such as the Badjar. (1)

In the southern sections of the Upper Guinea Coast, the tribal situation must have been fairly straightforward (~~up~~) until the twelfth century. The single dominant element along the coast were the Bulloms, extending roughly between Cape Verga and Cape Mount. With the Bulloms were associated the Kissis and the Krimis, the languages of all three being extremely closely related (2). The Kissis at that time occupied most of the eastern portion of the present Republic of Guinea and the region along the present Sierra Leone-Liberia frontier, with the Krimis to their south on or near the coast. In the hinterland between the Greater Scarries and the upper Bum lay the Limbas. (3) They had entered Sierra Leone at a very early date, pushing the Gbandes eastwards into what is now eastern Liberia. (4)

The pattern which confronted the Europeans was considerably different from that at the end of the thirteenth century. Several waves of refugees

(1) A. Teixeira da Mota: Guiné Portuguesa, Vol. 1, p154

(2) Yves Person: "Les Kissi et leurs statuettes de pierre dans le cadre de l'histoire Ouest - Africaine" in Bulletin de l'Institut Francaise de l'Afrique Noire, tome XXIII, Sér B, No. 1, 1961, pp.1-60 (see p.13)

(3) Ibid: See map showing the distribution of tribes around 1300

(4) Peter Kup: A history of Sierra Leone, 1400-1787. (London 1961) p.124

had arrived either on the coast or at positions in the near interior. These groups, unlike the 'primitives', conserve traditions of movement, often in extremely clear terms.

In the population movements south and south-west of the Futa Djalon, the Mande people who played the most significant role were not the Mandingas but the Susus. Living on the Falème, they were part of the empire of Ghana when the Almoravids invaded. They subsequently took up the struggle against the Berbers and Islamicised Saracoles, and achieved power in the Susu (Sosso) empire in the twelfth century. It was in 1235 that they suffered defeat at the hands of the Mandingas, and numbers of Susus fled to the west. (1)

Passing through Tenda country on the Gambia, the first Susu migrants proceeded south along the west side of the Futa Djalon. But, they faced hostility from the Badjarancas, and had to move south of the Corubal. Later Susu travellers avoided the Badjar, and journeyed down the east side of the massif. (2)

The Susu migration had multiplier effects in sparking off other population dislocations. The Nalu traditions are very precise. Led by Manga Taulia, they travelled westwards, making their first settlement at Bigine (near Bafata on the Geba). Later they moved on owing to Beafada pressure; and forming five sub-divisions, they occupied the region between Ria Tombali

(1) D. Tamsir Niane: "Recherches sur l'Empire du Mali au Moyen Age", Recherches Africaines, No. 1, Jan-March 1960, pp 17-36

(2) M. Saint-Père: "Petit Historique des Sossoe du Rio Pongas", Bulletin du Comité des Etudes Historiques et Scientifiques 1930, tome XII, pp.26-47.

and the Nunez. (1) Caught up in the same process were the Bagas, a group of whom, known as the Baga Foré, settled in the highlands of Cape Verga, as well as in the low swamps of the estuary of the Nunez and the Componi. (2)

The Tyapis and Landumas never reached the coast, remaining in the immediate hinterland of the Nalus and Bagas. But the final group in this category, the Temnes, were to become one of the most powerful tribes on the Sierra Leone littoral. Up to the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Temnes were still considered as an inland people, (3) but, by the end of that century, they had reached the Sierra Leone estuary, and had cut the Bullom tribe into two parts, the northern branch of which was subsequently whittled down by Temne and Baga pressure.

The waves of migrations always had two aspects: one of displacement and one of assimilation. Some of the inhabitants of the Futa Djalon were pushed on to the coast by the Susus, while others must have remained behind to form part of a new ethnic compound. The Futa Djalon was said to have been peopled at the time of the Susu arrival by the Djalonkés, which is a tautology, because nké is a Mande suffix, meaning "man of". (4) The tribe which is today known as the Djalonkés or Yalunkas, who are considered as closely related to the Susus, must represent the fusion of the original stock of the Futa Djalon

(1) J. Garcia de Carvalho: "Nalus de Bedanda", In Inquérito Etnográfico p.150

(2) Fernand Rouget: La Guinée, p.146 (Apud M.Saint-Père, Op.cit.

Note 2.

(3) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique p.80

(4) Antonio Carreira: Ô fundamento dos Etnónimos na Guiné Portuguesa p.10

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with the Susus. It is perhaps not without significance that a large section of the Djalonkés were called 'Soolimas' - men of the sharpened teeth - a feature which distinguished the Bagas and Nalus on their arrival on the coast.

In many respects, the Futa Djalon was a crucial transitional zone between the Western Sudan and the Upper Guinea Coast. The Susus, in their turn were to be replaced by the Fulas, who first made their entry into the area in the fifteenth century.

The advent of the Fulas in the Futa Djalon is generally associated with a warrior king by the name of Coli Tenguela who features in a large number of traditions collected over a wide area of the Western Sudan, the Senegambia and the Upper Guinea Coast. The core of these traditions suggests that Coli Tenguela first liberated the Futa Djalon from the rule of the Mandinga emperor of Mali, and afterwards crossed the Gambia to do the same for Futa Toro in the Tekrur, then directly under the sovereignty of the Wolof and part of the empire of Mali.

Coli Tenguela has been identified with Coli Temala, mentioned in the Decadas of João de Barros as the king of Tucorol and of the Fulas. De Barros wrote that, "the said Temala in those times, lit in those parts the fire of war, raising himself from the south, in a district called Futa". (1) An imperfect understanding of João de Barros led to the dating of the harassment of the Mandinga emperor by Coli Temala to a period around 1534; but, in a clear exposition, the Portuguese scholar, A. Teixeira da Mota, reveals that

(1) João de Barros: Asia, Primeira Decada (Ed. Antonio Baião, Coimbra 1932) p.117.

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the events to which João de Barros was referring, which involved the sending of a Portuguese embassy to the Fula king, had taken place in the reign of D. João II, that is to say, between the years 1481 and 1495. (1)

Texeira da Mota goes further and draws attention to the fact that other Portuguese sources had recorded that there had been a full-scale invasion of the Fulas from the Senegambia across the Gambia. Alvares de Almada was himself familiar with the point on the Gambia where the Fula army had forded the river, the spot retaining the name of Passo dos Fulas. The details of the Fula operations were colourfully recorded. "They came determined to ferry this army across the river, but having no boats for this purpose, the river being at that point one league wide, they filled it with rocks in such a way that the whole army crossed. Many aver that the army was so great that it was unnecessary for each soldier to carry more than one rock. Be that as it may, they blocked the river, and the whole army crossed with its baggage, which was great, because they had numerous horses, camels, donkeys and cows ... they carried hives of bees, which they let loose upon their enemies when the wind was favourable. This was a terrifying army. Never was another of equivalent size seen among these nations, destroying and laying waste everything, passing through the territory of the Mandingas, Cassangas, Banhuns and Buramos, a distance of more than 150 leagues, until they came to the Rio Grande, the country of the Beafadas, where the Fulas were defeated." (2)

(1) A Texeira da Mota: Nota sobre a historia dos Fulas: Coli Tênguela e a chegada dos primeiros Fulas ao Futa-Jalon (Lisboa 1952) p.59

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.281,282.

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This event was known to Alonso de Sandoval, a Spanish Jesuit at Cartagena, who collected information on the Upper Guinea Coast for his publication of a treatise on Africa in 1623; (1) and later in the seventeenth century, the tradition reached the ears of the Portuguese trader, Lemos Coelho. (2) It is highly probable that the crossing represented the arrival of Coli Tenguela. Writing in 1594, De Almada said that the events occurred about 80 or 90 years previously. Texeira da Mota argued, with perspicuity, that de Almada was likely to have been dating the events from the time he first came in possession of the material in the 1560's or 1570's. He thus gave the likely period as between 1474 and 1484. De Almada's own revision of his text in 1596 bears this out fully, for on that occasion, he wrote that the Fula army had arrived about a hundred and twenty years earlier, (3) which means about the year 1476. If the conquest of the Futa Djalon was carried out at that date, it would have been perfectly feasible for Coli to have left for the north and established himself as king of Tucuror by the time that D. João II sent his envoy. (1481-1495)

The early interpretation of the traditions surrounding Coli Tenguela advanced that the Fulas of Massina had revolted in 1512-13 against Askia Mohamed; and, after this failed, a migration was embarked upon, led by

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- (1) Alfonso de Sandoval: Naturaleza ... de todos Etiopes (Seville, 1623) p.38.
 (2) Damião Peres (Ed.): Duas Descrições Seiscentistas da Guiné de Francisco de Lemos Coelho (Lisboa 1953) p.19
 (3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.282 (Editor's note)

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Coli Tenguela. Though it can now be taken that both the Futa Djalon and the Futa Toro must have been lost to the emperor of Mali before the end of the fifteenth century, (1) it is not possible to give a clear alternative explanation of the origins of the Fula invasions.

The knowledge of this subject rests on traditional histories, which have not been successfully unravelled. Andre Arcin felt certain that it is impossible for Coli Tenguela to have been the author of all the deeds that have been attributed to him, so that several different persons must have been presented as a single personality. (2) It has recently been discerned that the traditions refer not to an individual but to a dynasty. This dynasty, the Denianké, are considered as having originated in Massina, but the Coli Tenguela who led the armed intrusion of the Fulas into the Futa Djalon, according to two accounts, came from the Boundou (between the upper Gambia and the Falème). From Boundou, Coli Tenguela proceeded to Timbo, Labé, Timbi, and finally to Gueme Sangan, where he built a fort, the ruins of which are still to be seen. After Coli left for the north, he never returned. (3) As the result of the Fula arrival, there was some displacement of the Susus, Djalonkés, Bagas and probably Temnes; and there was also intermixture, as word 'Tenda' indicates. But the Fulas did not constitute a significant

(1) French scholars have re-examined the issue, and have accepted the late fifteenth century date. (See D. Tamsir Niane: "A propos de Koli Tenguela", Recherches Africaines, No. 4, Oct-Dec, 1960

(2) André Arcin: Histoire de Guinée Française (Paris 1911) p.67

(3) D. Tamsir Niane: "A propos de Koli Tenguela" (Op.cit., Note 1)

proportion of the population of the region. Their military victory was accomplished by using the local tribes as their agents, especially the 'Paleo-Negritics'. Some of the latter even claim descent from Coli Tenguela, though they were clearly there when he arrived; (1) and it is fairly certain that the 'Cocolis', mentioned very often in sixteenth and seventeenth century European texts, were part of the Tyapi tribe which had served with Coli Tenguela (2)

Western Sudanese influences passed onto the Upper Guinea Coast not only from the Falème, but also from the Niger itself, via tributaries like the Tinkisso. The arrival of peoples from this latter direction affected the most southerly and south-easterly sections of the Upper Guinea Coast. Three groups have to be considered: the Konos, Vais and Korankos. The first two are closely related. They came from beyond the Upper Niger and settled between the Limbas and the Kissis (3) The tradition is that the Konos and the Vais were the same people when they arrived in what is now the northern district of the south-eastern province of Sierra Leone. They were in search of salt which they had heard was plentiful along the coast, but when the Konos

(1) Claude Halle: "Notes sur Koly Wenguella, Olivier de Sanderval et les ruines de Gueme-Sangan", Recherches Africaines No. 1, January-March 1960, pp.37-4

(2) A. Texeira da Mota: Guiné Portuguesa, vol. 1, p.152

(3) a) Yves Personne: "Les Kissi et leurs statuettes de pierre"

b) Ibid "Un Quête d'une Chronologie Ivoirienne", The Historian in Tropical Africa, (Ed. J. Vansina, R. Mauny and L.V. Thomas, London 1964) p.328.

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saw that there was much game and good farming land on the savannahs, they decided to stop, while the Vais went to the sea. (1) The Koranko migration was a more powerful affair. They too came from a north-eastly direction, driving a further wedge between the Limbas and the Kissis. (2)

Finally, of the Mande peoples on the Upper Guinea Coast, special consideration must be given to the Mandingas. If (as one would expect) in the process of population movement from the Sudan to the Upper Guinea Coast, there were periods of greater intensity, then the eleventh century would certainly have been such; bringing as it did the Almoravid invasion of the Saracole empire. When attempts at Islamisation were made, population dislocations resulted. The Mandingas would have been affected by this proselytisation, and prompted to move west, away from the centre of the Saracole power. On the other hand, when the Mandingas achieved ascendancy, they continued to move westward, to establish empire. Sundiata, (1230-1255) the first of the Mandinga emperors of Mali, was very active in expanding towards the west, and his empire reached to the Tekrur and the Gambia; while it was under Mansa Mussa (1307-1332) that Mali reached its greatest extension westwards. (3)

The Mandingas were well established on the Upper Guinea Coast when the

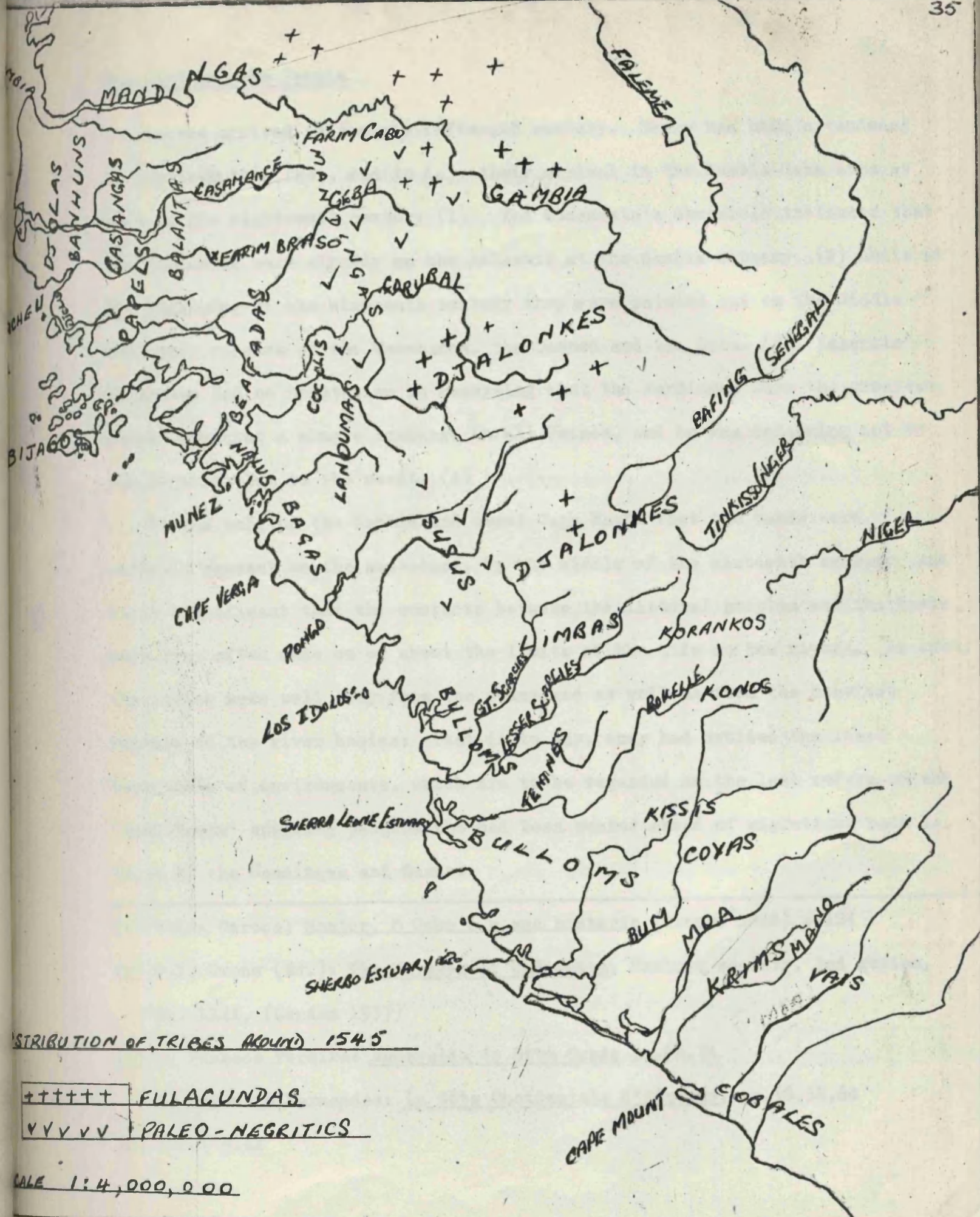
(1) Robert T. Parsons: Religion in an African society (Leiden 1964)

Introduction, p. xii.

(2) Y. Person: "Les Kissi et leurs statuettes de pierre" (Op.Cit) p.13

(3) D.T. Niane and J. Suret-Canale: Histoire de l'Afrique Occidentale.

(Conakry-Paris, 1961) See maps on pp.39,42



DISTRIBUTION OF TRIBES AROUND 1545

+++++	FULAGUNDAS
vvvvv	PALEO-NEGRITICS

SCALE 1:4,000,000

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Portuguese arrived in the mid-fifteenth century. There has been a tendency to overlook this fact, and to date their arrival in the Gambia-Geba area as late as the eighteenth century (1) Yet Cadamosta's chronicle indicated that the Mandingas were already on the Atlantic at the Gambia estuary, (2) while at the beginning of the sixteenth century they were pointed out on the middle and upper reaches of the Casamance, the Cacheu and the Geba. (3) Valentim Fernandes had no hesitation in asserting that the Mandingas were the greatest people speaking a single language in all Guinea, and he was referring not to the interior but to the coast. (4)

It was only on the Gambia and about Cape Mount that the Mande were actually present on the sea-coast, by the middle of the sixteenth century, and it is significant that the contacts between the littoral peoples and the Mande were very often made on or about the limits of the tide on the rivers. As such, the latter were well away from the swampland as well as from the heaviest forests of the river basins: that is to say, they had avoided the least hospitable of environments, which are to be regarded as the last refuge of the 'semi-Bantu' speaking peoples who had been pushed ahead of migrations such as those of the Mandingas and Susus.

(1) Velez Caroco; Monjur, O Gabu e a sua historia (Bissau 1948) p.104

(2) G.R. Crone (Ed.): The Voyages of Cadamosta, Hakluyt society, 2nd series, No. LXXX, (London 1937)

(3) a) Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis pp.68,74

b) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, pp.36,58,68

(4) Ibid: p.44

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All the peoples so far enumerated, whether Mande or non-Mande, made their contribution to building up the population of the Upper Guinea Coast. The corollary to the numerical increase of the population is that the whole cultural pattern can only be understood in the light of the continuous drift of population from the Western Sudan.

It is usual to classify the peoples of the Upper Guinea Coast as the West Atlantic language group. But Baumann, who first employed the categorisation West Atlantic, did not intend that it should be viewed simply from a point of view of language. He accepted the linguistic classification "semi-Bantu", while "West Atlantic" was a cultural definition, best brought out in contrast to the "Upper Niger Circle", where the Mande and Fulas had their homes. The most characteristic trait of the Upper Guinea Coast was "the initial absence of all state organisation and the superior civilisation which distinguished the Mande of the interior". (1)

On the coast, the society comprised basically the "Paleo-Negritics" and the other "semi-Bantu" newcomers (like the Bagas and the Temnes). Sudanese peoples arriving on the Upper Guinea Coast had indeed overlaid the West Atlantic culture with a lamina of Mande civilisation, but in the process they too had become part of the littoral society, swallowed up by the forest to which they had come seeking refuge from the states of the Western Sudan. Baumann explains as follows: "In giving this term (West Atlantic) an

(1) H. Baumann and D. Westermann: Les Peuples et les Civilisations de l'Afrique

(Suivi de) Les Langues et l'Education (Paris 1962) pp.367

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ethnographical connotation, it comprehends not only the Semi-Bantu tribes who are recognised as a linguistic entity, and who constitute the kernel of the West Atlantic circle, but also those Mandes known as Mande-fou. These latter are a branch of the Mandinga people who dominate the Western Sudan; they have penetrated the forests in a southerly direction, and are mixed with the people of the West Atlantic type, giving birth to the type known as Mande-fou, but whose civilisation is essentially West Atlantic". (1)

The two features implicit in the development of the West Atlantic civilisation are thus, firstly the evolution of a way of life to suit the given ecology, and secondly, the accretionary growth about a cultural nucleus, resulting from the arrival of newcomers.

By the time that the Europeans arrived on the Upper Guinea Coast, all the peoples had passed the stage where they led a semi-nomadic life as hunters and fishermen. Such were the circumstances of the earliest days of migration, as some traditions recall. Though group conflict was also recorded, the fundamental struggle must have been against an environment which was strange and hostile. The earliest European accounts indicate that the people of the Upper Guinea Coast had evolved a settled way of life in response to the land.

Modern investigators have found that there is a basic linguistic and cultural unity corresponding to the geographical unit of "the Rivers of the South". This unity hinges about the radical, bulom, which in various derived

(1) H. Baumann and D. Westermann: Les Peuples et les Civilisations de l'Afrique

(Suivi de) Les Langues et l'Education. (Paris 1962) p.368.

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forms, appears among all the coastal populations to designate the low lands, the stagnant water that accumulates thereon, the processes associated with the extraction of salt, the agriculture conducted on swampy soil and the human settlements established there. (1) The most obvious example is the Bullom tribe in Sierra Leone. They took their name directly from the habitat with which they were so intimately associated, and which must always be borne in mind when one speaks of the littoral plains. (2) The Papel word blom means "low flooded land"; among the toponyms for rivers, estuaries and islands feature names such as Buam, Bôlama and Bolong; the cultivation of inundated rice is carried on in bolanhas; and tradition has it that the original inhabitants of the Mansoa region (between the Cacheu and the Geba) were a people called Olom. (3) Perhaps the most significant of the terms in this group is the word pulom, which is applied to the silk-cotton tree. (*Bombax ceiba*) It is significant because these trees are held to be sacred, the residence of certain spiritual beings (often called Bloms) and the identification of a people with their environment is never close than when it is expressed in religious terms.

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- (1) Richard-Molard: Unpublished manuscript. Cited in A. Teixeira da Mota and M.G. Ventim Neves: A habitação indígena na Guiné Portuguesa (Bissau 1948) pp. 40,89.
- (2) a) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor" (Op.Cit).
 b) John Barbot: A Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea (London 1746) p.97
- (3) A. Teixeira da Mota: Guiné Portuguesa vol.1, p.330

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One common and basic reaction to the riverain nature of the Upper Guinea Coast was the utilisation of the water routes for transport and communications. Life was characterised by frequent re-unions for social, religious and political purposes, and for these the canoe was the means of transport. The Jesuit missionary, Father Baltezar Barreira, was struck by the speed with which Sierra Leoneans assembled at any given spot by means of their canoes. (1) Moreover, they demonstrated a distinct preference for this form of travel, even if it meant porting their canoes overland to make the necessary connection between two rivers.

Canoes were carried overland across the neck of the Sierra Leone peninsula which meant in effect the linking of the water systems immediately north and south of the mountainous portion of Sierra Leone. (2) Further north, the tributaries of the Gambia, Casamance and Cacheu virtually reached out for each other, so that, by a combination of water routes and short land connections, the whole region became a unit. (3) Naturally the waterways were also used for non-pacific purposes. The Bijagos, strategically situated close to the Cacheu, Mansoa, Geba and Ria Grande de Buba, used their almadias

(1) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação annal das coisas que fizeram os Padres da Companhia de Jesus nas suas missões Vol. 3, 1607-1609 (Ed. Artur Viegas, Lisboa, 1942) p.250

(2) Ibid: Vol. 1; 1600-1603 (Ed. Artur Viegas, Coimbra, 1930) p.408

(3) M. Bertrand-Bocandé: "Notes sur la Guinée Portugaise ou Sénégalie Meridionale", Bulletin de la Societé de Geographie de Paris, 1849, Vol.11, pp.265, 350 and Vol. 12, pp.57-93

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or war canoes to terrorise the inhabitants of the region. Without a doubt, whether used for good or ill, the rivers were the autobahnen of the Upper Guinea Coast.

The canoe could vary from the tiniest of vessels, barely able to hold one person, to relatively sophisticated craft, capable of holding upwards of sixty persons and of travelling on the open sea. The first extreme is provided by the small canoes used by the Djolas to traverse their flooded rice fields, and the second by the almadia or war canoe, which was most fully developed by the Bijagos. On his second voyage to Guinea, Hawkins found some fifty medium-sized canoes within the Sherbro estuary. Fashioned from a single trunk the final proportions were 24 x 3 feet, with a prow in the form of a beak, a proportionately raised stern, and an exterior artistically carved and painted blue. Each held about twenty to thirty men, but the active crew comprised a helmsman and four rowers, using very long oars with relatively small blades. (1)

The Bijago almadia was a much larger affair, hewn from the giant silk-cotton tree, and measuring about seventy feet in length. A number of boards, called falsas by the Portuguese, were added to the sides, and, thus modified, each almadia carried twenty-four men and their weapons, and had room for prisoners and cattle when returning from their expeditions on the mainland. Yet its principal advantage was not its size but its seaworthiness. On the Senegal, the residents built vessels which allowed them to engage in deep-sea fishing, but south of the Gambia it was only the Bijago almadia that

(1) Hakluyt Society, Vol. LVII, p.17

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traversed the open sea. Thus it was that the coastal peoples were incapable of retaliation against the Bijago attacks. One feature which won admiration was the way in which the trunk was scooped to leave a thin shell, which at the sides was only as thick as the thumb. (1) It was also propelled in a different manner from the canoes lower down the coast in Sierra Leone, according to a nineteenth century reference. All the individuals on board were rowers, who squatted at the bottom of the boat, and rose at the beginning of each stroke of their short oars. (2) These techniques were the Bijagos' answer to their insular conditions.

At all times, the canoe held its place as an integral and distinctive part of the littoral culture. It was not just coincidence that the Bulloms were said to inhabit the country "as far inland as one can paddle a canoe" (3) Nor is it surprising that in 1620 Richard Jobson found on the Gambia that "the country people have no boates or canoos above the ebbing and flowing". (4) A large canoe was a valuable piece of property, which was not as common as the thick forests might lead one to believe. Its construction was the work of specialists, sometimes brought in from outside the tribe, as in the case of the Djolas, who employ Mandinga boatbuilders. (5) The importance of such

(1) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor"

(2) E. Stallibrass: "The Bijouga or Bissagos Islands", Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, 1889

(3) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.80

(4) Richard Jobson: The Golden Trade (London, 1626) p.20

(5) L.V. Thomas: Les Diola, Vol. 1, p.30

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a specialist is attested to by the proverb "the blood of kings and the tears of the canoe-maker are sacred things which must not touch the ground".(1)

Just as the dependence on water transport was the outcome of the numerous rivers of the Upper Guinea Coast, so the manufacture of salt was the concomitant of the salinity of the water. Investigation has disclosed three methods of obtaining salt in northern Sierra Leone. Firstly, the collection of salt deposited on the leaves of the mangrove; secondly, the direct evaporation from sea-water; and, thirdly, the extraction from salt-impregnated soils.(2) To collect salt from the mangrove leaves must always have been the easiest operation, though it could hardly have yielded much. The Portuguese had noticed that the salt was prepared with the aid of fire, (3) which embraces both of the remaining two methods. The more popular was the extraction from areas of salt marsh. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Lieutenant John Matthews, after visiting Sierra Leone, wrote that the sun-hardened silt was collected sometime after the biennial flooding of the

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- (1) A. Pereira Cardoso: "A influencia exercida nos povos da Guiné pelas principais culturas que, em épocas pre-históricas, penetraram no Continente Africano. Boletim Geral das Colonias, 1929, No. 44, p.15
- (2) R. Glanville: "Salt and the salt industry of the Northern Province" in Sierra Leone Studies, No. XVI
- (3) (a) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação anual, Vol.2, 1604-1606 (Ed. Artur Viegas, Coimbra 1931) p.200
- (b) Alvares de Almeida: "Rios de Guiné" p.345

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plains at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. The caked mud was then dissolved in water in large earthen pots, and boiled in shallow brass pans. The hardened silt could only be obtained during the dry season, but where the plains were extensive the collection was carried out during the dry season, and huts were built for a few old people to boil the salt during the rains. (1)

Matthews' description is incomplete, and gives a too casual picture of the salt industry of the Upper Guinea Coast. Salt manufacture was not tied to the biennial flooding of the plains, but was linked to the daily tidal pattern. The water of the sea or a nearby river was received into large shallow ponds at high tide and permitted to evaporate. The saline crust which remained was scraped up with a portion of earth to a depth of a 1/4 inch, and dissolved in warm salt water to which a quantity of wood ash was added. The solution was poured into a conical strainer of palm leaves, at the apex of which straw was placed to prevent the earthy matter from passing through. Thus, by percolation, the salt water and the soil were separated, and the salt finally evaporated to dryness in specially constructed clay ovens, covered with tin or iron basins. (2) The operation had very often to yield results before the rainy season started in June. This was partly because from May onwards the labour force was deployed in agricultural work, and partly because the salt was sold during the dry season to obtain basic foodstuffs. Thus, in 1728, Senhora Maria, a leading Bullom lady, concentrated

(1) John Matthews: Voyage to the River Sierra Leone, (London 1788) p.37

(2) R.R. Glanville: "Salt and the salt industry of the Northern Province" in Sierra Leone Studies, No. XVI

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her attention until late May on the production of salt, canoe loads of which were immediately transported to the upper Port Loko Creek and exchanged for rice. (1) That it was still found necessary to use the labour of old people during the rains, shows that salt making was virtually an all the year round activity.

The final product of the evaporation process was of excellent quality, in spite of the incomplete separation of soil particles, and it was preferred to that procured by boiling the sea water. (2) As already indicated, the names of the process associated with the manufacture of salt often derived from that very expressive and central term Bulom. Salt manufacture on the Upper Guinea Coast formed part of a basic geographical, economic and cultural complex. De Almada had noticed the conjuncture of four factors - the limit of the tides on the river was the point where the mangrove ceased, where canoes became rare, and where salt became really scarce. (3) This scarcity bred trade.

The ability of salt to generate trade and to attract people over amazing distances is well known. The Senegal was involved in the great trade net of the Sudanic empires by virtue of the salt obtainable at Aulil, at the mouth of the Senegal river. (4) The same cannot be said for the Upper Guinea

(1) P.R.O., T70/1465: Diary of chief factor, Walter Charles, Bence Island, Sierra Leone, 1728.

(2) John Matthews: Voyage to the river Sierra Leone, p.37

(3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.280

(4) E. Bovill: The Golden Trade of the Moors (London 1958) p.81.

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Coast, but salt was nevertheless the most important item fostering contacts between the littoral and the hinterland.

The Bagas, on the swampy coast where the Pongo entered the sea, were particularly important salt-producers as far as exports were concerned. It was noted in the latter half of the seventeenth century, that, every year, three great caravans of Djalonkés (the inhabitants of the Futa Djalon) set out for the coast, principally in search of salt. One went north to the Senegal, one to the Gambia, and a third to the Pongo, where their presence was responsible for the existence of the largest market in the region. (1) The Susus also resorted in great numbers to the Pongo and the Nunez, and in the sixteenth century were acting as middlemen between the Fulas and the coastal people. (2) Salt generated similar activity on the Gambia. In the sixteenth century, the Gambia salt supplies were shipped upriver and deposited at Cassan, where crowds of Mandingas and Fulas were attracted. (3) Up to the late eighteenth century, this trade gave great power and authority to the Mandinga king of Barra at the Gambia estuary, since he had a fleet of canoes employed in ferrying salt upriver. (4)

(1) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições Seiscentistas da Guiné, pp.23,61

(The word Coelho used is "Jagancazes". This (along with "Jalungas" used by Valentim Fernandes) is to be identified with the people of the Futa Djalon.)

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné" p.347

(3) Ibid: p.347 (De Almada also referred to the 'Putazes', who appear to have been a section of Susus.)

(4) Mungo Park: Travels p.4

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Of course, it was in the sphere of agricultural production that the littoral peoples faced their greatest challenges, having to wrestle, not only with the forests, but also with the more intractable swamps. The major problems involved in the agricultural utilisation of the swamps were drainage, desalination and the protection of the recaptured land from the sea and the tides. Even after this, the heavy rainfall and resultant flooding for many months of the year automatically eliminated certain crops from among those which might have been desired. Indeed, inundated rice was virtually the only possibility, and it was to this that the Africans turned to achieve agricultural mastery of the marshlands.

De Almada specified that on the Gambia the residents were growing their crops on the riverain deposits, and by a system of dikes had harnessed the tides to their own advantage.(1) The system of irrigated farming extended south of the river Cacheu - that is to say, throughout the territory inhabited by the Djolas. The name Baiotes given to a large section of the Djolas, means "men of the rice nursery" (the rice nursery being the distinguishing feature of swamp rice cultivation). (2) By the early seventeenth century, this creole designation was already current, attesting to the characteristic employment of a large number of Djolas (3) When an official of the French Company of the Senegal travelled through Djola territory in 1685 he remarked that there was no house which did not have a rice nursery nearby, while along

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné" p.285

(2) Antonio Carreira: O Fundamento dos Etnónimos na Guiné Portuguesa, p.6

(3) Alonso de Sanderval: Natureleza de todos Etiopes, pp.6, 38

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the river banks the landscape had been transformed into a pattern of causeways with rice plants appearing above the flooded fields. (1)

The Djolas were important vendors, who supplied rice to their African neighbours as well as to the Portuguese settlement of Cacheu; preserving their role as the main rice producers of the area well into the nineteenth century. (2) Their productivity must have been based not on any greater area of cultivation but on superior yields, and it is well known that quantitatively the yield of 'dry' rice is far inferior to that of 'wet' rice. This consideration inclines one to believe that there were two other localities where swamp rice was grown on an appreciable scale. The first is the Upper Port Loko Creek in Sierra Leone. Both the Bulloms of the coast and the English of Bence Island were dependent on the Port Loko area for supplementary supplies of rice obtained principally in exchange for salt prepared by the Bulloms. The fish caught by the Bulloms was also used to acquire rice from the Lokos (3) The second region is the estuary of the Nunez, which was one of the chief sources of rice for the Portuguese in the seventeenth century. The Portuguese (mainly Afro-Portuguese) carried on an extremely

(1) P. Cultru: Premier Voyage de Sieur de la Courbe fait a la Coste d'Afrique, en 1685 (Paris 1913) p.209.

(2) M. Bertrand-Bocandé: "Notes sur La Guinée Portugaise ou Sénégambie Meridionale" (Op.cit.)

(3) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor"

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flourishing trade in local products such as rice, salt and kola. (1) The bagas and

Nalus were producing rice surpluses which the Portuguese were able to redistribute. The only time when dry rice was being produced in similar quantities dated from the late eighteenth century, when the Susus were cultivating extensive areas with forced labour. (2)

The creole Portuguese vocabulary provides two words which distinguish the change wrought on the marshland by rice farming. Before its utilisation the swamp is called a lala; while, subsequently, it is known as a bolanha. Both words appear in the literature on the region since the sixteenth century. The transformation from lala to bolanha was a very laborious one, requiring, as the first essential, the building of large dams of earth and wood along the river banks. These vary in size according to the amplitude of the tides in the particular area. At various points, outlets, called bombas in the creole dialect and ehungat by the Djolas, were fitted into the dikes. To fashion a bomba, a section of the trunk of the cibe (*Borassus Aethiopium*) was selected, which narrowed into a cone at one end. After being hollowed, the small end was covered with woven straw in such a way that it acted as a valve opening only towards the exterior. Sometimes a small canoe was employed, with a board placed in position to act as a

(1) See below, Ch. VIII, p. 451.

(2) Lord Stanley: "Narrative of W.C. Thompson's Journey from Sierra Leone to Timbo, Capital of Futa Jallo in West Africa" in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, 1846, p.106

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valve. In both cases, the valves function automatically, remaining closed against the pressure of sea-water on the outside, and draining the excess of rain-water within the bolanha when this water reached the height of the bombas.

The Bolanha was not normally used during the first two or three years. During this period, the rain water was allowed to accumulate and was discharged several times in the rainy season, thus reducing the salinity of the soil. The mangrove which remained inside the reclaimed land died and rotted, and was spread as fertiliser. Smaller interior dams were also constructed, dividing the bolanha into property lots. The whole operation was lengthy and strenuous. The main dike was sometimes several miles long, and in such cases, hundreds of people were involved in its construction. Besides, the dikes subsequently required constant care against the crabs which bored holes from one side to the other, against the cracks which appeared when the mud dried, and above all against the powerful action of the tides.(1)

Although 'wet' rice was important, the 'dry' varieties were far more prevalent, and the most widespread form of agriculture practised on the Upper Guinea Coast was the itinerant rotational one, which is still prevalent. Essentially, this consists in winning from the forest each successive year

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- (1) (a) A. Marques de Mano: "Visita a Guiné", B.C.G.P., Vol.2, No. 6, 1947
 Bolém Cultural da Guiné Portuguesa.
- (b) A. Teixeira da Mota: Guiné Portuguesa. Vol.1, pp.292-294
- (c) L.V. Thomas: Les Diola, pp.111-116 (Description of the highly evolved Diola techniques of rice farming)

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enough ground on which to sow the necessary crops. It was observed that the Sierra Leoneans were able to distinguish the Pleiades (which the Bulloms called a-warrang) and, by their position at sunset, could judge when it was time to prepare the fields for sowing. (2) The period between March and June was one of great activity, when, by collective effort, certain areas selected by the tribal authorities were cleared of forest by cutting and burning. Naturally, this had to be effected before the rains came, usually in June. A Jesuit report from Sierra Leone in 1616 recounted that in that year the rains set in before the work of clearing the forest could begin. This was attributed by the exponents of the tribal religion to the presence of the Jesuits, but fortunately for the missionaries and the Christian converts, the weather cleared up in May. (1)

The bulk of the heavy work of clearing the forest was undertaken by the men. The smaller trees were cut level with the ground, while the larger tree-stumps were left to be consumed by termites and fire. (2) The tall elephant grass which grows in the near interior permitted the flames to spread quickly. Travellers at that time of the year often commented on the smoke rising from the forest (3). The ground thus prepared for cultivation

(1) A.T.T. Castorio das Jesuitas 304:56, No. 1, Journey of Francisco Pinto

Pereira to Salvador, Sierra Leone, April 1616

(2) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor"

(3) The early Portuguese observers named one of the rivers leading into the Sherbro estuary as "the River of Smoke", conceivably because they saw the smoke rising from the rice farms, as Peter Kup suggests.

See History of Sierra Leone, p.8

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was referred to by the Portuguese as lugars. Since the term was adopted by the English and the French (modified to lougan), it is useful to retain it to describe this type of agriculture.

In July, when the first rains had already moistened the soil, the seeds were sown. It was simple hoe culture. Three types of hoe have been recognised in Sierra Leone: a straight-handled, narrow bladed hoe; one formed from an angled stick with a charred point, which was used for drilling; and a third broad-bladed hoe, employed for cleaning out weeds, and scraping the soil surface. (1) The demands made by this agriculture on the time and energies of the people of the Upper Guinea Coast have sometimes been underestimated. Some reports would have it that, once sown, the grain was left to nature's mercies until the harvest. (2) Closer observation makes it clear that this was not the case. The inhabitants of Sierra Leone were absent from their homes for three-quarters of the year, during the time that they had to clear the forests, hoe the ground, weed their fields and reap the crop. They never bothered to return to their homes during this period, but instead built themselves accommodation in huts called chicas, close alongside their lugars. (3) The ripening of the grain attracted large flocks of rice-birds

(1) G.C. Dunstan: The Agricultural and Forest Products of British West Africa
(London 1911) p.17

(2) T. Winterbottom: An Account of the Native Africans of Sierra Leone, p.50

(3) B.R.A.H., Papeles de Jesuitas, tomo 185, No.1343, "Relação da Costa da Guiné", 1606 by Baltezar Barreira.

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and it was the job of the children and the old people to scare these off. Every year the whole process was repeated. It was usually some five to seven years before any given lugar was cultivated anew, the extensive forests offering an easy inducement to this long rotational cycle.

The lugar was the least desirable method of cultivation. It is wasteful of the forest species and encourages soil erosion. It is felt in some quarters that most of the interior plateaux was wooded, but was denuded over centuries by the "cut and burn" lugar methods. (1) But it is almost certain that this system of farming was not the only one encountered on the non-swampy soils of the Upper Guinea Coast during the period under discussion. Modern studies among several tribes have indicated that they possess a highly evolved system of agriculture based on multiple crop rotation, and the intensive use of fertilisers. None of their processes owe anything to European influence, and they all show signs of being the product of long evolution. (2)

A number of considerations suggest strongly that relatively sophisticated agricultural methods (apart from irrigated rice farming) already existed as early as the sixteenth century on the Upper Guinea Coast. To begin

(1) (a) A. Texeira da Mota: Guiné Portuguesa, Vol.1, pp.47,48

(b) Th. Monod and R. Schnell: Mélanges Botaniques (Dakar 1952) pp.53.54.

(2)^a A. Texeira da Mota: A Agricultura de Brames e Balantas Vista Atraves da Fotografia Aerea (Bissau 1950) pp.135,142.

(b) Ibid: Notas Sobre o Povoamento e a Agricultura Indigena na Guiné Portuguesa (Bissau 1951)

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with, some tribes were buyers and others were sellers of the same crops which they all produced. Though the amount of cultivable land may have varied from tribe to tribe, the explanation seems to lie, not in the amount of land under cultivation, but in the yield, based on differing agricultural techniques. Thus, in the same way that the Djolas had large surpluses of rice to offer for sale; so the Balantas had quantities of prime yams, while the Banhuns produced enough millet to support themselves and the resident Portuguese, as well as to supply the slave ships. (1)

All the peoples who today demonstrate superiority in agriculture are also livestock breeders. This pattern has long been in existence. Cattle had and still have a high religious and social value, ^{though} and meat was not reared for everyday domestic consumption, ~~but~~ obviously, mixed farming made supplies of manure available. The best farmers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries - the Balantas, the Banhuns and the Djolas - all had cattle and goats, while the remaining peoples of the coast had little or no livestock (especially in Sierra Leone), they are never reported as having been accustomed to the use of fertilizers on any appreciable scale, and they had no great reputations as agriculturalists.

Another prominent feature of the advanced agricultural tribes of the Upper Guinea Coast today is that they have gone a long way towards transforming and controlling their natural forest environment. Just as the inhospitable mangrove lala gave way to the cultivated bolanha, so the

(1) Biblioteca de Ajuda (Ms.51-VIII-25: "Relações do Descobrimento da Costa da Guiné", fl.87, Report on Cape Verde and Guiné c.1606.

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thick forest has given way in places to open woodland, where certain species useful to man and domestic animals have been carefully preserved. Among those species retained are the Parkia biglobosa and the Faidherbia albida, both important as cattle fodder. This 'humanisation' of the landscape is considered an unmistakable gauge to agricultural development. (1) Since the beginning of the seventeenth century, André Dornelas had pointed out that Balanta territory was free of heavy vegetation. (2) It was these very Balantas who reared the most livestock in the area, and it was they who provided supplies of foodstuffs for their neighbours. (3)

It is recognised that the 'Paleo-Negritic' Tendas are remarkable agriculturalists, (4) who make the surrounding Mandingas appear shoddy in comparison. Even the much-lauded Fula animal husbandry is far less scientific and effective than that of many of the littoral peoples. (5) That peoples who were far superior producers of food than the Mande and Fula are consistently dubbed 'primitives' is due solely to the contention that they did not erect a superstructure of states.

(1) A. Texeira da Mota: Guiné Portuguesa, Vol. 1, pp.394-303

(2) André Dornelas: "Relação sobre a Serra Leoa"

(3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.309

(4) (a) Baumann and Westermann: Les Peuples et les Civilisations de l'Afrique, p.378

(b) Richard-Molard: Afrique Occidentale Française, p.108

(5) A. Texeira da Mota: Guiné Portuguesa, Vol.1, p.275

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It is undeniable that the Mande peoples represented the most important state-building factor on the Upper Guinea Coast; and this holds good for the Mande as a whole, because, contrary to Baumann's contention, the Susus or Mande-fou were no less developed in their political structure than the Mandingas or Mande-tan. Even after the emperor of Mali lost the Futa Djalon to Coli Tenguela his authority was still maintained on the Upper Guinea Coast through the agency of the Mandingas and Susus.

The central organisational feature of Mande rule on the Upper Guinea Coast was the creation of provinces under the rule of a Farim or governor. (1) In the early sixteenth century, one of the governors was identified as Farinbraço, who was resident on the upper Cacheu. (2) At that time, the Mandingas called the Gambia region Guabuu (3) and from the accounts at the end of the sixteenth century, it turned out that between the Gambia and the Corubal there were two main provinces - Braço and Cabo (or Gabu). Even to-day the Mandingas retain the name Cabo for a large area stretching between the Gambia and the Corubal, while Braço is a smaller region to the east, between the Casamance and the Cacheu. (4) Farim Cabo ruled over the Mandingas who lived to the south of the Gambia, having his capital at Cantor, the greatest trading city on the river. The Beafadas were also subjects of this Farim, while the peoples of the Casamance and the Cacheu

(1) This title in the forms farin, fari and faran was to be found all over the Western Sudan.

(2) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.68

(3) Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, p.64

(4) Ibid: Editor's Note 121.

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were subjects of the Farim Braco. These two major provinces were themselves subdivided into smaller units with a lieutenant of the Farim to be found every sixty or seventy miles. Beneath them lay the petty chiefs, so that the structure of Mandinga rule on the Upper Guinea Coast was extremely hierarchical. Ultimately, all authority was owed to the emperor of Mali, though there were further intermediaries between the Farims of Cabo and Braco on the one hand and the Mandimansa or Emperor on the other. (1)

South of the Corubal, the Susus held sway. This region, the hinterland of Sierra Leone, also had its Farims owing ultimate allegiance to the Mandimansa. Farim Concho (or Farim Susu) and Farim Cocoli were the two principal governors, and they were regarded in the same way as Farims Cabo and Braco to the North. Beneath them were lesser dignitaries like the king of the Bena Susus, who bordered on the Temnes, and the Farim Caputa who held authority in the hinterland of Baga country. (2)

Portuguese observers were impressed by the way that the Emperor of Mali was revered on the coast, recounting that those who were present when his name was called never failed to uncover their heads. (3) However, this was in most cases likely to have been the full extent of their homage to the ruler of Mali, given the system of delegated authority, which left most individuals on the coast virtually under the sole authority of their own chief. Valentim Fernandes stated that the people of the Upper Guinea Coast

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.271,283.

(2) André Dornelas: "Relação sobre a Serra Leoa"

(3) Ibid

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obeyed the Mandimansa perfectly, (1) but this was certainly an overstatement which could scarcely have applied even at the height of Mandinga power, and would have been less true in the sixteenth century when that power was on the wane.

The most concrete aspect of Mande sovereignty was the tribute which they received from the subject peoples, but the further one went from actual Mandinga presence and power, the less likely it was that any obedience of tribute was paid to the Farim. (2) This was to be expected, and it must have been particularly true of those people who were away from actual physical contact with the Mandingas on the middle reaches of the rivers. Even on the Gambia among the Mandingas there was no unity in the seventeenth century, and no vital political connection with the Sudan. The reverence which the peoples of the Upper Guinea Coast continued to give to the Mandimansa can only be taken as evidence of the fact that the past glory of the Mandinga emperors continued to live in their minds, and they considered themselves subjects of the Mandimansa even when there was no longer a Mandinga at the head of a Sudanese empire.

As opposed to the vast, if loosely bound, empires of the Mande, the village and the family were the meaningful categories, where the littoral peoples were concerned. On the Upper Guinea Coast, the population was generally distributed in small to medium-sized villages. Occasionally,

(1) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.74

(2) André Dornelas: "Relação sobre a Serra Leoa"

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there were references to towns with populations of several thousands, such as Quinamo, a Bullom or Krim village on the Bum, which was said to have a population of 5,000 to 6,000 (1) but the average village was not that populous. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the following were named as the main villages of Sierra Leone: Manguy, village of some thousand inhabitants; Maguem, village of 300; Pinto, village of 200; and Bop, village of 150. (2)

Village organisation displayed a marked familial tendency, as recent studies stress. Among the Mendes of Sierra Leone, the basic social unit is the Mawei or farming household, consisting of a man and his wives and children, and frequently also, blood and affinal relatives, such as junior brothers, unmarried sisters and dependents. Regulation of affairs within the Mawei is the responsibility of the Mawei-mui, who is in turn subject to the larger group of his kinsfolk of which the Mawei is a part. As a rule, this group occupies a number of adjacent Maweisia (pl) in the form of a compound, which constitutes a section of a town or sometimes a whole village. The head of this compound or Kuloko is a semi-political figure, acting as a representative of the compound on the town council. (3)

Similarly, the Beafadas distinguish between the Unanga-corda who is the head of a group of huts belonging to the same family and the Unanga-daque,

(1) Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, p.96.

(2) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.80

(3) M. McCulloch: Peoples of Sierra Leone (London 1946) pp.13,15

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who is the chief of the whole village. (1) The family thus retained its identity within the village and had its interests articulated within the village government.

In a Mende village, comprising one hundred persons, using as a point of reference one of the sons of the village headman, Little found thirty persons who were his paternal kin, ten who were his maternal kin, and thirty-two who were connected with him through marriage. (2) This tight family organisation has always been known to be the case among several of the littoral peoples. The Balantas had a multiplicity of petty settlements consisting of family lineages; (3) while the Bijagos and Beafadas were similarly organised. Today, under Mandinga influence, the centralised village is usual among the Beafadas, but in the sixteenth century, the population was so dispersed that attention was drawn to the fact that the Beafadas were an exception to the normal Guinea pattern of the nuclear village. Instead, each noble would have his several wives in a number of houses grouped under his own protection, and at some distance from the nearest such settlement or Apolonia. An Apolonia could be quite large, since a wealthy noble could have numerous wives, and in practice it approximated to the village type of political organisation, the family head ruling with the advice of a council. (4)

(1) O. Gomes Barbosa: "Breve Noticia dos Caracteres Etnicos dos Indigenas da Tribo Biafada", B.C.G.P., Vol.1, No. 2, April 1946

(2) M. McCulloch: Peoples of Sierra Leone, p.15

(3) Bib. de Ajuda, Ms.51-VIII-25: "Relações do Descobrimento da Costa da Guiné", fl.87, Report on Cape Verde and Guinea, 1606.

(4) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.332.

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In so far as the size of political organisation was concerned, it is obvious that one can maintain a distinction between the littoral peoples, on the one hand, and the Mande and Fula, on the other. But it is an entirely different matter to dismiss the one as 'primitive' and commend the other as 'superior', as is the underlying assumption of the categorisations "West Atlantic" and "Upper Niger". In part, the dichotomy is based on ignorance, and in part on certain entirely unscientific assumptions. Machat, a most competent nineteenth century scholar, asserted that the 'primitives' on the littoral of the Upper Guinea Coast had no private or public law. (1) Such a "state of nature" might perhaps have some value as an abstraction of political philosophy, but it obviously exists in no part of the globe where human society has been cradled. Modern investigations show the Papel with a juridical system based on five categories of property; (2) reveal the complexities of Djola law; (3) accredit the secret societies of Sierra Leone as powerful law-making and law-enforcing institutions; (4) and are addressed to such questions as "Le Droit Privé Coniagui". (5) But the studies which reveal such features must be prompted by an awareness that such societies provide a valid and valuable framework for human activities.

(1) J. Machat: Guinée Française, p.

(2) Antonio Carreira: Vida Social dos Manjacos (Bissau 1947)

(3) L.V. Thomas: Les Diola,

(4) M. McCulloch: Peoples of Sierra Leone

(5) J.L. Clavier "Resume du droit privé Coniagui", Bulletin de L.I.F.A.N.,

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The contention that the "West Atlantic" society is characterised by the "initial absence of all superior organisation of states and of all the manifestations of a superior civilisation which distinguishes the Mande domain of the interior" is also extravagant. (1) It seems to be based largely on the contrast between the considerable territorial proportions of the Sudanese states as opposed to the smallness of the social units on the coast. Linked with this is the belief that the littoral peoples had no state superstructure, and thus lived in "societies without states".

As a working definition of a society with a political state, the following will suffice: "A state system may be defined as a political structure in which there is differentiated status between ruler and ruled. It is founded not only on relations of kinship but also on a territorial basis. The most important index is the presence of political offices, i.e., of persons invested with roles which include secular authority over others in given territorial aggregations for which there are effective sanctions for disobedience. Such political offices must furthermore be co-ordinated hierarchically". (2) With respect to all of these criteria, the large majority of societies of the Upper Guinea Coast could scarcely be termed 'stateless'.

(1) Baumann and Westermann: Les Peuples et les Civilisations de l'Afrique, p.36

(2) Jan Vansina, Raymond Maunty and L.V. Thomas: The Historian in Tropical Africa (Studies presented and discussed at the Fourth International African Seminar at the University of Dakar, Senegal 1961) (London 1964) p.87

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It is only the Balantas who can be cited as lacking the institution of kingship. At any rate, there seemed to have been little or no differentiation within Balanta society on the basis of who held property, authority and coercive power. Some sources affirmed that the Balantas had no kings; (1) while an early sixteenth century statement that the Balanta 'kings' were no different from their subjects must be taken as referring simply to the heads of the village and family settlements. (2) It is possible to exclude the Djolas also from the ranks of those who had a political state. Not that the Djolas lack a king, who was in fact a very powerful figure in the early sixteenth century, (3) but clear territorial boundaries of authority do not exist, and, as in the case of the Balantas, the family is the sole effective social and political unit. (4) But, the Balantas and Djolas apart, the peoples of the Upper Guinea Coast had erected institutions of kingship and chieftainship on the base of the village and the family.

Each locality had its chief, who paid allegiance to the king or one of the kings of the tribe. Each king controlled a specific area usually a town and its environs. In the remaining position of the kingdom, the chiefs wielded power over determinate areas. (5)

(1) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor"

(2) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique; p.60

(3) Ibid: p.62

(4) L.V. Thomas: Les Diola

(5) In this study, 'king' will always refer to a personage, who within the given tribe, has no superior; while the term 'chief' will refer to the holder of authority within a section of the tribe, but owing loyalty to the king.

A few examples will illustrate the pattern of organisation of the peoples of the area during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Centred on the large bay of the Ria Grande de Buba were three Beafada kingdoms of Biguba, Guinala and Bissege. The king of Biguba had four chiefs under him, the king of Guinala had seven, and the king of Bissege had five. (1) What this meant in practice was that the kings had absolute control over the towns of Biguba, Guinala and Bissege, respectively, and far lesser authority in the remaining areas of the kingdom, which were ruled by the chiefs. The Papels were similarly organised. The strongest personage in the vicinity of the Portuguese settlement of Cacheu was the king of Mata, with the chief of Mompata falling under his jurisdiction. (2) Apparently, the most powerful Papel leader was to be found at Bassarel in the vicinity of the river Calequisse, south of the Cacheu. At any rate, he is still known as the "chief of chiefs", being vested with the power to determine in part the filling of vacant chieftainships over a wide area. (3) The Sapes also followed the same pattern of political organisation. Each one of the villages had a chief, one of whom was recognised as the sovereign, called Obe Vrig by the Temnes at the beginning of the sixteenth century. (4)

(1) André Dornelas: "Relação sobre a Serra Leoa"

(2) These were the two rulers to whom the Portuguese had to pay rent for their occupation of Cacheu. Cf. Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa, Vol.II, "Relação para el Rey, nosso Senhor do Bispo de Malaca", 1635

(3) J.E. dos Reis: "Manjacos de Calequisse", Inquérito Etnográfico, p.149

(4) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, pp.80,82

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In many respects, the king or chief had no greater power than the nobles. Valentim Fernandes emphasised that the Bullom and Temne overlords of the early sixteenth century had only nominal authority, but were no different from the other chiefs where power was concerned. (1) De Almada reversed the comparison by saying that each Beafada chief was king in his own district. (2) Nevertheless, kingship had developed its own rich symbolism.

There were a number of items with which the king was presented at his coronation without which he could not call himself king. These insignia comprised mainly arms and clothes, generally intended as symbols to maintain tradition and continuity. Thus, in the island of Bissau, the king's spear was like a badge of office, handed down through generations. (3) Other Papel kings had bows which served the same function, while the sceptre of the Sape kings was a sword known as a queto. (4)

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the coronation ceremony of the Upper Guinea Coast was the practice of binding and beating the prospective king before he was anointed. This practice was found among the Papels, the Beafadas and the Sapes, and was always given the same justification; namely, that the king had to learn what punishment was like before he could administer justice to others in strict fairness to all. (5) This highlighted

(1) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.82

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.322

(3) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor"

(4) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.350

(5) Ibid: p.350.

Antonio Dias (Ed.) "Crenças e Costumes dos Indígenas da Ilha de Bissau no Seculo XVIII", Portugal em Africa, Vol.II, No.9, pp.150-165 (based on missionary reports

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the importance of the judicial functions of the king.

The intimate link between the king and the concept of law is demonstrated by the fact that the absence of a king, as in the interval between the death of one king and the crowning of the next, usually meant disorder and lawlessness. When there was civil strife over the succession, an interim of disorder for as much as two years could ensue, (1) but, even when the succession was not disputed, the Papels, for example, utilised the hiatus to commit acts of robbery. (2)

In September 1757, the resident slave dealer, Nicholas Owen, reported that they had had the secret news that the king of Sherbro was dead, "but it is not yet spread abroad, according to their usual custom of keeping their diseased kings a good while hid, in order to make a new one before any trouble ensues". (3) Whether this was consciously held to be so or not, in effect this meant that law existed only through the person of the king, and that if the king was dead everything was permitted. According to recent investigations, there are among the Mendes a large category of crimes against public order, which are classified as crimes against the king's dignity, (4)

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.334.

(2) Antonio Dias "Crenças e Costumes dos Indigenas da Ilha de Bissau, no Seculo XVIII" (The Papels indulged in three days of looting and rioting)

(3) Nicholas Owen: Journal of a Slave Dealer (Ed. E. Martin, London 1930)
p.106

(4) M. McCulloch: Peoples of Sierra Leone, p.24

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in much the same way as the English law contains the concept of the king's peace.

The kings had their courts and their entourages, comprising officials whom European observers variously designated as alcaldes, governors, ambassadors and generals; and there is one reference to the President of the Privy Council of Guinala, (1) and another to the Prime Minister of a Sierra Leone kingdom. (2) However inappropriate such European terms were in the African context, they undoubtedly point to the existence of the political offices which have been considered as the most important index of political states.

The fragmentation of the littoral peoples has also been greatly overstressed. It should not be overlooked that in some tribes, unity existed at a religious level, as in the case of the Djolas, all of whom ultimately recognise the authority of a king-priest. (3) But in any event, the coastal peoples were perfectly capable of entering into viable relations with their neighbours within and without the tribe. The distribution of goods, to take a very important facet of social activity, was extremely well organised on an inter-tribal basis in the Geba-Casamance area, and one of the groups primarily concerned in this were the Balantas, who are often cited as the most typical example of the inhibited 'Primitives'.

(1) John Ogilby: Africa, p.336

(2) S.M. Golberry: Fragments d'un Voyage en Afrique (Paris 1802)
Vol. 2, p.266

(3) L.V. Thomas: Les Diola, pp.201-204

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In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Portuguese realised that the Balantas were the chief agriculturalists and the suppliers of food to the neighbouring peoples. The Beafadas and Papels were heavily dependent on Balanta produce, and in return, owing to the Balanta refusal to trade with the Europeans, goods of European origin reached them via the Beafadas and the Papels. The Balantas did not allow foreigners in their midst, but they were always present in the numerous markets held in the territory of their neighbours. (1)

Markets or fairs were held in the domains of the Cassangas, Banhuns, Papels and Beafadas. A market in any given locality was open to the public either on a given day per week or once every eight days, and the system was organised to permit a large amount of reciprocal attendance. (2) The most important centres attracted a conglomeration of several thousands of buyers and sellers from distances up to sixty miles. At the end of the sixteenth century, the largest was at Bijorei, in Beafada territory, which was said to have been attended by 12,000 people.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, a typical market in Banhun country was described in some detail. Each type of merchandise was reserved to a particular section with the exception of wines made from the

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné" p.309

(2) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.74

(3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.290,311

(3) Ibid: p.328

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fruit of the mompataz and from honey, both of which could be sold in any part of the marketplace. This concession to the wine-vendors was no doubt based on the fact that the market was not solely an economic institution, but was also a social venue of great popularity, where the local fermented drinks were in great demand. The nobles, in particular, being in a position to afford it, used the market as a recreational and social centre. The vendors took up their places early on the morning of market-day; at 10.00 A.M. the stalls were opened; and by evening the activities were terminated until the following week. Two officials of the king had charge of the market. To begin with, they saw to the carrying out of the king's prohibition against the presence of weapons in the market-place, and they also saw to it that justice was done, especially to foreigners in their midst. (1)

A unity of a different sort was found among the peoples south of the Corubal. In the region of Ria Tombali, the Beafadas gave way to the Nalus, and from this point southwards the differences between various groups of people were so small, and their affinities were so great, as to make them into a virtually homogenous society, which went under the generic name of 'Sapes'. The two principal members were the Bulloms and the Temnes, while the Limbas were also an integral element, suggesting that the 'Pre-Mandingas' had merged with the earlier Bullom, and Limba stock. The Cocolis or Landumas, the Nalus and the Bagas were not always called 'Sapes' by European observers, but there is little doubt that substantially they

(1) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique pp.68,70

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were members of the same group. Here the evidence of de Almada is revealing. Firstly, he made it clear that the Bagas, Cocolis and Nalus themselves formed a group, and secondly, he affirmed that the relationship between them and the Sapes was comparable to the relationship between the Spanish and the Portuguese. They all dressed alike, had the same system of justice, and "Understood each other" - a phrase with more than just linguistic significance. De Almada went on to include the Bagas and the Cocolis in the Sape community excepting only the Nalus, because at that time they were very much less domesticated. (1) Although today the Cocolis or Landumas are separated from the mass of Sapes by the Susus and Fulas, they consider themselves related to the Temne. (2) Indeed, the very small tribe of Tyapis, or Sapes who are closely related to the Cocolis, may well have been the ones who gave their names to the Sape grouping. (3)

André Dornelas had this to say about the peoples of Sierra Leone "All these nations are called in general 'Sapes', in the same way that in Spain several nations are called 'Spaniards'". However, unlike sixteenth century Spain, Sierra Leone lacked the elements of a unitary state. In a recent history of Sierra Leone, Peter Kup draws a useful parallel by

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné" pp.341,344,353

(2) Baumann and Westermann: Les Peuples et les Civilisations de l'Afrique, p.3

(3) This seems to be borne out by a reference to "the Sapes Bagas, Sapes Bulloms and Sapes Sapes" in Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas en Africa (Ed. Buenaventura de Carrocera, Madrid 1950) Vol. 2, p.131

pointing out that while the Sape alliance exercised some kind of loose-knit suzerainty, it was in no way comparable to the well disciplined empires of the Western Sudan at the same date. (1) It was not political centralisation but social homogeneity which caused all observers to identify the Sapes as a single family of tribes. In 1507, when Valentim Fernandes wrote, the inhabitants of Sierra Leone were speaking either Temne or Bullom, and, from all accounts, no Sape had any difficulty in communicating with any other Sape. Another common feature of Sierra Leone society was the presence of powerful secret societies, one of which - the Simo - was found among the Bagas, Nalus, Cocolis and Temnes. (2)

What prevailed on the Upper Guinea Coast, and was to prove more significant than the tribal divisions was the class differentiation, based on the distinction between those who had power and authority within the state and those who did not. Most of the Europeans on the Upper Guinea Coast used the Portuguese term 'fidalgo', when speaking of a noble of the region, and they were all careful to distinguish between the king and his fidalgos, on the one hand, and the mass of the population, on the other. The latter were referred to as the plebeus (plebeians), gente comum (common people), or words to this effect. (3) Manuel Alvares spoke of the special situation created when a 'noblewoman' married a 'peasant', among the Banhuns; (4) while an eighteenth century missionary report maintained that in Bissau the sons of the kings were fidalgos, but the grandchildren (in a

(1) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, p.123

(2) See below, Ch.2, p.125

(3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.323,324,333 and Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.88

(4) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor"

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matrilineal system) were "common mechanics". (1)

It was reported that the Banhun nobility had titles equivalent to 'Dukes' and 'Lords', and each travelled with his train of dependents and hangers-on, who went before him, heralding his arrival. (2) These European distinctions were well grounded in reality, and, judging from both historical evidence and modern field studies, they were the type of distinction that the people of the Upper Guinea Coast themselves drew. The Papels of the district of Prabis divide themselves into seven large classes, the most important of which is that of the Jagras or nobles, from among whom the kings and chiefs are recruited. (3) The Beafadas and Bijagos also use this term, (4) and though it must obviously have passed from tribe to tribe, the borrowing is of no recent date. In the sixteenth century, among the Beafadas of Biguba, only the Jagras could succeed to the throne; (5) and the title Jagara, applied to a Banhun king at the beginning of that century, clearly derived from Jagra. (6) The same applies to the Jagarefe, who was the most important dignity apart from the king, among the Papels. (7) The Banhuns, Papels, Beafadas and

(1) Antonio Dias: "Crenças e Costumes dos Indigenas de Ilha de Bissau" (Op.cit)

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.304,305

(3) Antonio Carreira: Vida Social dos Manjacos, p.104 (He calls them Babucim)

(4) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, (See Editors'note 128)

(5) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.334

(6) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.70

(7) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor"

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Bijagos have thus long recognised a class of nobles who transcended tribal boundaries. Among the Sapes, the situation was even more straightforward. The Sape noble was called a Solategi, and it was a status recognised throughout all the tribes of the Sape confederation. It was said of the Solategi in the latter sixteenth century: "And finding himself in any other kingdom whatsoever, even though it was not his, he continued to use and enjoy his privileges and liberties, as if he were in his own land".(1)

It is striking that the Papel Jagras or nobles are the owners of the land, and that everywhere else on the Upper Guinea Coast ethnographic studies point to the fact that the political rulers are the heads of the land-owning families, whose claims derive from descent from those who first settled the locality. The ownership of the land by the kings and nobles is limited in the vital respect that they cannot dispose of the land to anyone outside the tribe, but they have its usufruct, and rights over its disposition within the tribe. (2) Among all these people, the regime of private property is firmly established. Only trees growing wild are regarded as common property, (3) and here one is reminded of Hawkins' observation when he visited Sierra Leone and spoke with the Lançados, (the resident Portuguese traders). "Nothing is common", he said, "save that which is unset by man's hands". Indeed, even the common products of the bush could only be gathered when the nobles gave their approval. (4)

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.351

(2) M. McCulloch: Peoples of Sierra Leone, pp.15,16,25,26,67

(3) Ibid: pp.26,67

(4) Hakluyt Society, No. LVII, The Hawkins Voyages, p.20

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North of the Sapes, the position was the same. Of the Beafadas, it was said at the end of the sixteenth century that "the lands belong to the fidalgos, to whom other individuals pay rent in the products that they have, as among us tithe; but as far as the common people are concerned, they have no lands and inherit nothing". When the time came for gathering the fruits of the trees that were common to all, they did so at the direction of the lord of the land. Any unauthorised picking of fruits met with severe penalties; and, of course, it was the nobles and the kings who dispensed justice. (2)

Among the Balantas, who are to be classed as a "stateless society", the system of land tenure is different. The Balantas are all small land-owners, working their lands on the principle of voluntary reciprocal labour. Thus, when the Balantas clear new areas of swamp for rice cultivation, each one of the working force benefits by receiving a portion of the land reclaimed. Not so with the Papels, however, for they have a well-developed hierarchy of nobles, chiefs and kings who own the land. In their case, land development can only be achieved through the initiative of a rich individual, who can hire the necessary labour; and, since the workers have no stake in the final product, it is not surprising that they have no incentive to undertake the strenuous and demanding job of clearing the swamps. (3) These two contrasting examples indicate that the existence

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.332,338

(2) Ibid: 324,333,348

(3) A. Texeira da Mota: Guiné Portuguesa, Vol.1, p.312

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of a super-structure of states was associated with the presence of a land-owning nobility.

As with the ownership of the land, so with the distribution of the products - there was a manifest inequality among the vast majority of the peoples of the Upper Guinea Coast. At the end of the eighteenth century, Winterbottom wrote of Sierra Leone that "the plantation is cultivated by all the inhabitants of the village in common, and the produce is divided to every family in proportion to its numbers".(1) His contemporary, Golberry, held that this was true of many parts of Africa but not of Sierra Leone. "In this country," he said, "where territorial possessions are known, where individuals own lands, the negroes are rich." (2) Certainly, the principle of "to each according to his need" did not operate anywhere on the Upper Guinea coast, where the state structure embodied a class of privileged rulers. "He is the greatest among them who can afford to eat rice all the year round", wrote John Atkins, (3) and the botanist Azfelius, who made a careful survey of Sierra Leone, in connection with the project for the colonisation of that area, attests that the "Lower class" (sic) subsisted frequently for days together on boiled rice alone, seasoned with some kind of pepper. (4) Further north, Mungo Park also found that "the common class

(1) T. Winterbottom: An Account of the Native Africans of Sierra Leone, p.52.

(2) S.M. Golberry: Fragmens d'un Voyage en Afrique, p.344

(3) John Atkins: A Voyage to Guinea (London 1737) p.49

(4) B.M., Add. Ms. 12131 (Papers relating to Sierra Leone 1792-96.

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of people is but sparing supplied with animal food". (1) Even the limited diet of the poor was exhausted in between harvests, and they had to seek out the tarrafe, growing alongside the river banks. (2)

The difference between the nobles and the plebians was most obvious where their dress was concerned. In the sixteenth century, some of the poorest members of the society still wore grass skirts, but the majority wore a small covering of the skin of some animal, usually goatskin. (3) Over this, the kings and nobles wore ample shirts and trousers of cotton. (4) Their ornaments and accoutrements equally reflected the difference in status. For instance it was customary for the fidalgo to wear an iron ring on his thumb and a jingle in his palm, knocking the two together to give certain commands. (5) Another possession of the nobles was the Bombalon or telegraph drum. This is a unique instrument, consisting of a length of tree trunk of considerable girth, which is hollowed out through a narrow slit in one side. Beaten with wooden sticks, the bombalon can clearly be heard up to a distance of nearly ten miles in the silence of the night. (6) The messages

(1) Mungo Park: Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa, p.11

(2) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor"

(3) Ibid

Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, pp.76,94 (See Editors' note 152)

(4) Ibid: p.94

Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.302,325,347,289

(5) Ibid: p.327

(6) I am grateful to Senhor Antonio Carreira, who showed me various exemplars of this instrument, which were being collected for the Museum of Ethnography in Lisbon. He also fully explained the function of the bombalon.

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were sent by specially trained players of the bombalon and these had to be paid. The time and labour involved in its construction, and hence, presumably its high cost, along with the need to pay the players, would have tended to concentrate the possession of the bombalons in the hands of the rich, even if there was no specific ruling which debarred other members of the society from its ownership. In any event, it was recorded that this key technique of communications was monopolised by the ruling class. (1)

In their dwellings, as in their dress, one finds the same differentiation between noble and plebian. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the houses of the poor in Sierra Leone were made of stakes driven into the ground and covered with thatch. Those of the rich were made of brick and adobe. These latter were beautifully whitewashed with chalk or white clay, while the interior was tastefully decorated with fine quality mats and pelts. Among the furnishings, featured well-made three-legged stools covered with ox-hide. (2) The houses had special porches for leisure and relaxation. (3) Another illustration of the same nature is the fact that the few horses that were to be found north of the Geba were owned by kings, chiefs or nobles; while the other alternative animal transport - the castrated ox with its pierced nose - was also in the hands of the nobles. (4)

It would be very surprising indeed if these numerous indications of a

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.326

(2) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, pp.92,94

(3) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor"

(4) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.296,327

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well-defined cleavage in the society of the Upper Guinea Coast were not reflected in the conduct of noble towards non-noble in many other spheres which generally escaped comment by Europeans. On one occasion, the king of Bissau wrote the king of Portugal demanding the recall of a Portuguese captain-major who had treated one of the Bissau fidalgos with grave disrespect. Had any ordinary member of the island society dared to have acted towards the fidalgo in that manner, it would have cost that citizen his life, averred the king of Bissau. (1) This is a very pertinent insight into the way the society emphasised a certain pattern of conduct between privileged and non-privileged.

The prevalent communal image of African society may serve to obscure the decisive differences between the masses and the nobility. It is true that a village chief might be related to most of the residents of the village but even though, for certain purposes, he acted as family head, there rests little doubt that his level of existence was markedly superior to his poorer relations. The noble was a social being apart from the masses of the people and a recognition of this fact is basic for an understanding of much that occurred on the Upper Guinea Coast between 1545 and 1800. In terms of the ancient influences from the interior, new intrusions usually meant change at the level of leadership - that is to say, the Mande and Fulas were partially to replace the old ruling class of the littoral. But, even more important, in its contacts with the Europeans, the African society of the Upper Guinea Coast did not present itself as an undifferentiated entity. The patterns of trade often transcended tribal divisions, but never the distinction between fidalgo and plebeian.

(1) A.H.U., Maco V, Guiné - Anhanheta Cô to the king of Portugal,

A HISTORY OF THE UPPER GUINEA COAST, 1545-1800

CHAPTER TWO

THE ERA OF THE MANE INVASIONS

1545-1800

THE ERA OF THE MANE INVASIONS: 1545-1606

No description of Sierra Leone in the late sixteenth century and during most of the seventeenth century fails to make mention of invading peoples, generally called 'Manes'. There is little agreement either on their origins or on the date of their arrival in Sierra Leone, in spite of a lengthy historiography. In 1884, the botanist Conde de Picalho, in the context of the spread of food crops, considered it possible that there may have been a region of instability north of the Congo, from which peoples dispersed in various directions, the Manes being one of these. (1) Some years later, Captain Avelot, in a discussion concerned primarily with the Jagas of Angola, equated the Manes with the Temnes, and suggested that the invaders must have arrived in Sierra Leone around 1550. (2) In 1919, the anthropologist Northcote Thomas, addressing himself specifically to the question "Who were the Manes?", dismissed the identification of Manes with Temnes, and also advanced that the Mane migration took place at the beginning of the sixteenth century, at the very latest. (3) Since then, there have been several other contributions, such as that of a Nigerian origin (4) and the view that the Manes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are the Mani tribe of today, who live on the Lower Scarcies. (5)

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- (1) Conde de Picalho: Plantas Uteis de Africa Portuguesa (Lisboa, 1884)
 (2) R. Avelot: "Les Grandes Mouvements de Peuples en Afrique: Jaga et Zimba", Bulletin de Geographie Historique et Descriptive, No.27, 1912, pp.75-191.
 (3) N.W. Thomas: "Who were the Manes?", Journal of the African Society, Vol. XIX, pp.176-168; Vol.XX, pp.33-42 (1919,1920)
 (4) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, pp.128, 129
 (5) Marcel Moity: "Notes sur les Nani (Guinée Francaise)", Bulletin de l' I.F.A.N., Tome XIX, Sér. B, No. 2, 1957, pp.302-307.

THE ERA OF THE MANE INVASIONS: 1545-1606

This diversity of views is largely a reflection of the ignorance and uncertainty of individuals who were the closest contemporaries of the Mane invasions. But, the hesitancy and errors of modern scholarship on the subject are also products of the failure to utilise the extant documentation with due care. (1) By remedying this, and with the help of material which has recently become available, it is possible to reconstruct an important facet of the history of the Upper Guinea Coast.

The earliest contemporary European observer of the Mane invasions, who has gone on record, was John Hawkins. The people whom he called the "Sumboses" had arrived on the river Sherbro in 1561 according to Hawkins, but he did not throw any light on the problem of their origins. (2)

The next source which can be consulted is the work of Alvares de Almada. Christopher Fyfe, in a short contribution to the discussion of this issue, wrote that "Alvares d'Almada's book was published in 1594, thirty years after the events took place. His account is confusing and full of inconsistencies: some passages it is hard to make sense of". (3) While it is true that his book was published in 1594, it is more apposite to point out that De Almada, a Cape Verde mulatto, had been an eye-witness to events on the Upper Guinea Coast since the 1560's, and in 1580 he was sent to

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- (1) Yves Person found it necessary to comment to this effect. See "Les Kissi et leur statuettes de pierre", Bulletin de l'I.F.A.N., Tome XXIII, Sér. B, No. 1, 1961, p.20
- (2) Hakluyt Society, No. LVII, The Hawkins Voyages, pp.17-21
- (3) Christopher Fyfe: Sierra Leone Inheritance (London, 1964), p.43

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Lisbon to advise the Portuguese crown on the colonisation of Sierra Leone. (1) Apparently, he had begun the systematic collection of information about the "Rivers of Guinea" to aid in the mission. In the prologue of his book, De Almada expressed himself as follows: "I wish to write something about the Rivers of Guinea and Cape Verde.....because I have seen the greater part of it, and traded on many rivers, proceeding many leagues inland, and above all I have taken great pains to resolve doubtful issues, by consulting both our men (the local Portuguese) and the Negroes themselves." (2) Neither this statement nor De Almada's undeniable accuracy in other contexts absolves his pronouncements on the Manes from critical assessment, but his awareness of the need to clear up dubious points and his striving for accuracy are nowhere better seen than in his discussion of the Manes.

De Almada gathered from the old Sapes that the Manes had been coming for hundreds of years to make war. This statement probably reflects the fact that Sierra Leone had received attacks and migratory currents from that direction for a very long time, although the specific wave of invasion which brought the Manes was dated about the middle of the sixteenth century. De Almada advanced his own conjecture that the Manes were a Mande people, giving detailed reasons for his opinion. Drawing upon his knowledge of the Mandingas and the Mande empire, which, he affirmed, lay in a vast belt above

(1) (a) Sena Barcelos: Subsidios para a Historia de Cabo Verde e Guiné

(Lisboa, 1899), Part 1, Ch. V.

(b) Alvares De Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.377.

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.231

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all the coastal peoples, he noted that the Manes spoke the same or nearly the same language as the Mande he had encountered trading on the Upper Gambia, and they had exactly the same arms and clothing. The Manes carried small bows and arrows, which they claimed were useless to their enemies, while the small Mane bow could discharge the large arrows of their opponents. The rest of their arms consisted of large shields made of reeds, large enough to give complete cover to the user, two knives, one of which was tied to the left arm, and two quivers for their arrows. Their clothes consisted of loose cotton shirts with wide necks and ample sleeves reaching down to the knees to become tights. One striking feature about their appearance was the abundance of feathers stuck in their shirts and their red caps. (1) The full significance of this description can be gained by comparing it with an earlier description given by De Almada, when he was dealing with the Mande trading caravans which arrived on the Gambia. All the members of the trading party spoke the Mande language, and the majority were dressed exactly like the Mandingas, in short breeches which did not reach their knees; but the guards on the caravan, which sometimes numbered 1,000 and more, were dressed rather differently. They wore the same type of trousers as the Manes; they carried the same weapons, giving the same explanation about the efficiency of their enemies' arrows on their bows and vice versa; and they had the same profusion of feathers about their person. (2) It is clearly these people with whom De Almada equated the Manes.

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.360, 361

(2) Ibid., p.279

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The caravans arriving at the Gambia were supposed to have made their way along a highway which passed above the nations of Guinea. De Almada elicited from the traders that the copper which they purchased would be sold to non-Islamised peoples (cafres), and although it is perhaps a coincidence that he added at this point that the emperor of Mandimansa, under whose orders the caravans travelled, was known as the Great Elephant by the Africans near Mina, it is feasible that the six-month journey of these Mande traders originated in the hinterland of the Gold Coast. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Pacheco Pereira had described the Mande trade on the Upper Gambia, stating that the gold which they brought came from a country called 'Toom', which was some two hundred leagues away from the Mandinga kingdom. (1) Delafosse identified 'Toom' with Ashanti, which the Mandingas call 'Ton', and this agrees roughly with Pacheco Pereira's estimated distance. (2)

Assuming that the caravan guards were the same people as the Manes, then this provides the first slim clue that the Manes were a southern Mande people who may have lived in the hinterland of the Ivory or Gold Coasts.

Christopher Fyfe cited as an example of De Almada's confusion and inconsistency the fact that "he conjectured that the invaders came from an inland realm, Mandimansa - but also suggested elsewhere that they came from further down the Coast". Since the Mande world stretched across parts of the modern Ivory Coast and Ghana, there is no reason why De Almada's statement

(1) Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, p.64

(2) Ibid., Editor's note 130

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that the Manes came from Mande country and that they reached Sierra Leone via the Malaguetta Coast should be regarded as inconsistent. (1)

De Almada for once seems to have relinquished his judiciousness when he asserted that the Manes reached Sierra Leone after passing across the Congo. This idea enjoyed great currency in Sierra Leone, nor did it deter the counter assertion that the Jagas of Angola came from Sierra Leone. Even those who are familiar with the great Bantu travels would marvel at the fact that the Bagas of the Pongo were supposed to have dispatched a regiment to Benguela in Angola. (2) But not only the sources are to be blamed. Peter Kup cited Barreira: "These people are called Jacas in the Congo, in Angola Grindas....and here they called them Cumbas, a nick-name for Manes." Taking this statement literally, he went on to date the arrival of the Manes in Sierra Leone by events in the Congo. (3) If he had taken due note of the passage which reads: "These people are called in the Congo Jacas, in Angola Gindas, in India Zimbaz, and in the Ethiopia of Prester John Galas" (4), he would at least have harboured some slight doubt of the physical possibility of one and the same people appearing simultaneously in such widely dispersed parts of the Continent as Ethiopia, Angola, Sierra Leone and Moçambique.

The apparent link with these diverse regions seems to lie not so

(1) Christopher Fyfe: Sierra Leone Inheritance, p.43

(2) F.W. Butt-Thompson: Sierra Leone in History and Tradition (London, 1926).

(3) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, 1400-1787, pp.29, 130.

(4) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 3, p.255

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much in the Manes themselves but in their cohorts, the Sumbas. Most of the early writers on the subject distinguished between the Manes proper and the forces which they drafted into their army on their way to Sierra Leone. Those forces were said to be cannibals, the word 'Sumba' meaning precisely "an eater of human flesh", and it was applied firstly to the anthropophagi and more generally to the whole attacking force. (1) Since the Jagas of Angola and the Zimbos of Moçambique were both said to be anthropophagi, it must be the simultaneous appearance of the same phenomenon which led Portuguese observers to make the identification. It is noteworthy, for example, that Barreira, who was the chief exponent of this view, was himself in the Congo for a period of fourteen years before he started his missionary activity in Sierra Leone. (2), and he would have been very familiar with the Jagas, who were at one time employed by the Portuguese as auxiliaries.

A far more coherent account than Barreira's was that of André Dornelas, whose work has recently been re-discovered. Like De Almada, Dornelas wrote his account of Guinea some time after he had witnessed the events there. It was only in 1625, after he had retired to Santiago, that Dornelas decided to record his fifty years of experience on the Upper Guinea Coast. His father, also a Cape Verde trader, purchased three Manes in Sierra Leone in 1560, naming them Belchior, Baltezar and Gaspar; and from these André Dornelas had obtained information even before he first visited

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Ries de Guiné", p.365

(2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 1, p.339

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Sierra Leone in 1574. Dornelas was an eye-witness not so much to the struggles between the Sapes and the Manes as to the internecine fighting between the Manes themselves, since by the time of his arrival the conquest of the Sapes had been effected and the early history of the Manes was receding into the background, guarded only by a few elders.

"The origin of the Manes is reported by their elders as tradition handed down from their grandparents, and what they say is that ...". Such is the auspicious beginning of Dornelas' account of the origins of the Manes. In essentials, the tradition stated that the original chief of the Manes was a leading lady in Mandimansa, Maçarico by name, who offended the emperor and had to leave the city. She took with her large numbers of friends, relatives and dependants, who were transformed into a conquering army. This army overran vast territories and many nations, and its ranks were swelled with recruits to such an extent that for sustenance it was necessary to eat some of the defeated peoples. When she reached the Atlantic, Maçarico divided the army into two parts: one of these marched along the sea coast, a second proceeded parallel to the first, some forty-five miles away, while the third was equidistant on the right flank. Each section comprised a vanguard, a rearguard, and the main force in the middle, and in this order they marched slowly until they reached the Portuguese fortress of Mina. The Manes engaged in a few skirmishes with the Portuguese at the fortress, but they were discouraged by the artillery and thought better of tarrying there. Instead, they regrouped, creating a fourth army and sending it eastwards while the bulk of the forces continued westwards along the Malaguetta Coast.

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In the vicinity of Cape Mount they had a serious battle against the Bulloms, in which Maçarico's son was killed, and she herself died shortly afterwards from grief and old age. The date was then 1545, and it was forty years since Maçarico had set out from Mali. It took another fifteen years before the conquest of the Sapes was effected.

The tradition, as recorded by Dornelas, finds support on several details. Both De Almada and Manuel Alvares were informed that the original leader of the Mane forces was a woman, whom Alvares referred to as 'Mabete' 'Queen of Guinea'. Their reports also agree that Maçarico died just before reaching Sierra Leone. (1) With regard to the identification of the Portuguese fort at Mina, Barreira claimed to have been told by Tora, a Mane king alive in 1606, that the invading forces had come into contact with the Portuguese at Mina. (2) But, the only serious confirmation of the invaders' route is confined to the Malaguetta Coast, which was generally considered as extending from Cape Mount to Cape Palmas and which, therefore, leaves one some distance from the Portuguese at Mine.

Two members of the crew of a Portuguese ship, which was wrecked off the Malaguetta Coast, confirmed the direction of the invasion. One of these seamen, Paulo Palha, was black, while the other, Francisco Vaz of the

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.361,366. (He had heard that the original leader was a woman, but his account is that the general of the army was called Maçarico and it was his sister who was grief-stricken at his death.) Also Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor".

(2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 3, p.255

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Portuguese province of the Alentejo, was white. These two served the Manes in the capacity of soldiers until they reached Sierra Leone. (1) While there is no indication as to exactly where the shipwrecked sailors joined the Manes, one gathers from the activities of Hawkins that the Manes were at least as far ~~south~~^{east} along the coast as the river Cess, since a Mane king, fighting in Sierra Leone, was able to promise Hawkins that if he sailed down the coast to the river Cess he would be provided with slaves. (2)

As the traditional account, drawn up by Dornelas and supplemented by the writings of other Portuguese contemporaries, moves into Sierra Leone itself, it becomes clearer and more precise. The Manes advanced slowly northwards, across the Sherbro, Rokelle, Port Loko and Scarcies, casting their dominion over most of the Sapes. When the Manes appeared before a given village, they would send an embassy bearing cloth and arms. To accept was to recognise Mane suzerainty; to reject was not only to risk defeat in battle but there was the further threat that failure to submit would mean for the recalcitrants that their final resting place would be the stomachs of the Sumbas. (3) As it was, the reputation of the Sumbas, enhanced by rumour, was enough to spread terror and a disinclination to resist. It was in this context that the political weakness of the Sape confederacy was most obvious. Before a disciplined military force, the Sapes could only present a spectacle of political disunity and indecision.

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.361

(2) Cited in Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, p.129

(3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.362.

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The principle of action seemed to be that one should fight only when it was absolutely necessary; namely, when one's turn came, and the Manes were exactly on the doorstep. So each tribe, each village, submitted or fought its own battle, as it thought fit. (1)

In the purely military sphere, the Manes suffered reverses in two ways. Firstly, they had little success against the Limbas and Djalonkés, who adopted the policy of burning their own homes and retiring to underground caves. From these they sallied forth to conduct a species of deadly guerrilla warfare. (2) Secondly, the attempt to subjugate the Susus backfired. When the usual Mane arms were sent to the Susus, the latter returned them saying that those arms were no different from theirs. The Susus expressed a willingness to establish peaceful relations with the Manes, on the terms of equity and mutual benefit which they had previously maintained with the Sapes, but the Manes would not be dissuaded from the attempted conquest.

The decisive encounter between the Manes and the Susus was long after spoken of with awe by the people of Sierra Leone. The Mane Army was the largest ever assembled in those parts, comprising mainly Bulloms and Temnes in the service of their new masters. The Susus, too, boasted large numbers, their ranks being buttressed by Fula allies who contributed seven horses, a novelty in Sierra Leone. The story goes that the Susus prepared large supplies of poisoned food and fell back in apparent disorder. The ruse worked because the Manes partook of the food with resultant mortality. At

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p. 362

(2) Ibid., p.363

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this juncture, the Manes, contrary to their usual practice, decided to go on the defensive, and entrenched themselves. The Susus took the initiative, and, led by the Fula horsemen, they stormed the Mane position so furiously and gained entrance so quickly that Salvador da Costa, a Portuguese who had been enlisted by the Manes because of his skill as a musketeer, was unable to reload after firing his first round. The Mane forces fled in disorder, but the Susus were familiar with the terrain because of their earlier intercourse with the Sapes, so they pursued the fleeing Mane forces and decimated large numbers. (1)

The dating of the military conquest can be ascertained with exactitude, Barreira, writing in 1607, said that the Manes had arrived about sixty years previously (2), and De Almada says that the invasion began around 1550. (3) On the latter's evidence, Person was able to date the arrival of the Manes between 1540 and 1550. (4) This is confirmed by Dornelas, who stated categorically that the subjugation of the Sapes was effected in the fifteen years between 1545 and 1560. Quite unintentionally, Dornelas substantiated his claim that the Mane conquest was over by 1560, by pointing out that the original Sape kings had borne the title 'Beca'. Two of the Sape kings, who had escaped on Portuguese ships to Cape Verde and later Cacheu, were known as Beca Caja and Beca Bouré. But this title had completely disappeared in Sierra Leone during the 1560's and 1570's, and,

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.369-373.

(2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 3, p. 255

(3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p. 359

(4) Yves Person: "Les Kissi et leurs statuettes de Pierre", p.21.

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instead, the participants in various struggles bore titles such as 'Farma' and 'Shere'. 'Farma' was obviously a Mande word, having much the same meaning as 'Farim' (1), while 'Shere' (or 'Sere') is an alternative for 'Kamara', traditionally the earliest Mande clan in the Western Sudan. (2)

Thus, Avelot's view that 1550 was the date of the Mane invasion is much closer to the truth than that of Northcote Thomas, who had established his chronology by accrediting the evidence of Valentim Fernandes (1506) to Pedro da Sintra (1462).

Peter Kup fixed the beginning of the Mane invasion in the early 1560's, at a time when the conquest of the Sapes was already over. He cited the battle in 1567 between the Mane chief, Sasena, and Shere, the king of Sierra Leone, as an episode at the onset of the Mane invasion. (3) But Shere himself was a Mane, the first Mane ruler of the kingdom of Boure. Where Kup is right is in pointing out that new forces were advancing from the Malaguetta Coast. De Almada stated that when one set of Mane rulers of Sierra Leone forgot their obligations to pay tribute to the kings and captains who remained behind, a new invasion was launched against the defectors. (4)

The Mane generals and captains, on the basis of a clan system, had apportioned Sierra Leone among themselves, and proclaimed themselves 'kings'.(5)

(1) See above, Chapter 1, p.56

(2) M. McCulloch: Peoples of Sierra Leone, p.56

(3) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, p.129

(4) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.360

(5) Ibid., p.374. Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor"

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There were four principal kingdoms: firstly, the kingdom of the Bulloms, which extended from Tagrin Point northwards, and included the Idolos islands; secondly, the kingdom of Logos or Mitombo, centred about Port Loko; thirdly, the kingdom of Sierra Leone or Bouré, which stretched south from the Sierra Leone channel until it came up against the fourth kingdom, that of Sherbro. (1) Within each of these kingdoms, there were subdivisions, whose rulers sometimes wielded great power, as in the case of Tora, who commanded only the islands of the Sierra Leone channel but who, by 1605, was the eldest survivor of the Manes, and this gave him the status and authority of a king. (2) though he was subject to Fatima, the king of the northern Bulloms. (3)

Strictly speaking, a number of the petty rulers called 'kings' by the Europeans should really be regarded as 'chiefs'. It was a pyramidal structure of government, very similar to the Mandinga and Susu hegemony further north. The chiefs owed allegiance to the local kings, who themselves supposedly paid deference to the kings of the 'metropolis' at Cape Mount (4), who in turn paid tribute to an overlord who remained behind.

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- (1) B.R.A.H., Papeles de Jesuitas, Tomo 185, No. 1343, "Relação da Costa da Guiné" by Baltezar Barreira, 1606. (He excludes Sherbro from Sierra Leone proper, and thus has three kingdoms, plus a fourth mentioned in the following note.)
- (2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 3, p.250 (Tora's was regarded as a kingdom in its own right).
- (3) E.R. Taylor (Ed.): The Troublesome Voyage of Captain Edward Fenton, Hakluyt Society, 2nd ser., No. CXIII.
- (4) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor". (The word 'metropolis' is his.)

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What is needed to clarify the issue is information as to what transpired in the adjacent region that is now Liberia. No first-hand sixteenth century accounts seem to be available for the Malaguetta Coast, but information has survived in late seventeenth century descriptions by Barbot, Dapper and Ogilby. (1) Their work was mainly based on the observations of Dutch traders resident at Cape Mount at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and, indeed, these traders, like Dornelas, must have recorded the local traditions of much earlier events. They threw considerable light on the question of the Mane invasion, and place beyond doubt the fact that events in Sierra Leone were part of a chain of circumstances affecting the area as far south as the river Cess.

Barbot repeated old lore, which seems questionable, along with new information, which appears to be highly credible. Of the Manes, he wrote: "The Portuguese at Congo and Angola reckon these to be of the same race as the barbarous Jagos and Galas...and all of them generally supposed to proceed from the nations of the Galas Manou, living far up the inland of the river Sestro." The Monou or Manoe were responsible for the conquest of the Malaguetta Coast, and all authority was held by the emperor of Monou, to whom tribute had to be paid. (2)

The Monou, though a small group, succeeded in imposing their will on far more numerous tribes, by using different ethnic groups at different

(1) Ogilby's work is virtually a translation of Dapper's. Barbot and Ogilby are the two sources which will be utilised here.

(2) Barbot: Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea, p.96

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times as their agents. The three groups mentioned in the seventeenth century sources are the Quojas, the Karos (Krus) and the Folgias. The Folgias, apparently a Mande people, attacked the Krus, who lived in the hinterland of the river Junk. Flansire, the king of the Folgias, desired reconciliation after defeating the Krus, so he married the sister of Flonikerri, king of the Krus, and appointed Flonikerri as his general in a battle against the king of the river Cess. Flonikerri distinguished himself in this and other battles and, as a reward, he was allowed to attempt the conquest of Cape Mount. The Cape Mount region was at that time inhabited by the Vais and the Quojas. They, in particular, fought bitterly against the Kru armies, which represented the interests of the Folgias and the Monou, but, after a series of struggles, the conquest was carried to completion by Zyllymanque, the brother of Flonikerri.

After the kingdom of Cape Mount had been won, the conquest of Sierra Leone was said to have been undertaken by "the young monarch Flansire", possibly not the original Flansire of the Folgias, but a successor. The country was divided up among his generals. The area around the Sierra Leone channel went to Kandaqualle, the Sherbro was granted to Selboele, while the Gallinas (Moa) was ruled by Sytre; all viceroys of the Monou. But this arrangement was challenged by one Falma, who expelled Kandaqualle from his government. Flansire proceeded down the Moa and up along the coast, crossing to the Bananas to take under his protection those of his subjects who had fled there from Falma. With the aid of some Europeans, Flansire besieged Falma in a village to which he had retired,

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cutting through the palisades and the double row of trees which surrounded it, and setting the place afire. Falma escaped with great difficulty, and Kandaqualle was re-established. In the meanwhile, the viceroys of Sherbro and Gallinas had conspired with Gammina, Flansire's brother, to usurp the kingdom of Cape Mount. Hastening to return south, Flansire fought and defeated his brother at the river Moa. (1)

It is obviously necessary that the account of the events viewed from the Malaguetta Coast should be complemented/^{by}and correlated with the account of events viewed from Sierra Leone. In the first place, it is to be observed that the identification of the Manes with the Monou in no way contradicts the substance of earlier Portuguese assertions. Indeed, it accords well with the Portuguese claims that only the vanguard of the attacking forces had reached Sierra Leone, and that tribute was owing to an overlord who remained behind. The name Manow still exists as that of a small Mande group in the hinterland of Liberia. On the other hand, there is again a definite gap between the river Cess and the fortress of Mina, so that that aspect of the Portuguese reports remains unconfirmed.

The second major issue relates to those peoples who had a great part to play as agents of the Manes in the conquest of Sierra Leone. It has been suggested that the cohorts of the Manes were drawn from around Zaria and other parts of the Western Sudan, from cannibal tribes known to the Arabs as "Dem Dem". (2) However, if the Manes are to be identified with

(1) John Ogilby: Africa (London, 1670), pp.407-412.

(2) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, p.139

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Monou of Liberia, in the first instance, then one must seek the Sumbas along the Malaguetta Coast, en route to Sierra Leone, concentrating in particular on the Quojas and the Krus.

When the Krus appear in the literature of Sierra Leone, it was because of their skill as sailors, which earned them frequent mention in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. No writer on Sierra Leone or the Malaguetta Coast in the sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries appears to have heard of the tribe under that name. But, even today, the Krus are considered as a heterogeneous group comprising, among others, the Quojas and the Queas. (1) The latter also played a prominent role in the Mane conquest of Sierra Leone, assuming leadership in the kingdom of Bouré, according to Manuel Alvares. The 'Queis', as he calls them, were closely associated with the Cubales. This latter name seems to have disappeared, but in the early sixteenth century it was given to the inhabitants of the area on the coast between the Gallinas and Cape Mount.(2), so that this again emphasises that the Mane forces contained a high percentage of peoples drawn from immediately to the south and west of the Sherbro.

Not all of the ethnic groups between the Cess and the Sherbro were taken up as allies of the Manes. The Vais, for example, were said to have put up a stubborn resistance until they were almost decimated. (3) Then, the Galas, who were apparently in the hinterland north-west of Monou in the

(1) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, p.145

(2) Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, Map facing p.46

(3) John Barbot: Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea, p.111

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middle of the sixteenth century, descended to the coast, playing an equivocal role in the struggles of the Kru and the Quojas. When, for instance, Flonkèrri, the Kru King, was subduing the Quojas, he had to contend with the hostility of the Galas, led by the son of Manimassa, the emperor of Monou. (1) From their location, the Galas were likely to have been a group of Kpelles or Tomas.

To this already lengthy list of ethnonyms must be added the name 'Mende', before the picture can be completed. The Mendes are the only tribe who presently inhabit Sierra Leone (and Liberia) but who were given no mention whatever in the sixteenth century, implying arrival after that date. It is unlikely to be simple coincidence that the subjects of the Monnu called themselves 'Mende'. (2) On linguistic grounds, Northcote Thomas linked the Mendes with the Gbandes and Tomas; and he suggested that "in the Mende we have the portion of the Manes who drove out the aborigines or completely dominated them; in the Loko, a tribe originally of the aboriginal stock but brought so completely under Manes influence as to adopt their language instead of their own; and that the Temnes are also aborigines who were forced to take alien chiefs, but maintained in large measure their own culture, and in places won back from the invaders a portion of the territory the latter had subjugated". (3)

(1) John Ogilby: Africa, p.410

(2) John Barbot: Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea, p.123

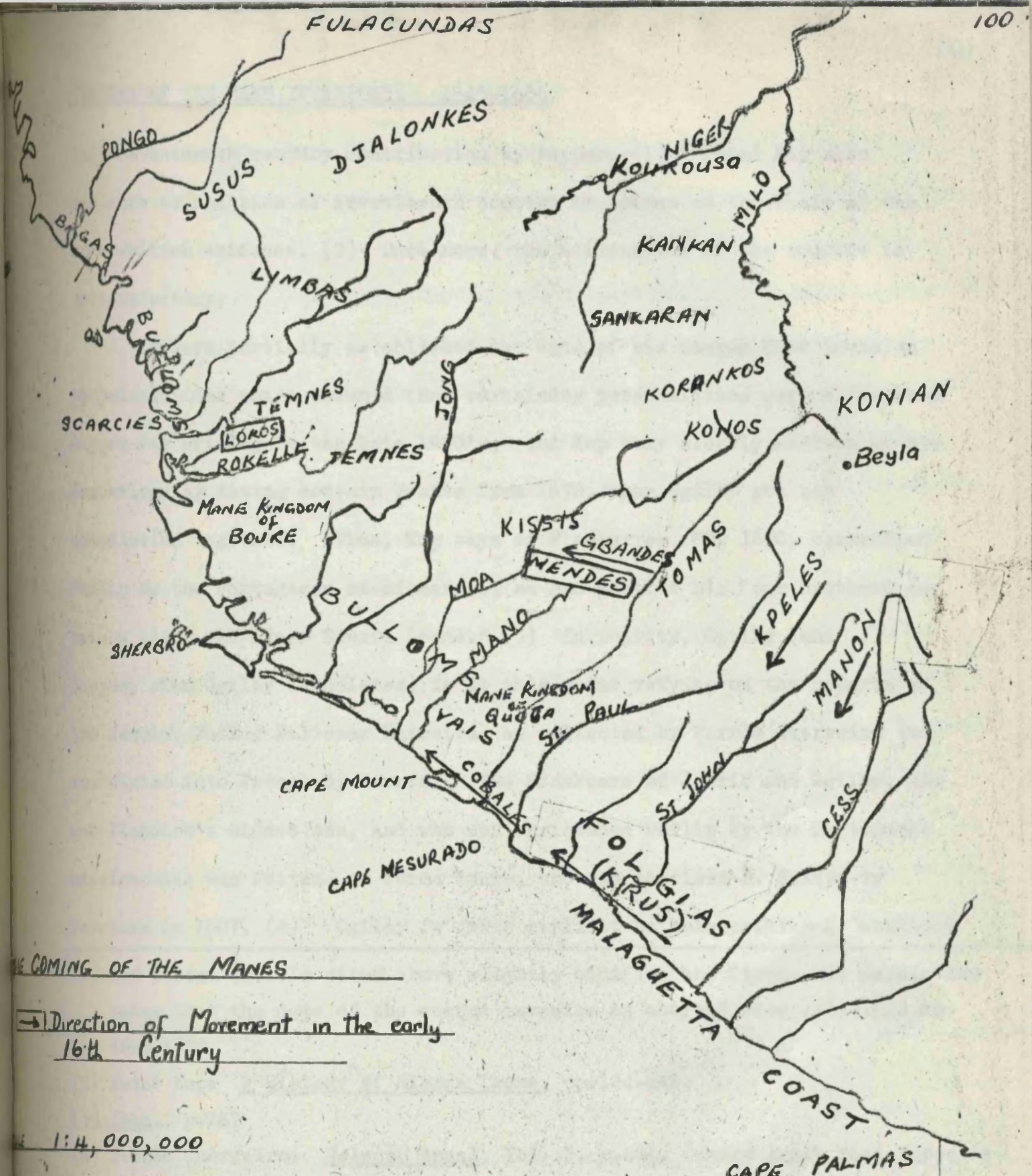
(3) Northcote Thomas: "Who were the Manes?", J.A.S., No. XIX, XX.

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Apart from inaccurately ascribing these events to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, Thomas made a convincing assessment of the Manes, which is largely corroborated by the recent researches of Yves Person. The latter, however, went much further afield in attempting to trace the origins of the Manes, and reconstructed their travels from the oral traditions of the Kamara or Dyomande. The Kamara had begun their descent from the Niger to the sea in the hinterland of Sierra Leone, making their first halt at Kourousa. From there, they moved south-east into the Konian, and then down to the Liberian coast. The expansion from the Konian (the region around Beyla) involved an attack on Sierra Leone in the middle of the sixteenth century, with the Kamara aristocracy leading Mande-fou elements, such as the Gbandes and Tomas, in a westerly direction. (1) The prevalence among the Mane ruling class of the name 'Shere' or 'Sere' which, as mentioned before, is an alternative to 'Kamara', leaves little doubt that this identification is correct.

Serious doubt attaches to Person's conclusions, however, on the issue of the "Kru-Quoja invasion", which he separates from the earlier Mane or Sumba invasion, and places in the third decade of the seventeenth century. This date is established from the fact that the Kamara traditions speak of a second invasion two or three generations after the first, as well as from the

(1) Yves Person: "Les Kissi et leurs statuettes de pierre". Also. "En Quete d'une Chronologie Ivoirienne", in The Historian in Tropical Africa, p.326



THE COMING OF THE MANES

→ Direction of Movement in the early 16th Century

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late seventeenth century contribution by Dapper. (1) Peter Kup also inclines to the view of seventeenth century invasions on the basis of the same written evidence. (2) Once more, the utilisation of the sources is unsatisfactory.

Person partially established the date of his second Mane invasion by calculations which assumed that certain key personalities were alive when Dapper was writing in the late 1660's; and Kup very clearly arrived at his chronology by dating certain events from 1670, when Ogilby put his compilation together. Thus, Kup says of Flamurre: "By 1670, christened Philip by the Portuguese missionaries, he had settled his four brothers as rulers along the river Sierra Leone." (3) In reality, Ogilby (and Dapper, whom Ogilby translates) is at this point relying on the reports of the Jesuit, Father Baltezar Barreira, as collected by Fernão Guerreiro and translated into French by Jarric. The Flamboere of Jarric and Ogilby, who was Flansire's eldest son, and who was christened Philip by the Portuguese missionaries was Fattema or Farma Bouré, who was baptised D. Filipe by Barreira in 1607. (4) Ogilby is quite explicit on this point. He mentions

(1) The second article cited above slightly modifies the first, one particular being that the date of the second invasion is shifted from 1600-1610 to 1620-1630.

(2) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, pp.144-148.

(3) Ibid., p.147

(4) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 2, p.204. (André Arcin read Dapper's work to this effect: "Dapper tells us that Sierra Leone in 1607 was commanded by the chief Fatima". See Histoire de la Guinée Française, p.133.

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that the supreme king of Sierra Leone was a Quoia, who had "left his old title Flamboere, and from the Portugals, by whom converted to Christianity, received the name of Don Philip.....The people, before the coming of the Jesuit Barreira, lay wholly drencht in idolatry, but he converted many to the Christian faith; and in the year sixteen hundred and seven baptized the king, his children, and many others, giving to the king at his baptism the name of Philip, as we said before, to which the Portugals flatteringly added Don, and because he was king of Serre Lions, called him Don Philip the Lyon".(1)

Such an understanding of Ogilby leaves unaltered the 16th century chronology, which can be built up from Portuguese sources. Ogilby does indeed mention a number of Mane kings, who were alive in 1670, but they were all born in Sierra Leone. No further invasions had occurred since Dornelas wrote - to the best knowledge of later 17th century writers. The years 1620-30 in the history of Sierra Leone are by no means well documented (2) but there were Capuchin missionaries in Sierra Leone about the middle of the century, who never hinted at an invasion only twenty years earlier, while the Jesuits had been informed of the first Mane arrivals fifty to sixty years previously. Besides, there is one detailed monograph on Sierra Leone,

(1) John Ogilby: Africa, p.375

(2) In this period, there were English and Dutch traders on the rivers leading into the Sierra Leone and Sherbro estuaries, but the English provided no references to local events, while the Dutch sources are not yet fully explored.

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written in 1669, which lends no support to a later "Kru-Quoja" invasion. This was a description of the Upper Guinea Coast by Lemos Coelho, a Guinea-born trader who had visited Sierra Leone regularly between 1646 and 1658. He, too, referred to the Mane invasions as something long past - "ninety years ago" was his estimate. Coelho was very unlikely to have overlooked new developments of magnitude in the decade 1620-1630. Not only did he gather information from Afro-Portuguese traders who were born in Sierra Leone, but he was personally acquainted with a Mane ruler named Sherabola, who resided on Sherbro Island. Coelho knew him as a very old man, reputedly more than one hundred years old, and understandably, so, because Captain Fenton had met him fighting there in 1584. (1) It is almost certain that Sherabola is the same 'Selboele' of Barbot and Ogilby, who was said to have given his name to the Sherbro, because the same claim is advanced for Sherabola. (2)

A further enquiry into the way that certain source materials were generated, though seemingly pedantic, is essential to establish clearly that the Mane or Sumba or 'Kru-Quoja' invasions all occurred in one spate in about twenty years after 1545. Once Ogilby moved south of the Sherbro, his sources changed. He could no longer use Jarric, since the Jesuits did not know the area south of the Sherbro. He then utilised records provided by Dutch traders. Possibly, these were acquired at the very beginning of the

(1) Hakluyt Society, 2nd. ser., No. CXIII - The Troublesome Voyage of Captain Edward Fenton.

(2) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descriçoes, pp.72, 230.

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seventeenth century, when the Dutch had a fort at Cape Mount. (1); possibly, they were acquired later; but they certainly were not eye-witness accounts of sixteenth century events. The Dutch traders, therefore, when they gave a chronicle beginning in the first half of the sixteenth century and stretching across several reigns, were, like Dornelas, recording African tradition. Treating their material as traditional history, one can seek to establish a link with a precisely dateable occurrence, involving the Europeans on the coast.

It will be recalled that Flansire had subdued the region between the Sierra Leone estuary and the Gallinas, leaving Kandaqualle as viceroy of the provinces of Sierra Leone. That arrangement was disturbed by an attack by Falma on Kandaqualle, forcing Flansire to return to Sierra Leone to re-establish the latter. Flansire sought the aid of the Europeans to besiege Falma in a heavily fortified town, which was eventually taken, though Falma himself escaped. None of the names were the same, but the struggle between Sasena and Shere in 1567-68, in which John Hawkins played a part, fits the circumstances in all essentials, if for Sasena one reads Falma and for Shere one reads Kandaqualle.

Hawkins calls Shere "king of Sierra Leone", and he was asked by Shere and "the king of the Castros" (the river Cess) to help dislodge Sasena and Seterama, two other Mane kings, who had fortified themselves at

(1) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 2, p.211.

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Bonga, on the south side of the Sierra Leone channel. (1) From the state of the fortifications and the large number of inhabitants of the town (about ten thousand), it was obvious that Sasena had effectively challenged and usurped Shere, who was the first Mane king of Bouré, on Dornelas' authority, and who was at that juncture waging a counter offensive for the recovery of his kingdom. Hawkins lent his assistance to Shere in January 1568, on condition that "as many negroes as by these wars might be obtained, as well of his part, as of ours, should be at our pleasure". After considerable casualties, including several of the one hundred and twenty men whom Hawkins had contributed, the town was eventually taken, though Sasena escaped - as Falma is said to have escaped.

Hawkins ends his account by castigating Shere for not handing over those captives which the latter had taken, and the English ships sailed away with the two hundred and fifty that they themselves had seized. (2)

According to the narrative of another crew member, Hawkins was told by his former allies, as the latter departed, that he should send to the Cess and captives would be made ready for him. (3) Again, there is an exact correspondence between the Hawkins episode and the tradition. Shere was

(1) B.M., Cotton Ms., Otho E viii, fls. 27- . For Shere's ally, Kup reads "king of the (?Casseti)", while Basil Davidson renders it "king of the Castros". The latter can be verified because it appears twice in the document.

(2) Hakluyt Society, No. LVII, The Hawkins Voyages, pp. 71, 72

(3) B.M., Cotton Ms., Otho E viii, fl.

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helped to re-establish his authority in Sierra Leone in precisely the same manner as Kandaqualle had been: namely, by troops moved up from the Malaguetta Coast. Furthermore, the traditions (via Dapper and others) relate that Flansire returned to the Cess to discipline other dissidents, so that he would have been in a position to make a promise to Hawkins to provide further captives from that area.

Years later, De Almada recalled the incident of the siege of Bonga, pointing out that some Portuguese had fought on the side of Sasena (1), a fact to which Job Hortrop, a member of Hawkins' crew, had drawn attention. (2) There is no recorded incident even vaguely resembling this one, and direct European intervention of this sort was unlikely to have passed unnoticed. Given that it was Kandaqualle whom Hawkins had helped to place once more in power, then the "Kru-Quoja invasion" must have taken place prior to 1568.

The two Jesuit missionaries, Baltezar Barreira and Manuel Alvares, both testified to the presence of the Quojas (Coyas) in Sierra Leone, during their stay on that part of the coast between 1606 and 1616. (3) The Quojas and Queas, who are part of the heterogeneous Kru people, must indeed have been in Sierra Leone for a considerable period before the Jesuits wrote, because two things are clear from the latter's lengthy reports: firstly, the Jesuits were not contemporaries of any invasion from the Malaguetta Coast;

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.375

(2) Richard Hakluyt: Voyages, Vol. 3, pp. 487,488

(3) Barreira was in Sierra Leone between 1606 and 1610, and Manuel Alvares from 1608 to 1616.

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and secondly, all invasions from that direction had come to an end many years previously. By 1594, all the invaders were held to be naturaes ("locally born") and in many instances indistinguishable from the Sapes. (1) By 1616, nothing had intervened to change this. Commented Alvares: "It is difficult to speak of the Manes of Sierra Leone because of their assimilation into the life there. Such genuine Manes about whom one could speak are few and fast disappearing."

The authentic Manes who were still to be found were the Queas, Quojas and Cubales. These formed the elite which ruled the province of Sierra Leone and Bouré. They claimed to have fought alongside the father of 'Filamanqua'; and, even allowing for the fact that similarity of names can be notoriously misleading, this 'Filamanqua' seems to be the 'Zyllmanque' of Ogilby. Reverting again to the traditions contained in the European chronicles, one finds that the father of Zyllmanque was the Kru king, who put up a desperate resistance to the Folgia invasion. He was succeeded by his son, Flonikerri, who in turn was succeeded by his brother, Zyllymanque. 'Filamanqua' was mentioned by Alvares in the context of the pedigree claims put forward by the Queas, who considered themselves superior to the Aperme, who were "half-slave and half-free" - the offspring on one side of conquered peoples. By inference, therefore, Filamanqua or Zyllymanque lived at least a generation earlier; and since he preceded Flansire, he would in fact have died before 1568, the date which is advanced here for the re-conquest of Sierra Leone by Flansire.

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p. 373

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It is possible that personalities like Zyllymanque and Flansire go back well before 1568 - to the original invasion of Sierra Leone by the Manes in 1545. This would mean that the invasion of the Toma-Gbande directly westwards across the Bullom-Kissi hinterland to the Rokelle and Port Loko was contemporaneous with and part of the "Kru-Quoja invasion". After all, this is what the weight of evidence suggests: namely, parallel fronts approaching Sierra Leone along the coast and in the sertao. But whether or not the Krus were part of the 1545 invasion, their political control of Sierra Leone ante-dated the end of the sixteenth century by some forty years at least.

It is necessary to stress once again that the forces that mattered numerically as far as the Mane Invasion of Sierra Leone was concerned came from close by. When the Manes fought the Susus, Limbas and Fulas (in what appears to have been the upper Scarcies region), they did so using primarily Bulloms and Temnes. (1) Similarly, it is to be expected that when they attacked the Bulloms and Kissis of the Sherbro and Gallinas, their main troops were drawn from the neighbouring Malaguetta Coast. The supposed cannibalism of some of the invading forces has provided a false trail, leading to the Dem Dem of Northern Nigeria. (2) 'Dem Dem' or 'Demdemeh' is a generic Arab term meaning 'cannibals', the existence and location of whom are extremely vague, and the whole idea is established mainly on rumour and myth. (3) Both among the Sapes and the Europeans, the notoriety of the

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.373

(2) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, p.139

(3) Basil Davidson: Old Africa Rediscovered (London, 1961), pp.66, 67

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Sumbas probably far outstripped their performance. It was said that they would sometimes appear brandishing a human joint for effect - and the effect was terrifying. (1) They were also said to have eaten of the flesh of their enemies "for courage and ferocity", and for the psychological effect it would have on their future opponents - being deliberately encouraged by the Mane elite, although the latter themselves refrained from any such practice. (2) These comments suggest more a ritual than a way of life.

Whatever the origin of the various strands of the invasion, the importance of the overlying Mande influence must be recognised. It was said that all new soldiers who were enlisted were not only trained in the use of Mane arms but were also inculcated with a new sense of loyalty. The recruits were chosen as young men, who, after training and indoctrination, were said to have been puffed up with pride at being among the Mane ranks. (3) The arms and clothing were clearly Mande, and the language, too, showed pronounced Mande characteristics, which today set the Manes and the Lokos apart from the Temnes, Bulloms and Kissis.

All of the Mande leaders of the Manes could have descended onto the Malaguetta Coast directly from the interior, along the routes suggested by Yves Person. Geography and verisimilitude are on the side of such an interpretation. Yet, one must take some cognizance of the insistence of sixteenth and seventeenth century reports that the origins of the Manes can

(1) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 3, p.255

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.359

(3) Ibid.

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be traced as far away as the hinterland of the Gold Coast.

As late as 1669, Lemos Coelho mentioned that the Manes had attacked the Portuguese fortress of Mina, after which they took ten years to reach Sierra Leone. (1) In part, the Portuguese must have deduced from the information that they received that the Manes had attacked the fort of São Jorge de Mina, but, unless there was a deliberate invention on the part of the Portuguese traders and missionaries, the Mane traditions themselves mentioned contact with a European fort. Barreira elicited this information in person from Tora, a Mane king: "He told me that they were ten years on the march, because of the wars which they waged wherever they passed, and he still remembered the castle of Mina, and the shots with which they were met." (2)

On the whole stretch of coast between Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast, there were no forts in the sixteenth century, so that, once the Manes did come into contact with a European fort, this suggests that they had reached the coast at a point east of Cape Three Points. At any rate, there could have been among the Manes individuals who had arrived on the Malaguetta Coast after a circuitous journey from the hinterland of the Gold Coast, merging with those who descended to the Atlantic from the region around Beyla. This would not be contradicted by the general picture of population shifts on the Gold Coast and its hinterland during the fifteenth and sixteenth

(1) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições, p.72

(2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 3, p.255

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centuries. (1) Above all, to construct a theory of the origins of the Manes without a single reference to evidence of this sort (if only to reject it) is a serious historiographical omission. Northcote Thomas was particularly judicious in his conclusions on this issue. Of Fora's evidence, he had this to say: "We can hardly suppose that the chief was aware of the Portuguese name of the place; and it is unfortunate that his exact words are not available." Then, having drawn attention to the possibility of the Manes having travelled from the Niger to Mina and then on to Sierra Leone, he added; "I must not be understood to argue that the Manes actually came by this route, or by any other, from beyond the Niger; I am merely exploring possibilities. Certain data have to be accounted for." (2)

In the final analysis, the most relevant aspects of the Mane invasions are not the origin of these people but their impact upon the situation in Sierra Leone itself. This aspect has already been touched on in the suggestion that the Mendes and the Lokos were products of the Mane invasions - a suggestion that seems well founded.

Today, the Mendes are one of the largest tribal groups in Sierra Leone. They are clearly the product of an intermixture on a Bullom base, and with an upper strata showing distinct Mande traits. Anthropometric measurements of some seven hundred subjects suggested that there were among the Mendes both a Mande type and a type indigenous to the forest region. (3)

(1) J.D. Fage: Ghana: A Historical Interpretation (Madison, 1961), pp.28, 29.

(2) Northcote Thomas: "Who were the Manes?", op.cit.

(3) K. Little: The Mende of Sierra Leone (London, 1951), p.21 (citing Migeod).

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Certain cultural divergencies, such as the presence of both matrilineal and patrilineal patterns of inheritance, support the idea of cultural fusion. Mende tradition distinguishes between the earliest settlers and invaders who came from the north. The leaders of the invasions set themselves up as chiefs, but difficulties over boundaries brought them into constant conflict with each other, as well as with any of the original rulers who were able to withstand them. (1) All this sounds remarkably similar to the comments of the Portuguese on the Mane invasions.

It was only late in the eighteenth century that the Mendes were recorded as making attacks on the Sherbro Bulloms, and they are in fact relatively recent arrivals in the modern state of Sierra Leone as far as numbers and influence are concerned. (2) In this situation, one must draw a careful distinction between the arrival of the conquering forces and the formation of new tribal entities. The Manes overran all of the Sherbro Bulloms, but their greatest impact was made around the Gallinas and Cape Mount, and at some distance inland following the line of the Toma invasion. Here, therefore, the Mende 'tribe' can be said to have emerged, moving deeper into Sierra Leone proper during the eighteenth century.

It can similarly be maintained that the Lokos were a product of the Mane invasions. Person argues that they stem from the section of the Toma-Gbande force which took an inland route across the hinterland of the Sherbro Bulloms. In reality, the Portuguese spoke not only of coastal movements but

(1) K. Little: op. cit., p.28

(2) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, pp.155-157

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of roughly parallel fronts in the sertão or hinterland. (1) They also made it clear that the region around Port Loko (or Logos, as it was then called) was one of the most important centres of Mane power within Sierra Leone. Farma, the first Mane king of the area, was also addressed as "Emperor of the Sapes", a title retained by his successors. (2)

As far as the Portuguese were concerned, Farma's subjects were Temnes, and today the Temnes retain traditions concerning their great king, Bai Farma, who came from the east. (3) As would be expected if the Lokos were part of the Mane invasion, the Lokos and Mendes are regarded as being divisions of the same people (4), though the Lokos display marked Temne characteristics in their speech, setting it apart from 'pure' Mende. These characteristics are held to have been acquired when the Lokos traded with the Temnes(5), but it seems far more likely that the situation is to be explained by the fact that the Mendes represent the Mane fusion with the Bulloms and Kissis, while the Lokos represent the same Mane elements fused with Temnes. Today, the Limbas still call a Loko Gbande, while the Gbandes themselves say that their brothers left them at an early date to fight a war in the west. (6)

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- (1) André Dornelas: "Relação sobre a Serra Leoa".
Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p. 365.
- (2) A.P.F. - Lettre Antichi, Vol. 248, fl. 57, "Declaration of king Farma, emperor of the Sapes, in favour of Fr. Seraphim de Leon", 15 Sept. 1654.
- (3) C.F. Schenkler: A Collection of Temne Traditions, Fables and Proverbs (London, 1861), p.3.
- (4) M. McCulloch: Peoples of Sierra Leone, pp.1, 3
- (5) Peter Kup: op. cit., p.124
- (6) Ibid, p.124

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The name Mane itself fell rapidly into disuse, except in the Scarcies. By some curious chance, it was this section of the invaders, furthest removed from their origins on the Malaguetta Coast, who were still being called Manes later in the seventeenth century, while to the south there was a reversion to the name 'Bullom'. (1) The Mane or Mani people of the Sherbro are almost certainly products of these sixteenth century occurrences.

While the creation of new tribal entities was essentially a long-term process, there were a number of ways in which the Manes made their presence felt immediately. The state-building Mande element was in a minority, but the forces were numerous, providing an example of an unusually powerful invasion in the history of the region. From the accounts of the Jesuits, the direct consequences were felt until 1606, when the death of Parma, king of Port Loko, marked the end of an era.

The defeat of the Sapes at the hands of the Manes was explicitly attributed to the lack of fighting spirit among the former, and their virtual ignorance of the arts of war, in contrast to the Manes. Mane methods of warfare won the admiration of Dornelas, who rated them as better warriors than the Senegal Wolofs, for whom he had the highest respect. Barreira praised the Sapes for their intelligence and their ability to learn, but he conceded that they had "weak and effeminate minds". (2) Before him, De Almada had said much the same things. He claimed that the Sapes were "given to feasts and pleasures, which they continually have, because the land gives

(1) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições, p.72

(2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 1, p.409

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everything in abundance, and they do not use arms like other nations". (1)

This last statement is obviously exaggerated, because early in the sixteenth century the Sapes were said to have had their war captains, and to have organised war by sea and by land. (2)

The traders and missionaries who had knowledge of both peoples stressed the change which came over the Sapes by the end of the sixteenth century. "These Sapes who inhabit Sierra Leone and its vicinity were a weak and cowardly people; now with the discipline of the Manes they have become excellent soldiers and are good captains" was one assessment (3); "The continuation of the war with the Manes has made them soldiers" was another. (4) The Bulloms, who had previously been regarded as the most aggressive of the Sapes, came into closest contact with the Manes, and were subsequently considered as the most expert in the use of Mane arms and Mane methods of warfare. (5) Throughout Sierra Leone, the arms, military strategy and fortifications had been profoundly influenced by the Manes. The bows, shields and knives described as being in the possession of most of the inhabitants of Sierra Leone in the early seventeenth century were exactly the same as those which distinguished the Manes on their arrival. After service, both for and against the Manes, the people of Sierra Leone had learnt to fight in formation,

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.356

(2) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.94

(3) Alvares de Almada: op. cit., p.374

(4) Fernão Guerreiro: op. cit., Vol. 1, p.409

(5) André Dornelas: "Relação sobre a Serra Leoa".

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using squadrons of archers and bowmen carrying the large Mane shields. The Mane entrenchments, known as atabanka were in general use. These consisted of three or four fences of stout palisades, with a ditch on the outside. Tall towers and garrison posts were built on the walls, within which the older and less energetic archers remained. (1) Planning encirclements and breaking out of sieges had become commonplace in Sierra Leone before the end of the sixteenth century. (2)

As far as military matters were concerned, the Sapes emerged the better off after passing through the Mane ordeal, but this was small recompense for the oppression, disruption and destruction which were the main features of the period. The Sapes were sold to the Europeans in thousands, they were forced to labour for the new ruling class, their trade with the interior was interrupted, and their very creativity was severely impaired.

When John Hawkins made his second slaving expedition to Sierra Leone in 1564, he found that the island of Sherbro had been transformed into a veritable granary. The Manes were using Sape labour to produce an abundance of millet, rice, root crops and palm wine. (3) The Sapes were harshly used, and in some cases they made efforts to throw off the yoke, if only by flight. In 1572, some Sherbro Bulloms staged a revolt which their Mane chief, Shere Mambea, was unable to quell single-handedly, and he left to seek the help of

(1) André Dornelas: "Relação sobre a Serra Leoa".

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.374. (For a description of methods of warfare in Sierra Leone, see Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, pp.165-171)

(3) Hakluyt Society, No. LVII, The Hawkins Voyages, pp.17, 18

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his confrères. In the meantime, his Bullom subjects, who were grouped in one large village, withdrew in a body to the bush. When Dornelas saw the site in 1574, everything was still intact - houses, agricultural implements, pottery, pestles, etc. The number of people involved in this escape was 1,000 adult males, apart from women and children. Many other Sapes were successful in making their escape. With the help of the Portuguese, some made their way to the Cape Verde Islands and to Cacheu. Frequent mention was also made of a 'tribe' called Tagunchos or Dagunchos. They had fled from the Manes, and had settled down in a hilly and relatively inaccessible section near to the Great Scarries. (1)

Mainly on the basis of their salt manufacture, the Sapes had been able to attract trade from the Futa Djalon. At one end of the trade routes, the Fulas and Djalonkés supplied white cloth, cattle and gold. This was passed on through the Susus who added iron and dyes. The caravans had usually followed the Pongo to the coast, and the Portuguese lancados had entered the transit coastal trade which allowed the goods from the interior trade to find an outlet further north (on the Nunez) and the coastal distribution southwards had to stop. Fortunately, by the end of the sixteenth century, conditions had become settled enough to permit a resumption of commerce on the Pongo. (2)

One of the most disastrous results of the Mane invasion was the destruction of the skills of the Sapes. In the early sixteenth century, the

(1) André Dornelas; Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.346,353

(2) Alvares de Almada, op.cit., pp.347, 373

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Sapes had great reputations as artists and craftsmen, working in ivory and raffia. Both Pacheco Pereira and Valentim Fernandes praised them in the highest terms. What they found most striking was the ability of the Sapes to carve to European specification items such as spoons, salt-cellars, and dagger hilts. Valentim Fernandes wrote: "the men in this country are the cleverest Negroes where manual art is concerned; they make salt-cellars and spoons of ivory. And also it does not matter what work one sketches, they will carve it in ivory." (1)

In his book, Afro-Portuguese Ivories, William Fagg established the identity of a number of ivory objects - spoons, forks, salt-cellars and horns, - carved for European use and to European design, but fashioned by African artists in a style of their own. He was unable to identify the area of provenance, but considered the Slave Coast very probable. A.F. Rider, basing his conclusions mainly on an account book of the Portuguese Casa da Guiné for the year 1504-1505, and on the remarks of Pacheco Pereira, pointed out that Sierra Leone was the area from which the majority of these hybrid art specimens must have originated. He also warned that one could easily be misled by "negative tradition", since Fagg had considered Sierra Leone an unlikely region on the grounds that no tradition of carving in ivory survived there. (2) That neither skills nor tradition survived is due to the Mane invasions.

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- (1) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.104. (Also pp. 76, 96)
 Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, pp. 80,84
- (2) A.F.C. Rider: "A Note on the Afro-Portuguese Ivories", The Journal of African History, Vol. 5, 1964, No. 3, pp.363-65.

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After the Manes had arrived and settled in Sierra Leone, objects of high artistic merit were still to be seen. In the same vein as the early sixteenth century writers, Manuel Alvares commented on the ivory spoons, the handles of which had carved on them various adornments such as the heads of animals, birds, and krifi (1), "with such perfection that when one has viewed them one has seen everything". Unfortunately, many of the items he observed must have been carved at an earlier date and were no longer being produced. The Mane destruction of the Sape skills was made explicit - "It is the fault of these foreign kings that the country is so poor, because they have captured so many master craftsmen, and.....have committed so many vexations on the indigenous people that these latter have become less and less concerned and have given up the exercise of their arts." (2)

It is also clear that a number of stone figures found in modern Mende country were associated with a pre-Mane culture. These anthropomorphic carvings, called Nomoli by the Mendes and Pomta by the Kissis, are not integral parts of the culture of the people who live there today, and were often turned up accidentally in agricultural operations. (3) They exist all over a region which would have been the original home of the Kissis, and the art of carving them was obviously lost in the face of a substantial invasion which entirely overran the area - almost certainly that of the Manes. Objects fashioned to European specification were but an insignificant part of the

(1) Krifi is a generic term for spirits. ~~See below.~~

(2) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor".

(3) Stanley Brown: "The Nomoli of Mende Country", Africa, vol.18, Jan.1948.

artistic output of the peoples of Sierra Leone. Art was functional - expressed in articles of domestic use, such as wooden bowls, pottery, stools and mats, and, above all, in the creation of ancestor images. Anthropomorphic ancestor images carved in wood were known among the Sherbro peoples in the early sixteenth century (1), and the Nomoli are said to have required much the same tools and techniques as wood. (2) More than an art form would have been involved in the disappearance of the Nomoli, since the religious and ontological framework in which they functioned would inevitably have been affected. For the coastal peoples the encounter with the Manes must indeed have been a traumatic experience.

In at least one respect the Manes made a positive contribution to the domestic skills of the Sapes; and that was in the working of iron. Again, Manuel Alvares furnished precise information: "Of the mechanic arts they have not a single office, with the exception of ironsmiths; and in the understanding of this they far surpass the naturals of Sierra Leone." Turning to the records before the Mane invasions, one finds confirmation of the Sape limitations in the working of iron. In the early sixteenth century, they were reported to have manufactured their own weapons, but they could not temper the iron properly and the product was brittle. (3)

Possibly, techniques of weaving cotton could also have been brought by the Manes. Most of the cloth on the Sierra Leone littoral before the era

(1) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.88

(2) Yves Person: "Les Kissi et leurs Statuettes de Pierre".

(3) Valentim Fernandes: op. cit., p.76.

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of the Manes arrived by way of the Fulas and Susus, and the art of weaving was also introduced from the east and north. In the early nineteenth century, Major Laing noted that the manufacture of cloth among the Temnes was very limited, and that the techniques had been acquired from the Koranko to the east. He added that "as the traveller advances eastward, he finds the natives improve both in the texture of the cloth and size of loom. In the country of Sangara very handsome and large cloths are manufactured....and form an important article of trade among the interior nations. I have seen cloths similar to those of Sangara on the Ivory and Gold Coast". (1) Obviously, therefore, the Manes could have made their contribution from the south-east. Today, the Mendes use a smaller loom than the Mandinga model originating in the north (2), and it is probably significant that the section of Temne country where weaving is practised is called Ro Mende. (3)

Both cotton and iron working further emphasise the Mande characteristics of the Manes. As far as craftsmanship in iron was concerned, the Manes were displaying the superiority of all the Mande peoples over the littoral tribes. Iron mining, smelting and refining were associated with the Susus and Mandingas, who had special clans or castes specialising in this craft. Such clans, like the Kante, often held positions of the highest authority within the tribal polity. On all these details the Manes conformed to the Mande pattern, for among them the craft of ironworking was open only

(1) G. Laing: Travels in the Timanee, Kooranko and Soolima Countries (London, 1825), p.81

(2) M.C. Easmon: "Sierra Leone Country Cloths", in British Empire Exhibition (Sierra Leone Section) (London, 1920).

(3) N.W. Thomas: "Who were the Manes?" (Op.cit.)

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to a privileged few. (1)

There were other changes which had to do with cold steel and warfare, but which ramified into sectors which at first sight appear far removed - namely, the religious and the metaphysical. One of the principal Xinas (2) or spirits of Sierra Leone in the early seventeenth century went under the name of Mane Mane. Physically, this comprised a pile of rocks with a sheaf of leaves placed in the centre. To this site the usual food offerings were made, but iron was the favourite item of oblation because the spirit which resided there was one to whom appeals were made on matters of honour and revenge, and iron was the instrument for this purpose. (3) Besides this particular spirit, a whole range of 'medicines' for war seemed to have been brought by the Manes and accepted by the Sapes; no doubt because the success of the Manes would have been attributed in part to the efficacy of the means which they had at their disposal for ensuring the intervention of superior forces on their behalf.

Among the Manes, women played a special role in the preparation of war 'medicine', and as a result the Mane invasions may well have strengthened existing female secret societies among the Sapes, and may perhaps have led to the formation of new ones. In the early sixteenth century, both male and

(1) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor".

(2) Europeans often referred to the Xinas as 'fetishes'. In reality, the word referred to spiritual beings who resided in determined places or material objects.

(3) Manuel Alvares: op. cit.

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female secret societies were known to the Portuguese as existing in Sierra Leone. (1) By the end of that century it was made clear that the female societies were concerned mainly with the training of young girls who had reached the age of puberty. All the young girls of a given area who were to be initiated were placed in a large house isolated from other residences, remaining there for a year or more under the guardianship of an old man with the reputation of having led a virtuous life. During the period of seclusion, the girls were given new names, were sustained by food supplied by their parents, and underwent training which prompted the Portuguese to regard the institution in which they were housed as a convent. On graduating, they dressed in their best garments and attended feasts and dances, where the nobles and the young men had the opportunity of selecting their wives. These initiates were called Mendas. (2) Almost in every detail, this description fits the Sande and Bundu female secret societies as they have survived into the twentieth century.

It is unlikely that the Manes brought about any fundamental change in the pattern of female education and initiation, but they seemed to have added to the power of women. For instance, the Manes established a large village exclusively for women, who could only be visited by men under certain circumstances. Their main function was the manufacture of 'medicines', especially for war, and every king had one of these 'priestesses' in his

(1) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.88

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.352.

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service, allowing her wide privileges. (1) Another contributory factor in this context was the political power which a woman of high birth could wield in Mane political circles. Mabora, the sister of Farma Bouré, was one of the most outstanding political figures in Sierra Leone during the early seventeenth century. Her authority was attributed partly to the fact that, had she been a man, she would have been king, and partly to her own personal qualities. (2) Recalling that the Mane movement was at the outset supposedly led by a woman, it could be that behind the Mane kings there was a female figure in the capacity of "Queen Mother", but, whether there was any such institution or not, very high status was obviously accorded to some Mane women, which would have strengthened the female secret societies, as well as allowing them to play some role in the preponderantly male societies. Today, the office of Mabola in the Poro society, which is held by a woman, commands the highest respect and has an integral role in the ceremonial life and purpose of that organisation. (3)

In the case of the male secret societies, the evidence also suggests that the Manes gave a great impetus to institutions that were already established. Only the most obvious externals were described in the sixteenth century. Women could not enter the lodge of the male societies, nor were they permitted to pass nearby when the deliberations or prayers were going on. (4)

(1) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor".

(2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 3, p.259

(3) K. Little: The Mende of Sierra Leone, p.164

(4) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, pp. 84, 88

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The plebians were told that on certain days a powerful spirit walked abroad, requiring that they should shut their doors and keep off the streets. What happened at this time was that the king and the nobles ran naked in the streets, making a great commotion. If any outsider came across their path, he was either killed or made a member. (1)

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the situation described was recognisably the same as that which exists today. There were three important societies, called the Pero, the Benle and the Cymo - which must clearly have been the Poro, the Ragbenle and the Simo, not only because of the close similarity of names, but also because the details which are supplied make the identifications possible. The Cymo, for instance, was said to have operated among the most northerly of the Sapes-Manes, and today it is indeed confined to the Nalus and Bagas. In the case of the Benle, it is striking that Manuel Alvares should have considered it as a very exclusive association, because the restricted nature of the Ragbenle is one of the characteristics to which modern scholars have drawn attention. (2) As far as the Poro is concerned, mention was made by Valentim Fernandes of a secret society with a female mascot called Pere, which could have been the Poro. (3) Manuel Alvares thought that the Poro was a Mane institution, but even if this was not so, it must certainly have fallen into the hands of the Manes after the conquest.

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.351

(2) M. McCulloch: Peoples of Sierra Leone, p.68

(3) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.84

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The question of the spread of the secret societies of Sierra Leone has long been of interest. Butt-Thompson suggested that the Poro was introduced by the Temnes as an adaptation of the Simo which they had known in the area that is now the Republic of Guinea, but the Temne traditions say that the Poro was borrowed by them from the Sherbro Bulloms, while the Mendes claim to be its originators. (1) This latter claim is interesting in the light of Alvares' opinion that the Poro was a Mane introduction, but, if anything, it would have belonged to the Bullom-Kissi peoples who were overrun in the south of Sierra Leone and who were incorporated into what is now the Mende tribe. The female organisation, the Bundu, which is widespread in Temne country, is also felt to have been derived from the Sande of the Mendes. (2)

When the strength of the secret societies is viewed in relation to the geography of the Upper Guinea Coast, a certain pattern emerges. From the Gambia southwards to Cape Verga, there are to be found associations for circumcision and initiation, but no all-powerful secret societies comparable to the Poro. Powerful secret societies were part of the cultural make-up of all the Sapes; and moving from north to south among the latter the strength of the institution grows. It is well entrenched among the Sherbro Bulloms, and even more so in Liberia. The Vais in Liberia have the most elaborate form of the Poro (3), and it seems feasible that they and other early inhabitants of Cape Mount, playing an important role in the Mane conquest, would have

(1) M. McCulloch: Peoples of Sierra Leone, p.30.

(2) Ibid., p.69

(3) Ibid., p.93.

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contributed to the increased authority of the Poro, Sande and the like, as they moved northwards.

Another issue of importance hinges on the political power of the secret societies, in relationship both to the local tribal authorities and to the rulers over large areas of country. In a comprehensive review of the Poro, Little concluded from historical data and from the results of field enquiries that there were "inner councils" of the Poro, who were the effective government in the chiefdoms, but it is doubtful whether there was a centralised supreme council. (1) On both these points, sixteenth and seventeenth century contemporary contemporaries yield some information.

The secret societies are all hierarchically organised in grades, and the highest grade or inner circle was obviously the seat of power within the tribe. This "inner council" was described by the Portuguese as the "old men's Cymo", its members making public appearances only at important functions such as the death of a king. (2) These old men or nobles or solategis, as they were called, met in the Funco or "Palaver House" in the centre of the village to conduct the business of government and law. When Hawkins was in Sierra Leone he learnt from the resident Portuguese traders that in the Funco the nobles made their decisions concerning peace and war, about the harvesting of the grain, and about the time for tapping the palm

(1) K. Little: "The Political Function of the Poro", Africa, Vol. XXV, No. 4, October 1965, pp.350-364, and Vol. XXXVI, No. 1, Jan.1966, pp.62-72.

(2) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor".

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wine. (1) At a later date these were all known to be decisions within the province of the Poro, and in the sixteenth century De Almada considered the nobles or solategis as being identical with those members of the secret society who had the right of parading in company with the guardian spirit at times when the 'plebeians' (sic) had to be indoors. Furthermore, these solategis wore masks and costumes when they appeared in the Funco. It was speculated that they were disguised when defending clients so as to be able to speak their minds frankly before the king, but the masks were the distinguishing mark of the secret societies. In the sixteenth century the masks were called arong (2), which is the name retained within the Ragbenle society. (3)

More pertinent to the coming of the Manes is the debatable point about the extent to which the activities of all the local lodges were centrally controlled and directed. In recent times, this facet of the organisation of the secret societies seems to have declined, but there have been hints of a "Grand Poro" with wide cross-chieftain powers for making wars and settling disputes. (4) Such powers were wielded in the early seventeenth century, and they emanated from a centralised institution. The Poro 'University' (sic) was said to have been situated just beyond Cape Mount. Students spent four years there, during which time they were equipped

(1) Hakluyt Society, No. LVII, The Hawkins Voyages, pp.17, 18.

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.348-351.

(3) M. McCulloch: Peoples of Sierra Leone, p. 69

(4) Ibid., p. 30

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to conserve the peace and deal with homicides and revolts. (1)

One cannot be certain that the 'University' was founded by the Manes, but if it had existed before their arrival they had good reason to strengthen it. It was a logical solution to the difficulties which the dispersed Mane ruling class would have faced in trying to govern so wide an area. Apart from common training at Cape Mount, the Mane kings met from time to time in what were very likely to have been Poro councils. For instance, when Farma, the first Mane king of Port Loko, died in 1606, his funeral was attended by important persons from "beyond Cape Ledo on the Malaguetta Coast". (2) Those persons would have been members of the inner circles of the secret organisations, since Farma was important enough to warrant their presence at his 'cry' or funeral ceremony. Besides, a 'cry' could be held at certain intervals after burial had taken place, and this was sometimes used as a pretext for a political convention. On one occasion, a Mane king was anxious to hold a 'cry', ostensibly on behalf of an ancestor, but the gathering was regarded primarily as an important political conference, where a subject of importance to the Manes as a whole was to be discussed. Rulers from all over Sierra Leone were ready to attend, though the success of the venture was jeopardised by the intransigence of Tora, the eldest of the Mane kings, then ruling over Temne subjects. (3) Such a gathering could hardly have been contemplated outside of the councils of the secret societies or

(1) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor".

(2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 3, p.259.

(3) Ibid., p.250

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of "the cult of the masks" (1); and it is to be reiterated that the inter-tribal feature was a logical concomitant to the superimposition of the Mane ruling class.

By 1623, the phrase "Sapes Manes" was used to describe the ethnic situation in Sierra Leone. (2) There were areas where the Mane element was more pronounced, as in the former Bullom-Kissi country in the Gallinas and the former Temne country on Port Loko Creek, giving rise to the Mendes and Lokos, respectively. Elsewhere, the Manes were completely assimilated, and even though there were references to wars between the Manes and the Sapes in the third quarter of the seventeenth century, the distinction between the two people had long worn thin. As far as the Upper Guinea Coast itself is concerned, the Mane penetration and its consequences are useful pointers to the sort of process which must have occurred when the Mande met the "Semi-Bantu" speakers of the Futa Djalon, when the Fulas merged with the Wolofs in the Senegambia, and when the Mande and Fulas met the "Paleo-Negritics" of Cabo. The Mane invasions also constitute a typical episode in the spread of the influence of the Mande in West Africa, which is recognised as one of the

(1) K. Little: "The Political Function of the Poro". He cites Harley to the effect that the pinnacle of power may not have lain within the Poro, but rather within the cult of the masks of which the Poro was the most highly developed form for manifesting the power of the ancestors towards the people.

(2) Alonso de Sanderval: Natureleza de Todos Etiopes, p.40

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most important themes in the history of West Africa. (1) And, to generalise even further, as J.D. Fage has done with reference to similar occurrences in Ghana, "this process of the eventual mergence of small groups of state-forming conquerors with the more numerous populations of the conquered would seem to be the key to a great deal of African history". (2)

(1) J.D. Fage: Ghana, A Historical Interpretation, p.26.

(2) Jan Vansina, R. Mauny and L.V. Thomas: The Historian in Tropical Africa, pp.90-93.

A HISTORY OF THE UPPER GUINEA COAST, 1545-1800

CHAPTER THREE

PORTUGUESE ACTIVITY

1550-1600

PORTUGUESE ACTIVITY (1550-1600)

Cape Blanco was discovered by Nuno Tristão in 1441, Cape Verde was passed by Diniz Dias in 1444, and the hills of Sierra Leone were sighted from the north by Alvaro Fernandes in 1446. For a few years there was no progress. Then, in 1460, Diogo Gomes and Antonio Noli discovered the western islands of the Cape Verde archipelago. (1) After Pedro da Sintra surveyed the Coast of Sierra Leone in 1462, the outlines of the Upper Guinea Coast were known to the Portuguese.

It was the Cape Verde archipelago, rather than the mainland, which first provoked direct action on the part of the Portuguese crown. After the death of Prince Henry in 1460, the five islands of Santiago, Fogo, Maio, Sal and Boavista passed to his cousin, Ferdinand of Braganza by a royal decree of December 1460. By a similar decree of September 1462, the remaining seven islands of Brava, São Nicolhão, São Vicente, Rasa, Blanca, Santa Luiza and Santa Antão also passed into the possession of the same prince. (2) Prince Ferdinand's widow and his son Diogo, held the islands until 1484, after which possession reverted to the Portuguese crown. (3)

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- (1) The claim has been put forward that it was Cadamosta who discovered the Cape Verde Islands, but this finds little support. See The Voyages of Cadamosta, Hakluyt Society, 2nd Series, No. LXXX (ed. G.R. Crone) pp.xlv & 159.
- (2) A. Texeira da Mota: Cinco Séculos de Cartografia das Ilhas de Cabo Verde (Lisboa 1961) p.1
- (3) João Barreto: História da Guiné (Lisboa 1938) pp.63, 64.
D. Manuel I held the islands for several years before he actually became king in 1495.

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Colonisation and settlement were not dominant motives in the early phases of the Portuguese quest in Africa, but it is noteworthy that where islands offered convenient intermediary points for trade with the coast, the Portuguese did pursue a policy of colonisation. This was true of the Cape Verde islands as it was of São Thome and other islands in the Bight of Benin. Prince Ferdinand divided Santiago, the largest of the Cape Verde islands, into two captaincies, one of which was bestowed on the discoverer, Antonio Noli, while the other was granted to Diogo Afonso, Auditor of the Exchequer of Madeira. Noli it was who, with the help of Prince Ferdinand, set up the first European settlement, and Diogo Afonso soon followed suit. The experience gained in the settlement of Madeira was put to good use, and the Santiago colony grew quickly. (1)

By the early sixteenth century, all the Cape Verde islands had been settled, and all but Sal, Santa Luiza and São Vincente had churches, the presence of a church being presumably a sign that the population was both sizeable and permanent. (2) However, apart from Santiago, only Fogo and Maio had their own administrative machinery, and this provides a better index

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- (1) João Barreto: História da Guiné, p.67. Madeira served as the pattern for the Cape Verde settlements in many respects. See Antonio Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, Africa Occidental (1500-1569), 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 115, Royal grant of several Cape Verde islands to D. João Pereira, 22 Oct 1545, p.381.
- (2) Antonio Brasio: 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 28, Manueline legislation on trade, 28 June 1514, p.89.

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than the church to the relative importance of the various islands. (1) Fogo was second in importance to Santiago, and was the principal centre of cotton cultivation. The orchilla, which grew wild, and the indigo, which was planted, provided the remaining raw materials for a cotton manufacturing industry in the sixteenth century. The cotton industry and livestock breeding were the principal occupation of the Cape Verde community. Apart from the cattle, horses, donkeys, mules and pigs which were reared, there were a considerable number of wild cattle and goats in several of the islands. (2) These were hunted and their hides exported. Sal, as the name implies, had valuable deposits of salt, and was thus a boon to the preservation of the hides, as well as being a popular port of call for passing ships.

The agricultural and trading activities of the Cape Verde islands were made possible by the transportation of Africans from the neighbouring mainland to provide slave labour. In 1582, the combined population of Fogo and Santiago was given as 1,608 whites, 400 freed slaves and 13,700 slaves. (3) This numerical dominance of the slaves was extended to many other spheres of Cape Verde society, largely because the ties with Africa and African customs were never broken. The African slaves provided not only the labour

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- (1) Antonio Brasio: 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 15, Royal revenues from the islands of Santiago, Fogo and Maio, 23 Oct. 1510, p.41.
- (2) Antonio Brasio: 2nd series, Vol. II - Documents No. 4,6,15, relating to the years 1504, 1506, 1510.
- (3) Antonio Brasio: 2nd series, Vol. III (1570-1600) - No. 42, Account of the Islands of Cape Verde by Francisco de Andrade, p.99.

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for the cotton and dye industries, but also the techniques. The Cape Verde islands specialised in the manufacture of "country cloths", using the same small loom that the Africans introduced from the mainland. At the same time, the Portuguese provided the organisation for a large-scale industry, and experimented with new fibres brought from Europe. (1) The net result was a cotton industry whose products enjoyed the highest esteem among the peoples of the Upper Guinea Coast, being preferred to the cloth imported directly from Europe.

Slavery was the basis of the Cape Verde society in yet another sense. The Portuguese settlers were not only interested in the import of slaves for their own labour force, but they also regarded the re-export of slaves as a priority. Cloth, dyes, hides and livestock were exported to Europe and the New World, but the profits from these must have been trifling compared with what could be expected from the slave trade. (2) The Cape Verde planters, therefore, concentrated on selling their own products on the mainland for slaves, and then selling these latter to Europe and the Americas.

As early as June 1466, the Cape Verde settlers received their first charter from the Portuguese crown; allowing them to have a judiciary and revenue department, giving them absolute rights over the Africans, and granting them exclusive licence to trade on the adjacent mainland. The Cape Verde sphere of influence on the coast extended officially between the Senegal, (where the commercial zone of Arguin came to an end), and Cape Mount, (where

(1) See below, Ch. VII, p. 399

(2) See below, Ch. VII, p. 434

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the monopoly of Fernão Gomez took effect). (1) However, in the second half of the sixteenth century, the Senegambia was a very marginal portion of the Cape Verde monopoly. It remained very popular with individual Portuguese and Cape Verdeans, but competition from the French, Dutch and English had reduced the Portuguese nationals to the status of agents for rival European powers.

In reality, therefore, the area which was effectively the preserve of the Cape Verde traders in the second half of the sixteenth century lay between the Gambia and Cape Mount - that is to say, the region which is considered here as the Upper Guinea Coast. (2) The Portuguese very often termed it "the Guinea of Cape Verde", and with justification. To begin with, Santiago held the reins of administration for the Cape Verde archipelago as well as for the Upper Guinea Coast. At least this was so from 1550 onwards, after the appointment of Jorge Pimentel as captain major of Ribeira Grande, Santiago. (3) During the first half of the century policy had vacillated between the

- (1) The text of the charter is to be found in J.W. Blake: Europeans in West Africa, Hakluyt Society, 2nd series, No. LXXXVI, pp.64-67
- (2) For J.W. Blake, the term "Upper Guinea" embraces the Senegambia, but he states that "after the middle of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese were forced to abandon the greater part of their trade with Senegambia, owing to competition and strife with English interlopers, and they then began to concentrate upon the development of the trade of the region south of the Gambia". (Europeans in West Africa, p.37, Vol. I)
- (3) João Barreto: História da Guiné, p.77

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alternatives of direct royal administration and the farming of the revenues. In 1550, the compromise was reached whereby a royal factor was permanently resident in Santiago, while the commerce of Cape Verde - Guinea was leased under contract. (1) In religious matters, too, the Senegambia did not lie under the jurisdiction of Santiago since the diocese of Cape Verde - Guinea created by Pope Clement VII in 1533, extended between the Gambia and Cape Palmas. (2) But, quite apart from playing a key role in secular and ecclesiastical arrangements which the Portuguese crown made for the Upper Guinea Coast, the Cape Verde islands were important to the mainland in that their population provided the majority of settlers of European extraction who were to be found on the Upper Guinea Coast.

Consistent with the Portuguese partiality towards islands, the Bijagos were seriously viewed as possible sites for Portuguese colonisation. In 1532, king João III gave the Bijagos islands (then known as the islands of Buam) to his brother Luis, to be held during the latter's lifetime. (3) Two years later, an attempt was made to encourage settlement by giving them the same privileges as the Cape Verdeans. (4) There was, however, one difficulty: most of the islands were peopled. In the original grant, it was stated that

(1) Georges Schelle: La Traite Negrière aux Indes de Castille Vol. I (Paris 1906)

(2) Antonio Brasio: 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 80, *Erection of the Diocese of Cape Verde*, 31 Jan. 1533, p.246

(3) Ibid: No. 72, *Royal letter to the Prince D. Luis*, 27 March 1532, p.226

(4) Ibid: No. 84, *Settlement of the islands of Buão*, 5 Sept 1534, p.263

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war could be waged against the indigenous population if they proved intransigent, and they could then be sold as slaves. D. Luis sent a force under Gomes Baleiro of Santiago to attack Ilha Roxo, the largest and most attractive of the Bijagos islands. The expedition was a dismal failure, very few of its members surviving. The result of this was that for several years the Bijagos refused to trade with the Portuguese, and dealt harshly with any Portuguese vessels which were shipwrecked on the dangerous shoals of that section of the coast. (1) Some time later, trade with the Bijagos was resumed - possibly before 1550, when D. Luis succeeded in disposing of his grant of the Bijagos islands for a sum of 15,000 cruzados. (2)

While settlements on all offshore islands was encouraged by the Portuguese, stringent measures were adopted in attempts to prevent any whites from settling on the mainland. The bogey of the Portuguese authorities was the lançado or tangomão, terms used to describe the private trader on the coast. The former takes its origin from lançar, "to throw", and refers to the fact that these white residents had "thrown themselves" among the Africans. (3)

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Tratado Breve dos Rios de Guiné", p.319.

(2) Antonio Brasio: 2nd Series, Vol. II - No. 72 Royal letter to Prince D. Luis, 27 March 1532 (Rubric added by Damião de Goes, guardian of the Torre do Tombo) p.229

Cruzado - writing in 1918, Dames gave the value of the Portuguese cruzado in 1510 as nearly ten shillings in the English currency of his day. A century later its value had more than halved. See M.L. Dames: The Book of Duarte Barbosa, Hakluyt Society, No.1918. Cited in B. Davidson: Black Mother, p.135

(3) Antonio Brasio: 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 28, Manueline legislation on trade, 28 June 1514, p.89.

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A tangomão was defined as a white trader who had gone to the extreme of adopting the local religion and customs, and who had his body covered with tribal tattoos. (1) At other times it seems that the term was applied only to the African-born auxiliaries of the white lançados. (2) It is very likely, therefore, that there was in the lingua franca of the Upper Guinea Coast some slight distinction between a lançado and a tangomão, based probably on the closer attachment of the tangomão to the Africans, either by birth or by choice. (3) But the Portuguese administration regarded them both in the same light: they were private traders who resided in Guinea against repeated prohibitions, providing a ready means whereby the attempted Portuguese monopoly of trade could be evaded.

Illustrating the spirit of the times, the Portuguese, on the discovery of the African coast, asserted the right to a monopoly of whatever benefits were in store. Quite apart from the defence of these claims to monopoly at an international level, the Portuguese crown found it necessary to enact a mass of codes, regulations and statutes applicable to its own citizens; and the lançado, by his presence and his trading activities on the Upper Guinea Coast, contravened many of these. The 1514 Manueline codification of legislation

(1) Fernão Guerreiro: "Relação Anual", Vol. I, p.400

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.326 and

John Ogilby: Africa, p.366

(3) Tangomão may possibly be derived from a certain category of priests in Sierra Leone, known as tangomas. See Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.102

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relating to the trade of West Africa revealed the main points of Portuguese policy. To begin with, it was a capital offence to go to Guinea without a royal licence. Secondly, it was illegal to send or carry ^{any} trade goods to Guinea, unless one was a licensed trader. Thirdly, except in an emergency, no ship which was bound for a given port was allowed to touch at any other point on the coast. When a ship did land at an authorised port, it was the captain's responsibility to see that the crew returned on board. His failure to do so could lead to severe financial penalties and exile to Ceuta. Finally, it was specifically stipulated that "no person, irrespective of rank or station, should throw himself with the Negroes, nor, under any circumstances, remain with the said Negroes, on pain of death." (1)

This legislation clearly implied that apart from those ships which were trading illegally, the licensed vessels also accounted for numbers of the private traders who were to be found in West Africa. The Upper Guinea Coast was the area where the problem of the renegade private traders was most in evidence. In January 1508 a decree was issued against the lançados of Sierra Leone. This ordered the sequestration of the goods of all such individuals, and the donation of the proceeds to the All Saints' Hospital in Lisbon (2) That Sierra Leone should have been singled out for mention is significant. The Upper Guinea Coast was an area better suited for small-

(1) Antonio Brasio: 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 28, Manueline legislation on trade, 28 June 1514, p.89

(2) Sousa Viterbo: "Os Portugueses e o Gêntio", in O Instituto, Vol. 43, No. 3 (Coimbra 1896)

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scale rather than large-scale trading, and this was particularly the case with Sierra Leone. The area between Cape Verde and the bays of St. Ann was regarded as the ideal resort for the lançado, and, in the early sixteenth century, poor men went nowhere else but there. "Sierra Leone was the refuge and shelter of many, and the haven of those who had arrived as nobody and came out as men." (1)

Towards the end of the second decade of the sixteenth century, the measures against the lançado grew more harsh and determined than ever. By a decree of the 16th December 1517, various restrictions were imposed on the trading rights of the Cape Verdeans, prohibiting them from conducting trade in the ports of Sierra Leone, forbidding them to purchase more slaves than were indispensable for the conduct of agriculture in the islands, and limiting their possibilities of trade solely to goods produced in the Cape Verde islands. (2) Very shortly afterwards on the 18th January 1518, Cape Verde trade with the Upper Guinea Coast was completely outlawed. All who continued trading to the mainland were liable to imprisonment, and the loss of their goods and vessels. (3)

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.355,356

(2) Antonio Brasio; 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 43 - Instructions to the chief magistrate of Santiago, 16 Dec 1517, p.139.

Also cited in J.W. Blake Europeans in West Africa, Vol. I, p.124

(3) Antonio Brasio: 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 45, 46, Royal edicts on the trades of Guinea in 1518, pp.144-148.

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The reason for these restrictions on the livelihood of the Cape Verdeans was vaguely given as "the harm that the residents of Cape Verde have inflicted upon the trades of Guinea", but the ferocity of these measures is only explicable in terms of the problem of the lançado. This legislation represents an attack on the Cape Verde islands as the place where lançados were principally recruited. If Cape Verde ships no longer went to Sierra Leone or to the rest of the Upper Guinea Coast, then the physical opportunities for private traders lancing themselves on to the mainland would be considerably reduced. D. Manuel also had further threats in store for those lançados who were already on the coast in large numbers. On the 15th March 1518, he commissioned Bernadim Gomes to sail to Guinea and superintend the removal of the lançados. Those who returned to Europe would be pardoned, although half of their goods would be confiscated, and each would be made to contribute ten cruzados to the All Saints' Hospital in Lisbon. Those who refused to embark for Europe should be executed by the local kings. Gomes was instructed to offer the African rulers the goods of the lançados and whatever gifts were necessary to assure their complicity in this matter. (1)

None of the above moves were successful. To all intents and purposes, the Cape Verdeans continued to trade freely on the mainland, and the numbers of lançados continued to increase. This is clearly inferred in the letter of appointment of Afonso Lopes de Avila to the post of factor of Santiago in 1520. He was cautioned not to allow metropolitan Portuguese to

(1) Antonio Brasio: 2nd series, Vol. II - ~~No. 52, Instructions to the~~
~~trade factor of Santiago, Afonso Lopes de Avila, 13 Jan 1520, p. 159.~~
 No. 46, Edict on the trade of Guinea, 12 March 1518, p. 147

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proceed to the mainland along with the Cape Verde residents; while to stop the latter from taking up permanent residence in Guinea, it was proposed that all who left Santiago for the coast should deposit security. Captains were to deposit two hundred cruzados, pilots one hundred and fifty cruzados, and ordinary seamen one hundred cruzados. (1)

That the punitive measures against the lançados should have assumed a less ferocious aspect by 1520 must have been due largely to their proven inefficacy. At the same time, the idea of settlers on the Upper Guinea Coast gradually became a matter of sympathetic concern to the Portuguese authorities during the course of the sixteenth century. Religious considerations caused the lançados to be viewed in a more favourable light. The diocese of S_antiago was responsible for sending a 'Visitor' periodically to the mainland to see to the spiritual welfare of the Portuguese, but when such a priest did arrive, he invariably engrossed in trading ventures, according to Jesuit report. (2) Three missionaries of the order of the Discalced Carmelites visited the Geba area around 1584, and the need for a substantial mission was emphasised. (3) In 1598, a priest was appointed to serve Cacheu, and the king of Spain and Portugal urged the establishment of a Jesuit mission, "both for the doctrine and salvation of the Portuguese, his

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- (1) A. brasio: 2nd series, Vol. II - No.52, Instructions to the trade factor of Santiago, Afonso Lopes de Avila, 13 Jan 1520, p.159
- (2) A.R.S.I. - Lusitania 83, fl. 316, Report from the Jesuit mission in Santiago, 30 May 1627.
- (3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.330.

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subjects, who dwell in those parts, as well for the conversion of the pagan inhabitants". (1)

More important, was the realisation by the authorities that some settlers on the coast were necessary to facilitate the Cape Verde trade. In 1535, mention was made in official correspondence, of the "factory of Sao Domingos" on the Cacheu river, and though there was no royal factor appointed, it had already assumed a semi-official status. (2) The port of Guinala on the Ria Grande de Buba was similarly referred to in 1558. (3) By November 1605, the settlement of Cacheu was granted a municipal charter by the crown. For some reason, this was not accepted, but the offer itself is clear evidence of royal approval for settlement on the coast. (4) Indeed, during the whole of the second half of the sixteenth century, there was no hostile legislation aimed at the lançados.

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- (1) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. I, p.399 (This was based on a decision of the Mesa da Consciencia, made on the 27th April 1596; that is to say, by the spiritual council of the monarch. See A. Brasio: Vol. II, p.383.)
- (2) Antonio Brasio: 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 89 - Certificate from the Casa de Mina to the superintendent of cotton on the island of Fogo, 10 Sept. 1535, p.275.
- (3) Antonio Brasio: 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 143, Voyage from Santiago to Guinea (report by the royal treasurer in S_antiago), 19 May 1558, p.467.
- (4) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 74, copy of municipal charter granted to Cacheu on 15 Nov. 1605. (For a discussion of this issue, see C. da Silva Fexeira: "Companhia de Cacheu, Rios e Comercio da Guiné (documentos para a sua historia)", in Boletim do Arquivo Historico Colonial Vol. I, p.88 (Lisboa 1950).)

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On the Upper Guinea Coast during the sixteenth century the power of the European nation state was hardly felt. Yet the number of Portuguese living in the region was appreciable. On the Malaguetta Coast, in contrast, there were no resident Europeans; while on the Gold Coast, Europeans seldom ventured far outside the walls of their forts. The Upper Guinea Coast and the Senegambia were unique in that the Africans there had living amongst them in their villages throughout the region numbers of European newcomers with whom they had to work out basic day to day relationships. (1) To appreciate the nature of Afro-European contacts on this section of the coast, one must pay careful attention to the status and role of the lançado within the local societies, from the time of his arrival until his departure or death. (2) Indeed, it is worthwhile to ascertain his social identity before his arrival in Africa.

The social selection of the lançados obviously depended in large part on the social character of the Cape Verde settlers. Surprisingly little seems to have been recorded on the early colonisation of the Cape Verde

- (1) Within and around the forts on the Gold Coast, close working relations existed between the Africans and the Europeans, but these were of a type different from that on the Upper Guinea Coast where the Europeans were dispersed.
- (2) The fact that the lançado role was of central importance has been acknowledged before. See, for example, J.W. Blake: Europeans in West Africa, Vol. I, pp. 28,39 and A. Texeira da Mota: Contactos Culturais Luso-Africanos na "Guiné do Cabo Verde", (Lisboa 1951)

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islands. Apparently, apart from Portuguese from the metropolis and from Madeira, some Spanish and Genoese were involved. (1) Among the colonists were several individuals who were relatively high up on the Portuguese social scale, and several plantation and slave owners of wealth. (2) It has been said that of Santiago that "white society on the island was feudal, aristocratic and, sometimes corrupt". (3) However, the vast majority were poor members of the Portuguese community, and the lançados were mainly drawn from the impoverished section.

In the seventeenth century, after the settlements on the mainland gained official sponsorship, it was the usual practice to augment the perpetually inadequate white population by sending miscreants whose offences were punishable by exile. This element must have been present in the Cape Verde islands and on the Upper Guinea Coast from the earliest days. Captain George Fenner reported in 1566 that the Cape Verde population comprised mainly those who had been sentenced to exile for a period of years. (4) In 1591, Richard Rainolds claimed that the majority of the lançados of the Gambia and elsewhere were banished men or fugitives who had committed "most heinous

(1) J.W. Blake: Europeans in West Africa, Vol. I, p.27
(2) Antonio Brasio: 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 19, Petition from the people of the island of Santiago to the king of Portugal, 24 Oct 1512. (They aver that the population contained "squires, knights and even nobles".)
(3) J.W. Blake: Europeans in West Africa, Vol. I, p.27
(4) Richard Hakluyt: Voyages, Vol. III, p.60

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crimes and incestuous acts". (1) This was a gross overstatement. On occasions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the crimes of the degradados or exiles to Guinea were placed on record, they included the offence of having marked playing cards; while the majority were civil offenders. (2) Generally speaking the lançados were more likely to have been victims of social oppression in Portugal than vicious men.

A significant proportion of the lançados were victims of another kind of oppression - anti-Semitism. Large numbers of whites in the Cape Verde islands and on the coast were either gente de nação or christãos novos, that is to say, either Jews or forcible apostates to Christianity. A report of 1544 refers to a multitude of christãos novos being present in the Cape Verde islands. (3) At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the traffic of Portuguese Jews to Cape Verde and the Upper Guinea Coast seems to have increased, many of them arriving via Flanders. (4)

(1) Richard Hakluyt: Voyages, Vol. III, p.192

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 35, Minute of the Conselho, 5 Sept. 1644.

(some serious crimes are mentioned here, including murder.)

Guiné, maco II - Memorandum of the Conselho Ultramarino, 1765.

(3) Antonio Brasio: 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 112, Letter from the captain of Santiago to the king, 30 Oct 1544, p.372.

(4) Bib. de Ajuda - Ms.51-VIII-25, fl.97, copy of a letter to the king on the fort of Cacheu, unsigned and undated, but written by Sebastiao Casão around 1607.

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That some of the Jews used the opportunity to practice their religion can be seen from the fact that in the seventeenth century there were synagogues in Ale and other ports of the Senegambia, (1) while, as late as September 1672, the long arm of the Inquisition reached out and seized a few persons in Santiago for taking part in Jewish rites. (2) But, as was the case with the Christians, the religion of the Jews was not generally in evidence. It was their physical presence as Europeans and traders that mattered.

The lançado of the sixteenth century was almost invariably a Portuguese, but he is best regarded as a phenomenon - the private European trader, living among African tribesmen - and as such he could be of any nationality. Barreira found a Greek and an Indian in Sierra Leone; (3) in 1686, De la Courbe found a Spaniard from Cuba wielding great influence at Hèreges; (4) in the 1750's, a Genoese was the most prominent lançado on the river Geba. (5) Besides, there were Dutch, French and large numbers of English traders who fell into this category. However, the English arrived in appreciable numbers only during the seventeenth century, and in fact up to

(1) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições, p.7, and A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 27, 23 Dec. 1641, João Corte Real

(2) A.S.V. - Nunziature Portogallo, Vol. 27, fl.174, 9th Sept. 1672

(3) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. II, p.202, Vol. III, p.252

(4) P. Cultru: Premier Voyage de Sieur de la Courbe, p.207

(5) A.H.U., Guiné, maco V - Memorandum of the Conselho Ultramarino, cerca 6 April 1753.

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the middle of that century, it is the Portuguese lançado upon whom attention must be focussed.

Allied to the lançado was the grumete, another Portuguese term best left untranslated. Originally, it meant a sailor's slave, but it was applied to a large category of African helpers of European traders. Some were purchased as slaves, some were paid what amounted to a wage, and others were virtually affinal relatives of the white traders. (1) The grumetes were at all times a significant part of the resident trading community led by the lançados. (2)

Of course, the phenomenon of the lançado could only have arisen after a certain minimum of contact between the Africans and the Portuguese had led to the establishment of trust as a basis for trading relations. In the Senegambia and on the Upper Guinea Coast, this occurred at an early date, since, when Cadamoste sailed in 1456, organised trading had already taken the place of the earlier manhunts of Nunez Tristão, and it was on account of this evidence of the possibilities of peaceful commerce that Fernão Gomes was given his grant in 1469. (3)

The main business of the lançados was slaving. This will be treated in detail later, but it can be briefly considered here in so far as it helps to establish a typology of Afro-Portuguese and Afro-European relations.

- (1) See below, Ch. VIII, p. 444
- (2) English traders retained the word in a slightly distorted form, namely, grommeto.
- (3) João de Barros: Asia, Primeira Decada, p.65

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Basil Davidson writes that "the general run of the Atlantic trade can be said to fall into three stages, of which the third was the most important. These were slaving by piracy, by warlike alliance, and by more or less peaceful partnership." (1) In the first of his stages, he recognises the very brief phase of direct attacks by the Portuguese on the Africans in the mid-fifteenth century. (2) He then cites the activities of John Hawkins as typical of the second stage. But, what Hawkins represents is not so much a new and definitive stage but an aberration and an anachronism. His methods were typical of the first phase which the Portuguese had long left behind. He made direct attacks on unsuspecting villagers on the Upper Guinea Coast and, he seized slaves whom the Portuguese merchants had purchased through "peaceful partnership". Only on his third trip when he found that the Africans were prepared and that violence on his own initiative was not paying dividends, did he enter into an alliance with local kings (Manes) who were waging war. (3)

This does not detract from the substance of Davidson's thesis concerning the partnership which marked the Afro-European trade. The qualification is simply that the all important stage of "more or less peaceful partnership" followed directly after the initial suspicion and hostility of the fifteenth century had declined. The Mane warfare was coincidental, and in the absence of those wars, Hawkins, like other European captains after him, would have had to do business with the African ruling class through the inter-

(1) B. Davidson: Black Mother (London 1961) p.88

(2) Ibid: p.54

(3) See above, Ch. II, p.104

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mediary of the lançados; as Captain Fenton found in 1582, (1) and as Sieur de la Blanc testified for the more northerly section of the Upper Guinea Coast on the basis of observations made around 1592. (2)

To understand the nature of the trade on the Upper Guinea Coast and the role of the lançado it is essential to appreciate the effect of topography and physical conditions as a limiting factor on European activity. On the Upper Guinea Coast, there were very few ports of call for sea-going ships. The river Sierra Leone had the best harbour, capable of berthing the largest vessels of the day. This fact, together with the availability of fresh water and citrus fruit made it the favourite port of call for ships bound for the southern Guinea Coast or for India. The limited nature of the port facilities can be gauged from the fact that in 1641, the master of a 400 ton vessel refused to risk taking it into the port of Cacheu, at that time the busiest on the Upper Guinea Coast. (3) Fortunately, the sea-going vessels calling at the Sierra Leone estuary, at the island of Bissau and at Cacheu were themselves tiny, ranging from 100 to 250 tons. Commerce on the Upper Guinea Coast settled down into a pattern dominated by the lançados. Their job was to scour the rivers and the creeks in small boats and make the produce available in the seaside ports.

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- (1) E.R. Taylor (ed): The Troublesome Voyage of Captain Edward Fenton, 1582-83, Hakluyt Society, 2nd series, No. CXIII.
- (2) Vincent le Blanc: Les Voyages Fameux de Sieur Vincent le Blanc (Paris 1648), Part III, "Voyage de Guinée".
- (3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 24, Memorandum of the Conselho Ultramarino, Oct. 1641.

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Like the Africans, the lançados found that transport was almost entirely dependent on the riverain character of the region. Their first problem was to obtain the necessary small craft. The canoe came to play an important role within the framework of the trade generated by the arrival of the Europeans. On the Gambia, the Mandinga almadias could transport upwards of ten tons of trade goods. (1) For the lançado, though, the canoe was not the principal means of transport. Whenever boats could be bought from European ships the lançados availed themselves of the opportunity. For example, Captain Fenton was offered 600 bushels of rice and 400 pounds of ivory by Portuguese lançados in Sierra Leone as the price of a small three-masted vessel. (2) In 1622, the governor of Cape Verde reported that the lançados were primarily interested in purchasing iron and launches from the French. (3) But, in the main, it was the self-reliance of the lançado which allowed him to achieve mobility on the waterways.

The lançados built most of their boats themselves. All the building materials were at hand. In Sierra Leone, there was a plant which yielded an excellent fibre for caulking, while hawsers and ropes were also made from it. (4) The cabopa tree yielded planks which were resistant to

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- (1) P. Cultru: Premier Voyage de Sieur de la Courbe, p.193
- (2) E.R. Taylor: Voyage of Captain Edward Fenton.
- (3) Sena Barcelos: Subsidios para a Historia de Cabo Verde e Guiné, Ch. VII (1622-40) p.221.
- (4) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Letter of André to the king, Sierra Leone 1606, Vol. II, p.221.

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worms; and only the masts of the ships were said by De la Courbe to have presented difficulty, (1) though, much earlier, André Dornelas had pointed to the tall straight trunk of the cabopa for this purpose also. (2) Dornelas had obtained the timber for his coastal vessel from Balola in Beafada territory, while Coelho resorted to the island of Bulama for his. (3) When Cacheu was at the height of its prosperity in the early part of the seventeenth century, a sizeable proportion of its inhabitants seem to have been boat-builders. (4) At Cacheu and elsewhere, these boatbuilders were mainly grumetes who had been trained to do such jobs.

The inventiveness of the lançados, and their consequent mobility, contrasts with the dependence which the servants of the Royal African Company showed on London, and their consequent incapacity. Numerous letters were despatched to the Company's directors by the agents in the Sierra Leone and Sherbro rivers, emphasising the necessity for sloops and launches. Boats and naval stores were always slow in forthcoming, and to make matters worse, the local agents were careless with respect to Company property. (5)

On the other hand, those private English traders who followed the Portuguese in Sierra Leone in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were just as adaptable as their Portuguese forerunners, and they were actually in

(1) P. Cultru: Premier Voyage de Sieur de la Courbe, p.227

(2) André Dornelas: "Relação sobre a Serra Leoa"

(3) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições, p.51

(4) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor"

(5) See below, Ch. VI, p.

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a position to hire their boats to the Royal African Company. (1) In the latter part of the eighteenth century, when these English private traders were slaving intensively in the Rivers of Guinea, they set up impressive facilities for building and careening boats, (2) demonstrating once more that water transport was an absolute priority on the Upper Guinea Coast.

River travel was not easy. The Geba channel was formerly called the Rio Grande because of the width of its estuary, but, within this, there were several islands, sandbanks, mudbanks and the occasional rock, between which the current flowed swiftly. (3) European ships usually had a choice between three or four alternative entrances to the same river, but each was equally dangerous. New dangers were encountered in the channels themselves. Allowance had to be made for the volume of the water which varied daily with the tide, and seasonally with the rainfall, so that what might have been a considerable river under optimum conditions, at other times either shrunk to a trickle or disappeared entirely. (4) In addition, some of the channels were continually shifting. An important example of this was the Casamance, about which it was impossible to give any definite navigational instructions, since

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- (1) See below, Ch. VI, p.
 - (2) See below, Ch. X, p.548
 - (3) Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, p.70.
 - (4) Carrington da Costa: Fisiografia e Geologia da Provincia da Guiné, (Porto 1946) p.33. The highest water levels are between August and December, and the lowest between May and June.

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the channel was so unstable. (1)

The navigation of the rivers was dependent upon the tides, above all else. (2) In the parlance of the coast, expressions such as "on the next tide" and "a tide's distance away" became very common. The ebb and flow of the water in each particular river was carefully noted. On the Geba, the up-tide consisted of three powerful waves, each of which could have filled a boat. One surge came each hour, and, after these, the tide ebbed for nine hours. (3) On some rivers the current was so powerful that it gave rise to a macareu or water-spout, which was another hazard. (4)

The rivers determined not only the pattern of movement, but also the pattern of settlement on the Upper Guinea Coast. At almost every estuary a trading nucleus was to be found, sometimes in direct contact with Cape Verde and the world outside, and, at other times, serving as intermediary clearing houses for Cacheu, Bissau and Guinala. A trade centre, equal to the one at the estuary was to be found at the furthest navigable point on each river, these were used to tap the produce of the sertão of hinterland.

For this pattern to emerge, the lançados usually chose the most

- (1) Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, p.70
- (2) For example, Mungo Park, travelling on the Gambia at the end of the eighteenth century, explained that his boat had to anchor wherever the tide failed. (Travels into the Interior Districts of Africa, p.6)
- (3) Alonso de Sanderval: Natureleza de Todos Etiopes, p.39
- (4) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.345.

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convenient African village in which to settle. Sometimes, they pioneered settlements. On the upper Cacheu, for example, the lançados had a village of their own, which the Mandingas called Tubabodaga, "the whiteman's village".

(1) This was usually referred to as Farim, because it was in the territory of the Farim Braço. The presence of the lançados enhanced the importance of a site or village, and attracted Africans to live there. In 1594, there was a port on an estuary of the Pongo, which had a population of 3,000 Africans, probably all Bagas. It had its origins in the efforts of a São Thome family, which had established itself there two or three generations earlier. (2) After 1591, the Papels resorted to the fort of Cacheu, and, during the course of the seventeenth century, they had overflowed the walls and were to be found dwelling outside the perimeter of the stockade. In Sierra Leone, the Manes became quickly aware of the advantages of residing at the waterside in villages already favoured by the lançado presence and European commercial activity. In 1608, D. Pedro, a recent convert to Catholicism, moved from his inland capital, and took up residence on an island near the Sierra Leone estuary. The move was ostensibly occasioned by the desire to live among the 'Christians', for which one can read "Portuguese traders". (3) In the late eighteenth century, there was a reversal of this process, because the ferocity of the slave trade made proximity to the European factories a very

(1) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições, p.36

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.346.

(3) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. III, p.253.

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perilous matter. (1) But, in the sixteenth century and for much longer, the European ships and lançados acted as magnets in drawing the African population of the Upper Guinea Coast even closer to the waterways and especially to the estuaries.

The above process was essentially one involving local population movements, and is not to be confused with the migration of peoples from the interior to the coast. The Susu and Fula descent to the coasts was largely motivated by the desire to make contacts with the Europeans on the waterside, but these occurred during the late seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Before that time, it was the Portuguese who took the initiative in probing inland. The Portuguese were first drawn to the Mande people in their determination to tap the reported wealth of the Western Sudan. Some time in the 1480's or 1490's a three-man delegation journeyed via the Gambia to the city Mali, where they spoke to the Mandimansa. In 1534, a Portuguese ambassador was again despatched along the Gambia to Mali. (2)

Several official Portuguese attempts to reach the Western Sudan were also made using the Senegal river. (3) The last of these apparently took place in 1565, but the only record of it is a letter to the king of Portugal from Diogo Carreiro, reporting his arrival in the Senegal, and his resolution

(1) See below, Ch. VIII, p. 479

(2) João de Barros; Asia, Primeira Decada, pp.115,116.

(3) Ibid: p.116.

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to make his way to Timbuctu. (1) But before and after this date there must have been several unofficial and unrecorded journeys made into the deep hinterland of the Upper Guinea Coast, since both De Almada and Dornelas made mention of Lançados who were familiar with the Mandimansa and the Fula king of Futa Toro, (2) while, further south, the lançados had penetrated into Susu territory, and, at the end of the sixteenth century, they were well established in the court of the king of the Bena Susus. (3)

The Portuguese did not find the fabulous riches that they had hoped for, but they quickly came to realise that the Mande peoples offered profitable trade in gums, ivory, hides, civet, dyes and slaves, as well as small amounts of gold; and the lançados were prepared to journey inland for these products. The points of greatest lançado penetration inland were very often in Mande territory. Cantor, some 250 miles up the Gambia, was the seat

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- (1) A. Brasio: 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 158, Letter from Diogo Carreiro to the king, 29 March 1565, p. 524; and
J.W. Blake: Europeans in West Africa, p. 34
- (2) For example, De Almada mentions João Ferreira, a Jew, born in Crato, who married a sister of the Fula king. ("Rios de Guiné", pp. 253
254)
- (3) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual (Vol. II includes a letter written to the king of Portugal in 1606 by André ~~Dornelas~~, a Sierra Leone trader who was familiar with the court of the Susus of Bena on the Scarcies. Vol. III contains the report which Father Barreira made on his trip to the Bena Susus, mentioning the influence of the lançados there.)

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of the Farim Cabo, and marked the limit of the lançado settlements on that river. The town of Farim, the residence of the Farim Braço, was more than 100 miles up the river Cacheu; while the important trading centre of Malampana or Geba, about 70 miles up the Geba river, was also in Mandinga territory. Concentrations of lançados on the Casamance, the Corubal and the Nunez were in areas where the local population were under Mandinga influence: namely, among the Casangas, the Beafadas and the Cocolis. On rivers such as the Pongo, the Konkouré and the Scarcies, the terminal points for European settlement fell within Susu country. Thus it was that when the lançados selected or formed settlements on the middle and upper reaches of the rivers, they not only achieved complete coverage of the littoral peoples, but they effected a meeting point with the Mande, and encouraged the latter to look towards the sea.

De Almada claimed that the Africans on the Upper Guinea Coast did not have the capacity for handling the despatch of European ships with cargoes in bulk. Were it not for the lançados, he said, only local coastal products would have been brought to the ships, while the products of the hinterland remained untapped. (1) This generalisation is not completely tenable, but it does highlight the principal role of the lançados - a role which is very similar in some respects to that of the pombeiros of Angola; who made sure that the European ships on the coast were well-provided for, no matter how far inland it was necessary to proceed to secure the human and other merchandise. (2)

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.252

(2) James Duffy: Portugal in Africa, pp.60,105 (many of the pombeiros were of European descent.)

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It was to be expected that the arrival of the Europeans would have given a new significance to the Atlantic, and would have caused the Africans to look more towards the coast. The east-west connections between the river estuary and its source were thus emphasised. What was less obvious was that the north-south links along the length of the Upper Guinea Coast had also been considerably reinforced. Before the arrival of the Europeans, the loose association which existed among the Sapes gave some semblance of unity to the area between the Cogon and Cape Mount. Between the Gambia and the Cogon, there was also a degree of unity exemplified in the trade between the Banhuns, Casangas, Beafadas and Balantas. But the only common bond between the Sapes and the peoples to the north was provided by the Mande empire. The Europeans opened new vistas by linking the coast from the Gambia to Cape Mount by sea-routes. The Cape Verdeans made long journeys directly to the rivers of Sierra Leone; lançados travelled from Cacheu to the river Scarcies on the well-established kola trade; the Cabheu-Nunez run for dye-stuffs was equally frequented; (1) and, for a variety of purposes, the lançados travelled from estuary to estuary along the coast, helping to transform the rivers of the Upper Guinea Coast into a single entity - "The Rivers of Guinea".

The lançados were not evenly dispersed over the Upper Guinea Coast, because the idea of trade with the Europeans and the acceptance of the European presence did not find a universal and simultaneous welcome. Indeed, some tribes displayed chronic hostility towards the Europeans. The Djolas were in this latter category. At the end of the eighteenth century, Mungo

(1) For kola and dyes, see below, Ch. VIII, pp. 451-453

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Park still considered them "a wild and unsociable race". (1) So too were the Balantas. They did not encourage their neighbours to enter Balanta territory; and they were more adamant and hostile as far as the Europeans were concerned. The belief was widespread among the Europeans on the coast that the Balantas killed all white men that they caught. (2) The Bijago islanders also had a reputation for ferocity, and the unsuccessful attack on Ilha Roxa in 1550 did not help Portuguese-Bijago relations. When differences of opinion with the Portuguese traders arose in the seventeenth century, the Papels of Bissau often had recourse to this sarcastic barb - "If you do not like it here, then perhaps the Balantas or the Bijagos would be more to your liking." (3) It is to be noted that these three groups, who were slowest to forge relations with the Europeans were the least developed as far as their state structure was concerned, especially the Djolas and the Balantas. (4)

All the remaining tribes harboured greater or lesser numbers of lançados, and treated them with varying degrees of consideration. Many Europeans dwelt among the Bagas in the sixteenth century because of the profits to be made, although European life was not very safe. Some of the lançados received adequate protection, but in other instances they were likely to be

(1) Mungo Park: Travels into the interior Districts of Africa, p. 15

(2) P. Cultru: Premier Voyage de Sieur de la Courbe, pp.256,257; and

P. Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas en Africa, Vol. II, p.143

(3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 268, Rodrigo Fonseca, 22 March 1699

(4) See above, Ch. I, p.63

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ambushed in the forests. (1) On the other hand, among the Casangas, Portuguese life and property were virtually sacrosanct, (2) while other tribes fitted in between the two extremes.

In spite of the above variations, once the brief initial phase of hostility was over, certain common patterns of behaviour were to be found throughout the region where the lançados were welcomed by the Africans.

The Europeans dealt always with the kings, chiefs and nobles of the region. One English trader in the mid-eighteenth century explained that "to keep as far as possible from these people as we can, we seldom get so far engaged with any black as to involve ourselves in quarrels, always siding with the great men of the country who defends us in case of quarrels or disturbance". (3) Each resident trader in fact placed himself under the protection of an African ruler; ^{and} between the two, there was an understanding on mutual rights and obligations. In the eighteenth century, the English traders were referred to as 'strangers', and the ruler with whom they dealt was known as their 'landlord'. The European 'stranger' entered into contract with his African 'landlord' for the protection of his life and property. He could also rely upon his 'landlord' to act as broker, assuring that the required local produce was available for purchase, and taking responsibility for any debts incurred by the trader. In return, the European 'stranger'

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.343

(2) André Dornelas: "Relação sobre a Serra Leoa"

(3) Nicholas Owen: Journal of a Slave Dealer, p.62

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made certain financial payments. (1) The Portuguese termed all their European rivals on the Upper Guinea Coast as estrangeiros or 'strangers', and the Africans, coming first into contact with the Portuguese adapted this word to designate whites other than Portuguese. (2) The Portuguese used the word hospede (meaning either 'host' or 'guest', according to context) to refer to both the African chief and the lançado, (3) and for the sixteenth century, it is important to consider the model of Afro-Portuguese relations as that of "host and guest" rather than the more impersonal "landlord and stranger".

Even in the eighteenth century, the obligations which the chiefs discharged towards the resident European traders, went beyond what would normally be implied in a business arrangement between landlord and stranger; and, in the sixteenth century, the warmth and personal element of the relationship was marked. The comfort and well-being of his guests was the responsibility of every ruler; who welcomed the Portuguese among his people. Among all the Sape tribes, the custom was to welcome the lançado with a hot bath. He was then allowed to choose one of the chief's wives, with whom he co-habited for the remainder of his stay among that particular people. If

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- (1) V.R. Dorjahn and C. Fyfe: "Landlord and Stranger - change in Tenancy Relations in Sierra Leone", Journal of African History, Vol. III, No. 3 (1962), pp. 391-397.
- (2) A.W. Lawrence: (Ed.) A Series of Uncommon Events which befell Captain George Roberts (London 1930), p.106; and see below, Ch. VIII, p.
- (3) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor"
Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp. 299, 343, 348.

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the trader were to leave and return, he would take up residence with the same woman, and his duties towards her were clearly defined. Fidelity was demanded of him, and any failure in this respect made him culpable before the African law, and liable to lose all his goods. He was obliged to clothe her and their offspring. (1) To all intents and purposes, the lançado was thus legally married.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, a Portuguese trader in Sierra Leone mentioned that the equivalent of the word hospede or 'guest' was used not only for the Portuguese but for Africans who came to visit with friendly intentions. When that trader advised the king of Sierra Leone to take action against two African visitors from Cape Mount, he was told that the latter were the guests of the king and could not be harmed. (2) This was the code of conduct which frustrated the designs of the Portuguese king in 1518 to have the lançados surrendered to him or murdered. In other words, since hospede or 'guest' could be either African or European, and since the latter was the newcomer, the Africans were obviously extending to the Portuguese at the outset those norms of hospitality which they were accustomed to apply among themselves.

The Bijagos from any given island engaged in hostilities with fellow tribesmen from other islands once they were at sea, (3) but this was not the case with visitors to the islands themselves, who were welcomed as "friends

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.347, 348

(2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. II, p.210

(3) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor"

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and guests". (1) Another curious example bears out the above contention that the Africans reacted to the Portuguese within the context of their own mores of hospitality. The Beafadas prohibited the killing of any bird perched in a tree close to Beafada homes, "because they say that the birds are their guests, to whom they can do no harm". (2) Theoretically, it is difficult to imagine that the Africans of the Upper Guinea Coast could have reacted to the Europeans by using standards which were inconsistent with or derived from outside their own culture, though their norms were not unique. Mannoni found that "when the coloniser first appears, it is not as an enemy but as a stranger, as a guest. In Madagascar he is called vazaha, an expression which means as nearly as possible, 'Honourable stranger'. (3) This was precisely the situation on the Upper Guinea Coast when the Afro-European contact was first made.

Hospitality has always been a dominant theme in the social conduct of the Africans of the Upper Guinea Coast, as elsewhere on the continent. Above all, hospitality was a duty attached to kingly office, (4) and it was the ruling class with which the lançados dealt directly. It is noteworthy, for instance, that the Portuguese, while sympathising with the Sapes, lost

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.317.

(2) Ibid: p.328

(3) O. Mannoni: Prospero and Caliban (Trans. New York 1964) p.86

(4) T. Winterbottom: An Account of the Native Africans of Sierra Leone.

(He advances that the honour of reigning was sometimes rejected because of the expense involved.)

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no time in becoming the guests of the Manes.

The records indicate that the lançados were paying guests, making various payments in kind, which were called 'gifts' or 'presents'. A gift, in legal terms, is a voluntary transfer of property without consideration. On the Upper Guinea Coast, and elsewhere on the West African Coast, it was used in a variety of contexts, where it implied an obligatory transfer, with something given in return. For instance, 'gifts' had to be given to the Bullom chief of the bay of Sierra Leone to obtain water; (1) 'gifts' had to be offered to the Banhun chiefs to allow wax to be collected in their territory; (2) and 'gifts' were periodically handed over to the king of Cacheu to countenance the presence of a Portuguese fort. (3) These were, of course, the equivalents of purchase price, taxes and rent.

Yet, the fact that they should all be termed 'gifts' is significant, because it stems from the African concept of hospitality which incorporated the exchange of gifts. European traders were quick to put all 'gifts' which they gave to the Africans on the debit side of their accounts, but, rather less often one comes across an admission that the African chiefs

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- (1) Nicholas de Vallault: Relation des Costes d'Afrique, p.62 (section relevant to Sierra Leone is reproduced in Christopher Fyfe: Sierra Leone Inheritance, pp.55-58)
- (2) See below Ch. VI, p.342
- (3) See below, Ch. V, p. 268

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were in the habit of offering presents to the Europeans. (1)

At times, the exchange of presents seemed indistinguishable from barter trade and exchange for profit. As Manuel Alvares put it, when the Africans gave a chicken, they expected a goat in return; and, if they gave a goat, they expected a cow. By the mid-eighteenth century, if not before, this exchange of presents was a standard procedure known as 'service', and the African rulers clearly looked forward to a profit. When the Europeans did not reciprocate a gift, this led to a 'palaver'. (2) However, it is highly probable that, at the outset, the question of the compulsory return of a gift with a view to profit did not enter into the consideration of the Africans. In 1621, the Englishman, Richard Jobson, conducted an expedition on the river Gambia. As he travelled on the upper stretches of the river, he found that the demands he had to meet grew less and less. "We payd a kind of poore custome, which in the mouth of the river, where the Portingall hath used, is not onely greater, but perremptorily demaunded, whereas above it is lesse and rather taken as a curtesie presented, which morall kindnesse

(1) P.R.O., T70/14 - Greenaway, 26 Jan. 1703. (Having received a directive from the London officials not to engage in trade on his own account and not to receive 'presents', this agent protested that it was the custom of the Africans to give gifts to all white newcomers, and subsequently the agents received presents which had nothing to do with trade)

(2) Nicholas Owen: Journal of a Slave Dealer, p.74

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requires all strangers, coming in the way of amity." (1)

The duty of hospitality, particularly as far as the rich were concerned, also led directly to a situation where the lançado was expected to share out small gifts from time to time, especially if a local ceremony such as a 'cry' demanded such action. The Portuguese continually complained that they were pestered for small items by the Africans, (2) and no other Europeans were free from this. The English trader, Nicholas Owen, stressed that the articles requested were small - an old hat, a meal, a torn shirt - but their nuisance value was high. From the viewpoint of the lançado or any other type of European trader, there must have been a few items which were not given to the Africans in pursuance of trade, whether those items were called 'gifts' or not; but it is likely that for many of the Africans such demands did not fall within the bounds of trade - they were legitimately to be expected as acts of hospitality from rich individuals.

Very broadly speaking, the lançado was asked to fit into the African way of life. Not only the concepts of hospitality, but the laws and customs of society as a whole were also applied to the Portuguese, and had to be respected. Every time that a lançado breached a local prohibition, this was cause for annoyance, anger or hostility, depending on the circumstances and the magnitude of the offence. There was a single word for such

(1) Richard Jobson: The Golden Trade, p.64

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p327.

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offences in the lingua franca of the Upper Guinea Coast - chai. (1) A chai always meant a 'palaver', that is to say, the matter went into the local courts. The customary law of the Upper Guinea Coast was not so foreign to the experience of the Portuguese that they could not understand it. To fell timber in many areas of Europe would have been an offence, so that, on the Upper Guinea Coast, to fell trees which had not only an economic value, but also tremendous religious significance, was obviously going to bring the Portuguese into conflict with the Africans. (2) Even when a custom was unfamiliar to European experience, the lançado was not being taxed for ignorance - not after long years on the Upper Guinea Coast. The Beafadas had a special bird which was taboo, since it was supposed to contain the soul of the Beafadas. The European traders of experience knew the seriousness of this matter, but they would nevertheless shoot and eat this bird, if they thought they would not be detected. (3) Most offenders against the law share this optimism.

The lançados and all other categories of European traders took greatest exception to those African laws which had a direct bearing on European property. One such law, followed by all tribes of the littoral, was that any ship which ran aground in their jurisdiction was legitimately theirs.(4)

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- (1) P. Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas en Africa, Vol. II, P.144
- (2) A.H.U., Guiné, maco XI - J. Antonio Pinto from Cacheu, 28 Dec 1809. (A War started with the Papels because the Portuguese cut down dome trees.)
- (3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.327; and see below
- (4) A. Brasio: 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 143, Voyage from Santiago to Guinea, report of the treasurer of Santiago, 19 May 1558, p.467

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According to a report of 1558, the African rulers considered that it increased their prestige to have the hulk of a vessel on their foreshore, and so were not prepared to help refloat ships which ran aground. (1) Besides, in most cases, the crew were held for ransom. (2) On the treacherous coasts of the region, there was plenty of scope for the application of these African laws of salvage, and it is also interesting to note that these practices had a close parallel in the rights which the ruler of a district claimed if an animal fell dead in his domains, after having been wounded outside of his territory by hunters who were not his subjects. (3)

Perhaps the most galling imposition, from the viewpoint of the lançados, was the fact that when any of them died, the African ruler, in whose country he resided, inherited his goods. Indeed, the African rulers laid hold of all the goods in the possession of the lançado at the time of his death, not taking into account that he might have been keeping trade goods on behalf of other individuals. (4) One explanation of the origins of this law was that a lançado had made a king his heir, and this was afterwards taken to be the rule. (5) However, it is far more realistic to view the rule as the

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- (1) A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, Africa Occidental, 2nd Series, Vol. II - No. 143, Voyage from Santiago to Guinea, 19 May 1558, p.467.
- (2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. III, p.283; and
Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.319.
- (3) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.96
- (4) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. III, p.283
- (5) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições, p.192.

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extension to the Europeans of the normal practice of African society. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the powerful Djola king, "Mansa Felupe", was the only ruler who, apart from inheriting the goods of all who died in his own domains, was able to demand the goods of his own subjects who died in foreign lands. (1) From this, one can infer the customary law of inheritance in instances of this sort.

Very often, though the Portuguese and other Europeans objected to or offended against African custom, they looked to this same customary law for their own protection. The lançado was not only the object of charges of chai, but he could also bring a 'palaver' against an African, and have his case decided in open court. (2)

The word 'contract' can rightly be applied to certain unwritten agreements between the Africans and the Europeans, because many of these agreements were based on oaths which were binding under the customary law. Experienced traders learnt to insist that arrangements made with the Africans were sworn on some 'medecine'. There was a special ceremony practised by the Banhuns and the Papels on the river Cacheu. Firstly, the blood of a dog was offered to their Xina; then two chickens were made to sink to the bottom of the river by tying rocks to their legs; and finally an oath was sworn. For their security, the lançados on the Cacheu had this oath repeated annually.

(3) Even the fearsome Bijagos were the most reliable of friends once they had

(1) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.64

(2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol.

(3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.312.

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performed a ceremony of welcome; (1) while in matters such as calling a halt to hostilities or the ceding of land, the African rituals were the only guarantee of validity. (2)

Call the Afro-Portuguese relationship that of "host and Guest", "partnership", or "contract", the fact remained that the lançados had to recognise the laws of the land, and the will and sovereignty of the local rulers. The latter half of the sixteenth century was a period of crisis for the Afro-Portuguese understanding on the Upper Guinea Coast, during which the lançados made strenuous attempts to change the nature of the agreements, and to escape, in one way or another, from the authority of the African rulers. Both the causes and the consequences of the attempts are of the utmost importance.

The first indication of the crisis came in the region between the Casanance and the Cacheu. Throughout the sixteenth century, this area was a popular market for the Cape Verde traders. The Banhuns and Casangas were skilled weavers and dyers, and provided a ready market for raw cotton from the Cape Verde islands. (3) Banhun agriculture was also in a flourishing state, and provided amply for resident Europeans, as well as supplying food to the

- (1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.317
- (2) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor" (A Papel ceremony marked the end of the hostilities in 1691)
- (3) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, pp.58, 68 (and see below, Ch. VI, p.437)

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slave ships. (1) These advantages accounted for the presence of large numbers of lançados on the right bank of the Cacheu, especially in the Banhun town of Buguendo, which the Portuguese called São Domingo. (2) There was a marked deterioration in the treatment which the Banhuns accorded the Portuguese during the latter part of the sixteenth century. The ruling class was said to have ceased to extend their protection to their guests, and the rest of the population adopted an unfriendly attitude. The Portuguese were particularly irritated that their hats and swords were liable to be seized from time to time, frequently to the accompaniment of a few clouts, thus offending both their persons and their dignity. Important robberies were also committed, and, occasionally, some whites lost their lives. (3) A similar situation prevailed at Hereges, south of the Gambia, where some lançados met their deaths at the hands of what was a predominantly Banhun population. (4)

The crisis in Banhun-Portuguese relations came to a head in the 1570's. Towards the end of that decade, the lançados at Buguendo invoked the aid of Masatamba, king of the Casangas, to force the Banhuns to ameliorate conditions. Masatamba launched an attack on Buguendo, and was reportedly victorious. (5) Nevertheless, when the captain-major of Santiago journeyed.

(1) Biblioteca de Ajuda, Ms. 51-VIII-25: "Relações do Descobrimento da Costa da Guiné", fl.87, Report on Cape Verde and Guinea, c.1606.

(2) André Dornelas: "Relação sobre a Serra Leoa"

(3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.303, 304

(4) Ibid: pp.285,286.

(5) André Dornelas and Manuel Alvares.

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to the mainland in 1580, he found that the conditions under which the lançados dwelt at Buguendo were still untenable, and he arranged with Masatamba for the transfer of the inhabitants to Sarar, a Casanga settlement, further up the Cacheu river. (1)

Less than three years after the abandonment of Buguendo, the lançados found themselves at loggerheads with some of their oldest friends on the Upper Guinea Coast - the Beafadas. The Beafadas had been particularly accommodating towards the Portuguese, and ^{were} there/settlements throughout their domains. At this date there were more than 100 whites at Guinala on the Ria Grande. (2) In that port events were moving in the same direction as in Buguendo. As a result the lançados withdrew to a fortified place not far from Guinala. The fortifications were ostensibly set up as a protection against French pirates, and the site was subsequently known as Porto da Cruz. (3)

In the meantime, the Sarar settlement had not been very successful. The centre of lançado activities on the river Cacheu shifted to Papel territory on the left bank of the river. It turned out that the exchange of Banhun for Papel masters brought no better deal for the lançados. They claimed to have suffered abuses in the Papel village where they lived in theory "under the word and protection of their hosts". Goods were stolen and lives were lost. In 1589, the Portuguese of Cacheu decided to set up their

(1) André Dornelas and Manuel Alvares, and Alvares de Almada "Rios de Guiné", p305

(2) A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, Africa Occidental, 2nd Series, Vol. III, No. 42, Relação of Francisco de Andrade on the Islands of Cape Verde, 26 Jan. 1582, p.105

(3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.329.

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own stronghold, following the Porto da Cruz precedent. Firstly, Chapala, the ruling Papel king of Cacheu, was approached with a request to allow a fort to be built near the estuary of the river to provide defence against the attacks from pirates. These latter did present a threat, so permission was granted to build a stockade on which several pieces of artillery were mounted. Next, the Portuguese argued that some houses had to be built within the stockade for those who were to man the artillery. This request was also granted. Finally, the Portuguese withdrew en masse from Chapala's town and took up residence within the fort. (1)

At this juncture, Sierra Leone was passing through a very unsettled period, occasioned by the Mane conquest, and this had interrupted the development of Afro-Portuguese relations. Of the tribes who were continuously conducting trade with the Portuguese on the Upper Guinea Coast for most of the sixteenth century, only the Casangas remained friendly. What happened among the Bahunns, Beafadas and Papels is, therefore, sufficient basis for generalisation. The generalisation made by De Almada, himself personally involved for about twenty-five years, was that the lançados had been on the Upper Guinea Coast long enough for the residents to become familiar with and contemptuous of them. He emphasised that it was after long intercourse with the Portuguese, and after the Bahunns had become versed in the Portuguese language that they reacted so unfavourably to their guests. (2) The Papels and

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.299,300

(2) Ibid., p.304.

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the Beafadas likewise, were fluent in the Portuguese language (1) that is to say, in the "Creole Portuguese" which was spoken on the Upper Guinea Coast. (2)

The model of "host and guest", therefore, is only a point of departure. The period of its historical existence is ascertained largely by the laments of the Portuguese themselves at the end of the sixteenth century, that things had been fine up to a few decades before the fort of Cacheu had to be built in 1591. But relations could never have been static, even in the first half of the century, because the Africans and the Portuguese were reacting to each other's differences and adopting new positions. Evidently, the barter with the Europeans was initially conducted in a guileless manner by the Africans of the Upper Guinea Coast, but with time this was abandoned. The ruling class in particular came to place a very high priority on European imports, and sought to acquire such goods by a variety of means. A 'gift', as Jobson found, was changing from something which was not requested and the receipt of which gave pleasant surprise, to something which was demanded and, when it was not forthcoming, this was a unpleasant surprise about which steps would be taken. (3) The process of change, which was observable on

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.325 and 326 and Manuel Alvares "Ethiopia Menor"

(2) For a linguistic assessment of "Creole Portuguese", see Bertrand-Bocandé: "Notes sur la Guinée Portugaise ou Sénégalie Meridionale", Bulletin de la Société de Géographie de Paris, 1849, Vol. XI, pp.265-350 and Vol. XII, pp.57-93; and A. Wilson "Uma Volta Linguística da Guiné Portuguesa", Boletim Cultural da Guiné Portuguesa.

(3) Once again Mannoni offers an intriguing psychological analysis. See Prospero and Caliban, pp. 42 et seq

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the middle and upper Gambia in 1627, had taken place long before on the coast itself, which was more exposed to European trade. By the 1560's the Africans of the Upper Guinea Coast were acting in a manner which the lançados considered intolerable enough to warrant the use of force on their part. This would seem to be the explanation of the genesis of the breakdown in the understanding which existed between the Portuguese and all but one of the principal trading peoples on the Upper Guinea Coast, north of the Sape ethnic group.

The results of the Portuguese actions are not in doubt. The Cacheu episode sparked off a full-scale attack by the Papels, which the Portuguese lançados beat off, inflicting heavy casualties upon the Papels, and suffering none themselves. (1) Shortly afterwards, the combatants came to a modus vivendi, which permitted the return of some traders to the African villages, while numbers of Papels went to live within the stockade. The reaction of the Beafalas of Guinala to the Portuguese entrenchment in Porto da Cruz was less violent but more effective. This was how the consequences were reported: "After we grouped ourselves together under the shelter of the fort, we bought our slaves and other goods at higher prices. Formerly, we were separated, lodged in the houses of nobles, with more than a league and a half separating each trader. Then we gained more trade, we did not compete with each other, and our persons were protected by our hosts and their relatives. Today, if we go beyond the confines of the fort the Negroes treat us badly - by 'badly' I mean that if we or our servants are involved in any dispute, the Negroes are uncompromising, so that violence occurs, resulting sometimes in deaths,

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.300.

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something which never happened when we were living among them. (1)

The withdrawal of the Portuguese from Buguendo, and their construction of forts at Cacheu and Guinala were conscious attempts to opt out of the old arrangement of "host and guest", and it was so interpreted by the Africans. The new conditions which the Portuguese hoped to create entailed the ultimate use of force to flout the authority of the local rulers. This was not tolerated by the latter. In Guinala, apart from the higher prices and ill-treatment which resulted from the Portuguese actions, there was an interesting conflict over the Beafada laws of inheritance, as applied to lançada property. The construction of the fort of Porto da Cruz offered an opportunity to transfer the seriously ill and their belongings to the stronghold, where the local rulings could be resisted. (2) However, it was a losing battle on the part of the resident traders, since the Beafadas in turn made a point of placing a guard on the property of the sick. (3).

The lançados simply could not deploy sufficient force to make their independence a permanent reality. They had built and armed the two garrisons of Cacheu and Porto da Cruz entirely at their own expense, but they could not maintain them. By a curious twist, the Portuguese artillery had to be used to defend both themselves and the Beafadas from the attacks of the Bijagos, when these intensified at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and both the Portuguese and Beafadas had to flee from the foreshore.

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.330

(2) Ibid., p.334

(3) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. III, p.283

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of the Ria Grande de Buba.(1) But, without this extraneous factor, the maintenance of the fort would have been beyond the lançados. The Cacheu experience demonstrates this clearly.

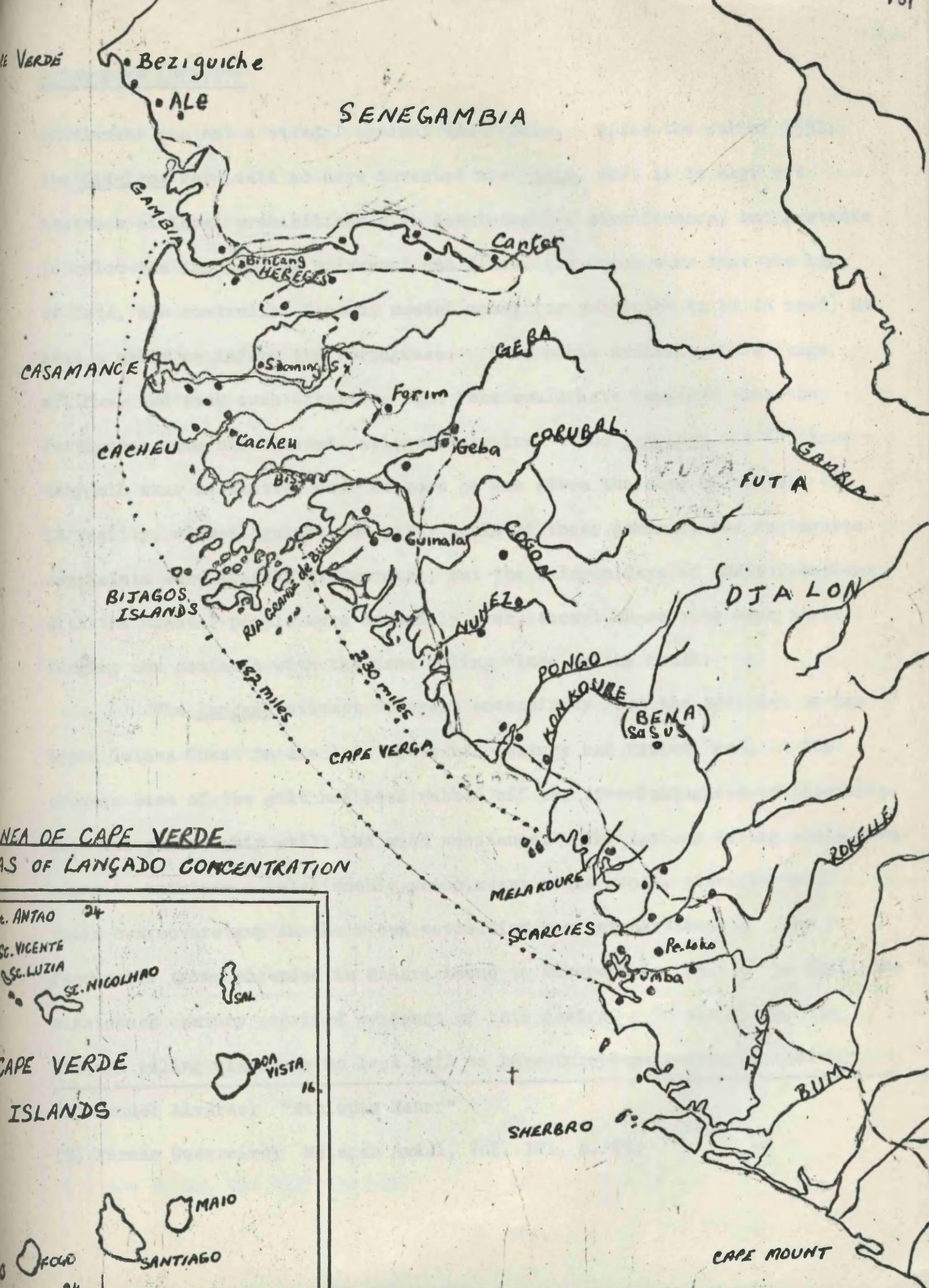
It was in Cacheu that the seventeenth century Afro-Portuguese relations were to be most clearly seen, and all the evidence indicated that the buildings of the fort did not effectively emancipate the lançados from African control.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Cacheu had a population of 1,500 of whom about 500 were white, while the Africans there were closely attached to the Portuguese interest. The town was divided into two sections: Villa Fria and Villa Quente. In the former - the cooler part of the city - resided the rich merchants; while the hot district was the home of "the ordinary people, ... who live by their labour and daily earnings, some workers in the careening yards, others sailors". The bourgeoisie in Villa Fria lived well, and Cacheu bustled as the main centre of the Hispano-Portuguese slave trade at that time; but this lançado

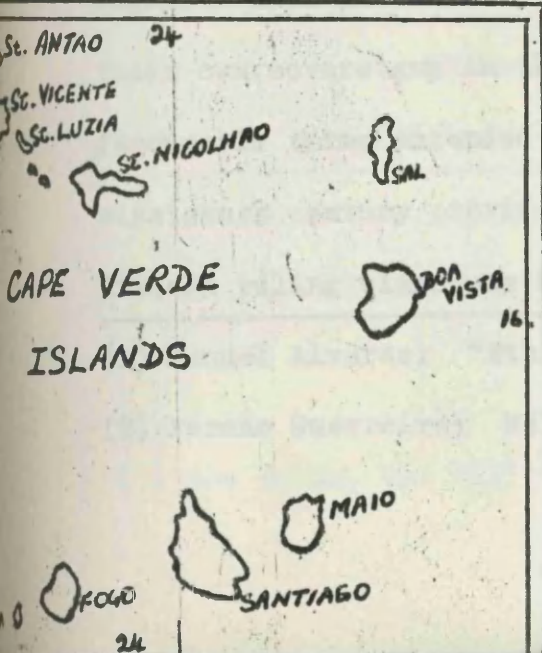
(1) A.R.S.I., Lusitania 74, Fl. 78 - Letter from Mangali, king of Bissege to the king of Portugal, 20 April 1607; and from Enchabole, king of Biguba, 24 April 1607. The king of Guinala, Bamalla, writing on the 1st May 1607, also mentioned that the Portuguese had left during the rule of his predecessor, Campecho, but that he had provided the conditions for their return. This could mean that, as happened in Cacheu, a normalisation of relations came about when both parties realised that complete alienation was unprofitable.

VE VERDE

SENEGAMBIA



LINEA OF CAPE VERDE
EAS OF LANÇADO CONCENTRATION



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settlement was not a citadel against the Papels. After the war of 1591, the fidalgos were said to have invented new chais, that is to say, not breaches of local prohibitions with deontological significance, but pretexts to mulct the lançados by 'palavers' and fines. (1) Any time that the king of Mata, who controlled Cacheu, needed money (or purported to be in need) he sent a noble to inform the Portuguese. This noble arrived with a large retinue, and took such liberties that "one would have imagined that the Portuguese were his slaves", alleged Barreira. The lançados did not dare deny him what he wanted, and the more he was given the more he wanted. (2) In reality, viewed against the petty scale of these demands, the Portuguese complaints were grossly exaggerated, but the halcyon days of their relations with the coastal people were certainly over, except where they were still forging new contacts with the Mane ruling class to the south.

The lançado attempt to wrest sovereignty from the Africans on the Upper Guinea Coast in the late sixteenth century had failed, and, in the process some of the gilt had been rubbed off the Afro-Portuguese relationship. But, the partnership still had much substance. The African ruling class were eager to maintain a relationship which meant trade goods, provided that their own sovereignty in their own estimation was not threatened. The favourable terms extended in Sierra Leone to European 'strangers' up until the nineteenth century provided evidence of this desire. To the north, the African ruling class was no less avid to have Europeans reside in their

(1) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor"

(2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. III, p.283.

(3) See below, Ch. VIII, p. 480

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territory. At the end of the eighteenth century, it was a common saying north of the Geba that "all white man rogue, all white man witch", (1) but, nevertheless, both the Bijago fidalgos and those of the Beafadas were convinced that "so long as white man lived near they would lack nothing, but if white man does not live here we shall want everything. (2)

Using hindsight in an attempt to see to what extent the early Afro-Portuguese relations had set the pattern for the future, it must be stressed that the arrangements for the lançados should be viewed differently from the connection with the visiting ships. These latter, trading privately or under the aegis of state or private company, brought individuals, who, like the lançados in the late sixteenth century, sometimes attempted to challenge the power of the African ruling class. In fact, as the resident traders themselves and their descendants grew more Africanised culturally and ethnically, they moved closer to and eventually penetrated the local power structure. (3) Other Europeans, therefore, had cause to struggle against the new 'Afro-Portuguese' class, which was allied to the African fidalgos. For three centuries after 1600, the social formations which wielded power and authority locally, successfully resisted attempts at European domination, when these were made. Though for the sake of peace, self-preservation and profits, the Europeans generally accepted the status quo.

(1) Philip Beaver: African Memoranda Relative to an Attempt to Establish a British Settlement on the Island of Bulama in the Year 1792. (London 1805)

p.200

(2) Ibid: pp. 72,105

(3) See below, Ch. VIII, p. 480

A HISTORY OF THE UPPER GUINEA COAST, 1545-1800

CHAPTER FOUR

SLAVE TRADING

1562-1640

SLAVE TRADING, 1562-1640

The Upper Guinea Coast had a lengthy association with the Atlantic slave trade. Together with the Senegambia, it was being exploited for slaves in the 1460's even before the southern sections of the West African coast had been charted by the Portuguese. 400 years later, the Atlantic slave trade was still being prosecuted in the area. Over this span of centuries, the Upper Guinea Coast was involved in all the phases of the slave trade. At first it supplied Europe; then, when labour was required for the mines of Central and South America, the Upper Guinea Coast made its contribution; and, when slaves were needed on the Caribbean and North American plantations, the Upper Guinea Coast was not to be left out. In the late eighteenth century, it was Sierra Leone that was chosen as the site for the first settlement of freed slaves in West Africa; yet, in spite of this memorial to freedom, and in spite of the British navy, the slavers were still present on the estuaries and rias of this region until the second half of the nineteenth century. Thus, though the Upper Guinea Coast is not as notorious as the Congo and the Bight of Benin, it is in many ways a classic area for the study of the Atlantic slave trade.

The growth of the Atlantic slave trade on the Upper Guinea Coast and the Senegambia illustrates how rapidly the 'trickle' became a 'flood'. (1) Fifty years after these shores had been seen by the Portuguese, the latter

(1) The terms are Basil Davidson's. See Black Mother, Part two.

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were shipping abroad, "when the trade of the country was well ordered", more than 3,500 Africans every year. (1)

Captives taken were mainly destined for the nearby Cape Verde islands and the Iberian peninsula, with Madeira and the Canary Islands providing secondary markets. (2) Sometimes, captives from this section of the coast were procured by passing ships, and became galley slaves - as, for example, in 1504, when the East Indies fleet of Alfonso de Albuquerque obtained 70 Negroes at Santiago. (3) This may also have applied to ships bound for the Americas. The Cape Verde islands were situated on the route of the sailing vessels proceeding from Portugal to Brazil, and it is not unlikely that small numbers of Africans from the Upper Guinea Coast made their way to Brazil at an early date to serve as slaves.

It was the Spanish market which ultimately held out the greatest prospects. After the famous pleas of Las Casas, Charles V granted to a courtier the right to furnish 4,000 slaves to the Antilles, and the deal was eventually carried through by Genoese merchants who made their purchases in Lisbon. (4)

(1) Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, p.90

(2) A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 19, Petition of the People of the island of Santiago, Oct. 1512, p.54.

(3) Ibid: No. 14, Privileges to the residents of Santiago, May 1510, p.39

(4) D.P. Mannix in association with M. Cowley: Black Cargoes, (London 1963), p.3.

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through Cape Verde enterprise. (1) In 1512, a royal edict had declared that all Guinea slaves should go directly to Lisbon. (2) The Cape Verdeans protested that in that event no ships from Madeira, the Azores, the Canaries or Spain would visit the Cape Verde islands, (3) and they may have broken this strict provision. In any event, many of the slaves on the Lisbon Market would have been acquired on the Upper Guinea Coast and in the Senegambia. Indirectly, therefore, the Upper Guinea Coast was in touch with the market in the Spanish Indies since the second decade of the sixteenth century. By the second half of that century, the Spanish Indies had become the principal destination of captives from this area.

The close connection between the Upper Guinea Coast and the Spanish Indies can be seen from the Spanish records of the registration of slave ships. The principal administrative device which the Spanish developed to organise the importation of slaves into the Americas in the sixteenth century was the registro. This was a licence, which, on payment of a fee, was issued to a ship's captain, authorising him to transport an agreed number of slaves from a given point in West Africa to a specific port in the Americas.(4)Registros

(1) J. Barreto: História da Guiné, p.73

(2) A. Brasio: Op.cit., No. 18, Edict on the Trade of Guinea, 24 Oct 1512, p.51.

(3) Ibid No. 19, Petition of the People of the island of Santiago, Oct. 1512, p.53.

(4) In 1624, the Portuguese were asking 40 ducados per registro.

See A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa I - Petition of Francisco Rodrigues Serra, 1624.

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were obtainable in Tenerife (Canary Islands) and Lisbon, but by far the most important office of issue was the House of Trade in Seville. The House of Trade first issued registros in 1562, and from then until 1593, the vast majority of the licences named Cape Verde - Guinea as the area of provenience of the slave cargoes. (1) After 1595, the licences did not specify the section of the West African coast where the slaves were to be procured, but, from other sources, it is clear that Upper Guinea remained a key region for the supply of slaves to Spanish America for another four decades, until the political break between Portugal and Spain in 1640. Thus the period 1562-1600 represents the kernel of the Hispano-Portuguese slave trading partnership.

During the height of the registro system up to 1595, there seems to have been no standard number of licences issued every year, and the number of slaves which each captain was allowed to carry varied considerably. Some licences authorised the transport of more than 600 slaves, while others related to less than 100. (2) Nevertheless, it is possible to arrive at some conception of the overall volume of slave exports in this period. Both Alvares de Almada and André Dornelas left the firm impression that the years of trade which they experienced from the 1560's and 1570's to the end of the century were years of boom and prosperity for the slave traders. Dornelas

(1) H. and P. Chaunu: Seville et l'Atlantique, Vol 3, 1561-1595
(Paris 1955)

(2) A.G.I., Casa de Contratación - No. 2875, Registros de Esclavos,
1584-1599.

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found on one occasion in the port of Guinala eight boats belonging to Cape Verde traders, ten belonging to the lançados, and two ships with registros for slave cargoes for the Indies. (1) A report to the crown in 1582 claimed that it was usual to have twenty to thirty vessels at a time in the Ria Grande de Buba, mainly loading slaves. (2)

The size of the vessels used in the Atlantic slave trade was quite small. Even in the eighteenth century, they seldom went above 300 tons, while crafts of only 60 tons were known to make the Atlantic crossing. (3) However, the size of the ships belied the number of slaves transported. Dornelas remarked that it was not unusual to find 200 'pieces' of humanity packed into a small coastal boat, and the ships which made the Atlantic crossing carried at least twice that amount. At the onset of the registro system the slave ships to the Spanish Indies carried 400 to 500 slaves each (4) and this was later increased. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the average annual export of Guinala alone was reported to be close to 3,000 slaves. (5)

(1) André Dornelas "Relação sobre a Serra Leoa"

(2) A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, 2nd series, Vol. III - No. 42, Relação of Francisco de Andrade on the islands of Cape Verde, 26 Jan 1582, p.105.

(3) See above, Ch. III, p.152, ~~Note~~

(4) Thomas Mercado: Tratos y Contratos de Mercaderes (Salamanca 1569) p.66.

(5) André Dornelas: op. cit.,

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On the other side of the Atlantic, the Spanish authorities were having great difficulties in regulating the inflow of slaves in such a way as to collect revenues. It appears that the registered ships usually carried more than their stipulated complement. In 1590, the House of Trade in Seville, having received reports that the customs of Cartagena were being systematically defrauded by the arrival of vessels with large numbers of slaves beyond the amount authorised by the registros, demanded a complete account of slaves entering the port for the preceding five years. The Cartagena officials were bent on denying their own complicity in irregularities, and claimed that the ships seldom ever arrived with more slaves than they were licensed to carry. In their accounts, the Cartagena officials expected the House of Trade to believe that ships licensed to carry, say 139 or 311 slaves, arrived in America with exactly that number on board.(1) Not only was this highly improbable, but whatever numbers arrived in the New World represented a considerable reduction of those who were embarked. In 1569, Thomas de Mercado estimated the mortality of slaves shipped from the Cape Verde islands to Spanish America as at least 20% and much higher in some individual cases. He cited one example which had occurred shortly before he wrote, where 300 out of 500 slaves died on one vessel bound from Cape Verde (Santiago) to Mexico. (2) Thus, it is clear that the registro system was not being complied with in terms of the numbers of captives taken on board on the African Coast. Indeed, at the outset, the regulations struggled to replace

(1) A.G.I., Casa de Contratación - No. 2877, Registros de Esclavos, 1610-1616.

(2) Thomas Mercado: Tratos y Contratos de Mercaderes (Salamanca 1569) p.66.

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what the Portuguese regarded as 'interloping' and acts of piracy by Spanish ships. (1)

The extent of the defrauding of the Spanish and Portuguese revenues and more realistic figures of slave exports were given in a report to the crown by the governor of Cape Verde in 1622. It appears that since 1595 the Atlantic slave trade from the Upper Guinea Coast to Spanish America had been standardised to permit four slave ships to call on the Upper Guinea Coast every year. Reports from time to time suggested that the number of ships was not exceeded. (2) But the agreed cargo was usually between 100 and 200 slaves and this was completely disregarded, ships being packed with cargoes of 800, 1,000 or more slaves. The object of the captains of the slave ships was to defeat the revenue provisions on both sides of the

(1) A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, Africa Occidental, 2nd Series, Vol. II - No. 152, Spanish Trade in Guinea, 15 May 1563, p.501; and No. 153, Directive from the King of Spain to the mayor of Seville, 17 May 1563, p.506.

(2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa I-No. 27, Nicolhão de Castilho, 27 Jan 1616; (There had been twelve registered ships clearing the port of Cacheu over the past three years.) No. 99, Baltezar Castel Branco to Antonio Francisco Luas, holder of the contract, 15 April 1617. (He reported that in 1616, four ships were sent from Cacheu to the Spanish Indies, and three or four to the Cape Verde islands. That year, the arrangement was to be the same.

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Atlantic, robbing the Portuguese coffers in Guinea and the Spanish coffers in the Americas, because they paid duty only on the number inscribed on their registros, at the rate of 28 cruzados on every slave to the Portuguese and 40 ducados (44 cruzados) to the Spanish. (1) It is very likely that these practices were prevalent not only in 1622 and in 1590 when the House of Trade made enquiries in Cartagena, but since 1562 when the registro system began. Certainly, in the 1560's there were instances where ships obtained slaves even without registros, (2) so it would not be surprising if the registered ships made the most out of their title to legality.

Four ships annually carrying between 800 to 1,000 slaves, as reported in 1622, would have placed the Cacheu exports well over 3,000 per year. The Conselho Ultramarino was appraised in 1643 that the Cacheu exports previously averaged 3,000 per annum. (3) In arriving at a total for the whole of the Upper Guinea Coast, one must take into account that the primacy of the

(1) Sena Barcelos: Subsidios para a Historia de Cabo Verde e Guiné, Ch.

VII, p.221, Report of governor Francisco de Moura, 1622. A similar report had been made by the Jesuit Superior in Santiago, P. Sebastião Gomes around 1620. He indicated that each registered ship declared 200 slaves or less as their cargo, and thus robbed the Portuguese revenues of payments on 500 to 600 slaves. See A.T.T., Jesuitas 304: 36, No. 7.

(2) Thomas Mercado: Op. cit., p.66; and Brasio, p.501.

(3) A.I.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 28, minute of the Conselho Ultramarino, 20 Nov. 1643.

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slave trade in this zone passed from Guinala to Cacheu at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and that both of them served as entrêpôts, whose trade nets were spread over all the rivers of Guinea. At no time, however, would Guinala or Cacheu have been the sole point of despatch for slaves to the Americas, nor would the Santiago and Lisbon authorities have accounted for slaves sold to Europeans other than the Spanish, though privateering voyages were becoming more and more frequent in the last few decades of the sixteenth century. As a rough estimate in the light of these considerations, 5,000 slaves per annum would seem to be a reasonable figure for the volume of the Atlantic slave trade as conducted on the Upper Guinea Coast between 1562 and 1640; that is to say, during the period of registros corresponding to a substantial Spanish interest in African slaves, but preceding the extension of plantation slavery in the Caribbean and North America, as well as the full development of the asiento agreements.

It is clear that the Spaniards identified the Atlantic slave trade with the Upper Guinea Coast. Thomas Mercado mentioned São Thome, but his brief discussion of the slave trade is entitled "Concerning the Trade in the Negroes of Cape Verde"; and he refers specifically to the Sapes, Beafadas and Wolofs, (1) which indicates that the zone from which the captives were taken included the Senegambia and Sierra Leone, though about this time the Senegambia was declining in importance, as far as the Portuguese were concerned. (2)

(1) Thomas Mercado: Tratos y Contratos de Mercaderes, pp.63-68

(2) See above, Ch. III, p.

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According to another Spaniard, the Jesuit, Alonso de Sandoval, who was in close contact with slavers and slaveowners in Cartagena in the early seventeenth century, the slaves of the Upper Guinea Coast were the most popular in the Spanish Indies, and were referred to as escravos de ley. (1) This expression, probably stemmed from the fact that the slaves were brought under special contract, namely, the registro; (2) but it came to mean that they were slaves of the highest quality. The escravos de ley of the Guinea of Cape Verde were said to have been diligent, keen, intelligent, good-natured and happy; and they never lost an opportunity to play their instruments, ~~sing~~ sing and dance. They were also quick to learn the Spanish language, adopt the Spanish dress, and follow the fiesta a la Española. To this already imposing list of virtues (from the slave owners' viewpoint), the Conselho Ultramarino added that the slaves of Cacheu were known for their fidelity. (3) 'Keen', 'intelligent', 'good-natured' and 'faithful' are dubious compliments, likely to have been gratuitously thrown in once it was clear that the slave was working and not attempting to rebel or escape at every opportunity; but there seems to be some truth in the report that the slaves

- (1) Literally "slaves of the law".
- (2) Assuming that the Spanish and Portuguese usage was the same, then there were two categories of goods which could be imported into a colonial area. Some commodities were livres (free) and could be imported by any private person, while others were de lei and were the preserve of the government or specially authorised agency. See, e.g., A. Lobato: Evolução Administrativa e Economica de Moçambique, 1752-1763 (Lisboa 1957) p.251
- (3) Alonso de Sandoval: De Natureleza de Todos Etiopes, pp.39,41,51

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from the Upper Guinea Coast adapted themselves rapidly to the New World situation, with a heavy emphasis on forms of amusement. The resort to song and dance constitutes perhaps the most important survival technique of Africans enslaved in the Americas.

Some scholars have felt that the specific provenance of the slaves has some significance for New World studies. (1) However, quite apart from the likelihood that many of the alleged tribal characteristics were misleading stereotypes, what is relevant from an African viewpoint is whether the reputation of a given tribe or locality was sufficiently decisive to affect the conduct of the slave trade with respect to that tribe or locality. Sandoval held that the preference for the Negroes of the Upper Guinea Coast meant that the Spanish American buyers paid more for them than they did for other slaves. Later in the seventeenth century, there is some corroboration of this. Barbot said of the Upper Guinea Coast that "the slaves purchased by Portuguese and others in these parts of the continent and the neighbouring islands, especially those called Bijagos, are the ablest and most serviceable of any throughout North Guinea, and are valued at Mexico and Cartagene beyond those of Benin and Angola"; while Ogilby stated the difference in prices to have been ten reales on an average. (2) In 1678, the chief factor of the Royal African Company in the Gambia indicated that he could not possibly buy slaves

(1) See, e.g., Henri Dumont: Anthropologia y Patologia Comparadas de los Negros Esclavos (Ed. Fernando Ortiz, Havana 1916)

(2) John Barbot: Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea, p.84; and John Ogilby: Africa, p.363

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at Cacheu because the Spanish were offering thrice the amount with which a slave could normally be secured. (1)

There is the possibility that the Spanish preference for escravos de ley was affecting the volume of slaves exported from the Upper Guinea Coast, In 1643, the Portuguese Conselho Ultramarino stressed the importance of preserving Cacheu, because of the quality of the slaves, and because "it was from there that the greater part of the slaves needed in the Spanish Indies and the mines of Potosi were obtained. Furthermore its loss would ruin the sugar estates of Bahia and Rio de Janeiro". (2) The reference to Bahia and Rio de Janeiro is quite perplexing, as the Conselho should have known that Angola and the Congo were supplying the Portuguese demand for labour in Brazil. Between 1575 and 1587, Luanda exported an average of 2,500 slaves per annum and over the next four years this yearly average tripled. (3) The most that can safely be advanced is that, firstly, the element of preference affected the destination rather than the numbers of Africans taken from the West African Coast; and, secondly, since the total of victims taken from West Africa was not as

(1) P.R.O., T70/10 - Thurlow, 15 March 1678.

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 28, Minute of the Conselho Ultramarino, 20 Nov 1643. When the Conselho had been informed in 1641 of the importance of Cacheu, they had at the same time been told that Angola produced more slaves. See the Consultas of the Conselho, Cod.30, fl.107, Christovão da Cunha Tristão to the Conselho, 11 Sept 1641.

(3) J. Duffy: Portugal in Africa, p.50 (These figures do not include covert commerce from informal ports of embarkation.)

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tremendous in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, then the few thousands per annum transported from the Upper Guinea Coast were relatively more significant, especially in the Spanish Indies.

The figures produced by the Cartagena trade officials in the context mentioned above, though underestimates of the totals, were probably an accurate representation of the relative proportions of the slaves obtained from various parts of West Africa. Of the 6,884 slaves said to have been imported between 1585 and 1590, all but 507 originated from Cape Verde - Guinea. At the same time, the Upper Guinea Coast was also exporting slaves to Tierra Firme (Panama), Nueva España (Mexico), La Guira (Venezuela) and Rio de la Plata (Argentina).

To obtain even a few thousand captives per year from this small stretch of coast was a major undertaking, providing a clear example of the organisation which went into slaving activities on African soil and the disorganisation which resulted within African society. How were such numbers of Africans made available for shipment to the New World? The great debate on the slave trade in the late eighteenth century and in the nineteenth century led to keen attention being paid to this issue. Lists and tabulations of slaving methods were produced in an effort to show whether or not the Atlantic slave trade was vicious. This particular question no longer needs debating, but the categorisation of slaving methods is still useful. A modern history of the Atlantic slave trade states that "African natives became merchantable slaves in any one of five ways. They were criminals sold by the native chiefs as punishment; or they were individuals sold by themselves

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or their families in time of famine; or they were persons kidnapped either by European slavers or, more often, by native gangs; or they had been slaves in Africa and were sold by their masters; or else they were prisoners of war".

(1) This list can serve as a basis for the discussion of the conduct of the slave trade on the Upper Guinea Coast, with the exception of the category who were supposedly slaves in Africa, since this requires fuller investigation at a later stage. (2)

When John Hawkins sailed to Sierra Leone for the first time in 1562, he took 300 victims, "partly by the sword and partly by other means". (3) From his own account, and from the complaints of the Spanish, this means that he either came upon the Africans unawares or he seized them from Portuguese slavers. As argued earlier, such methods were anachronistic, and had been rejected as the dominant mode of obtaining slaves since the early years of Portuguese activity. (4) Up until the end of the era of slave trading, a ship's captain would occasionally risk kidnapping a few Africans from the shore, but such forays did not really pay, since they could entail casualties to the ship's crew. Besides, no regular or seasoned trader would resort to man-stealing either by trickery or by force, because it harmed European commerce as a whole. At the time of De Almada's writing, the Nalus on the Cogon had for several years been hostile to all Europeans. This hostility came about

(1) D. Mannix and M. Cowley: Black Cargoes, p.40

(2) See below, Ch. X, p.574


(3) Hakluyt Society, No. LVIII, The Hawkins Voyages

(4) See above, Ch. III, p.151.

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after a European ship, which was loading ivory at the Cogon, sailed away with a dozen Nalus on board. De Almada referred to the ship as being manned by "individuals who had no experience of trade in those parts". (1)

Given that, for the most part, the Europeans paid for their human cargoes, then the main issue relates to the methods by which the Africans were made available for purchase. In times of famine, it is said that they volunteered themselves. Occasionally, such instances are documented, usually with reference to the Senegambia, where famine was produced by locust plagues. John Barbot and Mungo Park for example, reported famines in the Senegambia giving a fillip to slave exports. (2)

However, to cite famine as a major contributor to the Atlantic slave trade is a gross distortion, and to add that "most of the tribes had no means of storing food for long periods" (3) is to introduce cobwebs. Food shortages were not unusual on the Upper Guinea Coast (among certain tribes). When there was a period of scarcity preceding the reaping of the crop, those persons who were not rich enough to have food supplies all the year round had other means of supplying their wants until the main grain crop had been reaped.  It would have taken not only the failure of the staple crop but also the failure of subsidiary cultivation and the disappearance of most of the other

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.340
(2) John Barbot: Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea, pp.33,47;
and Mungo Park: Journal...1805, p.18
(3) D. Mannix and M. Cowley: Black Cargoes, p.43
(4) ~~See above, Ch. I.~~

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supplementaries of the sea and the forest before famine could be said to have struck. Only a serious locust plague did this, and for most of the West African coast they were rarities.

The first record of a locust attack on the Upper Guinea Coast is provided by a captain-major of Cacheu, who reported that there was a famine in the area in 1639-41, which was occasioned by locusts. (1) In 1750, there was the possibility of another swarm. Fears were expressed that since locusts were reported in the hinterland that year they would descend to the coast. (2) Shortly afterwards, the locusts were at the estuary of the Gambia spreading desolation, (3) and they may conceivably have arrived on the coast south of the Gambia. Of course, these may not have been the only such occurrences, but from 1750 onwards the chronicling of events on the Upper Guinea Coast was more continuous and more complete, and yet one does not hear of another locust plague until 1841-43, (4) and then again in 1893. (5) Thus, locust attacks, though dramatic, were most infrequent on the Upper Guinea Coast, and the same

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 27, Paulo Barradas da Silva,

18 October 1641.

(2) Nicholas Owen: Journal of a Slave Dealer, p.87

(3) M. Adanson: A Voyage to Senegal (Paris 1789)

(4) Lord Stanley: "Narrative of Mr. W.C. Thompson's Journey from Timbo, capital of Futa Jallo in West Africa", Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, 1846, pp.106-138.

(5) Christopher Fyfe: A History of Sierra Leone, pp.221,506.

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can be said for most of the slave trading areas of West Africa. (1)

Africans, in the main were not captured by Europeans, nor did individuals rush to sell themselves - they were forcibly brought to the Europeans buyers by other Africans. 'Wars' are admittedly the most prolific agencies for the recruiting of captives. When the Manes led the invasion into Sierra Leone in 1545, they sparked off a period of unprecedented slaving. The Portuguese seized upon the opportunity to profit from the rout of the Sapes. The ocean-going slavers remained in the coastal bays and estuaries, while the boats of the lançados hovered like vultures in every river, waiting to take hold of the victims of the struggles. So numerous were the unfortunates that the boats sometimes rejected further offers of slaves after they had gorged their fill. (2)

The Sape peoples were restless under the Mane yoke. (3) After recruiting some Sape youths to train as soldiers, the Manes were prepared to sell as many as possible to make the population manageable. Whenever a

(1) The difference between the Senegal and the areas further south seems to be that the former is exposed to frequent attacks from the Desert Locusts which breed in the Sahara, while the species which attacks the West African coast are the African Migratory Locusts which have their home in the middle Niger, and only occasionally swarm and disperse in various directions. See F.J. Pedler: Economic Geography of West Africa (London 1956) p.19.

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.363,364.

(3) See Above, Ch. II, p.116.

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ship needed slaves, the Sapes were the ones to be sold. Farma, the first Mane overlord, was a ruthless ruler, whose tyranny was only ended by poison. He was said to have been 130 years old when he died in 1606, and, during his long regime, conditions were such that it was not unusual to have 20 or 30 vessels loading slaves at any given time in the ports of Sierra Leone. (1) In his investigations of African regional origins of Cuban Negroes, Fernando Ortiz encountered the term 'Zapes' in many of the older documents, but had difficulty locating it in Africa. (2) Almost certainly, this referred to the Sapes of Sierra Leone, since the Spanish orthography was usually 'Zapes'. (3)

The Mane example illustrates one extreme of the inter-relationship between tribal wars and the slave trade. The origins of the Mane-Sape wars were entirely independent of the presence of the Europeans, but, as a by-product, they filled the holds of the slave ships. It was certainly unfortunate for the Sapes that the Mane affliction should have coincided with the presence of slave-buying Europeans. Inevitably, the Manes came to look upon the supply of slaves to the Europeans as an end in itself. English slave traders in the 1580's reported that Farma would obtain 300 or 400 slaves

(1) B.R.A.H., Papeles de Jesuitas, Tomo 185, No. 1346, Report of P. Baltezar Barreira on the slave trade of the Upper Guinea Coast, despatched from Sierra Leone 1606.

(2) Fernando Ortiz: Hampa Afro-Cubana (Havana 1916)

(3) See, e.g., Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas en Africa, Vol. II, p.131.

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on request, by embarking on a campaign. (1) This was one indication of what was largely true of the Upper Guinea Coast in the era of slave trading; namely, that most of the inter-group hostilities were motivated by and orientated towards the Atlantic slave trade. The melée of peoples on the river Cacheu - Banhuns, Casangas, Djolas, Papels and Balantas - was regarded by the slave traders as a paradise. (2) Indeed, the whole of the Upper Guinea Coast offered ample opportunities for conflicts between ethnic groups. Sometimes, captives were sold to the Europeans as incidental by-products of tribal wars, but, more often, localised wars were fought specifically to procure slaves for export.

One primary source of slaves on the Upper Guinea Coast lay in the antagonism which existed between the Bijagos islanders and the residents of the adjacent mainland. The whole Bijagos society was geared towards the conduct of war. While the Bijago women cultivated the land, built the houses, gathered sea-food and fished, the Bijago men dedicated themselves to building almadias and waging war. They attacked indiscriminately all the peoples of the adjoining mainland - Djolas, Papels, Balantas and Nalus - and the residents of one island preyed upon those of other islands, once they were on the sea, for the sea, they said, had no king. The Bijagos were excellent sailors and swimmers and disciplined soldiers. Their weapons were handled with a dexterity born of assiduous practice; and tremendous prestige

(1) G.R. Taylor (ed.): The Troublesome Voyage of Captain Edward Fenton, Hakluyt Society, No. CXIII.

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.307.

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resulted from success in the use of arms. Women took initiative in choosing their husbands, and they chose only warriors with fine reputations.

(1) A Successful combatant acquired many wives and almadias, and this in turn led to more wealth, especially since the owner of the almadia was entitled to one-third of the spoils from any expedition.

The Bijago assaults on the mainland had all the elements of cinematographic spectacle. The warriors anointed their bodies with red ochre, coal and white clay; stuck feathers into their hair; and hung horses' tails on their breasts, attaching little bells to them. An elaborate ceremony was presided over by a priestess, whose final duty was the breaking of an addled egg on the stern of each almadia. Then, with a dip of paddles, the almadias went scudding off at a rate that the Europeans found amazing. Their journey was timed so that they arrived on shore during the hours of darkness. Surrounding a given village, they quickly set fire to the thatched huts. If the occupants came out fighting, they were cut to pieces by the expert Bijago warriors, and, more often than not, they were prepared to surrender.

The sordid reality behind these bizarre episodes was that the Bijago activities had been considerably stimulated and enlarged on account of the European slave traders. It is true that some Portuguese traders on the mainland opposed the Bijago tactics. Sebastia Casão, a prominent trader in

(1) This observation made by Manuel Alvares was confirmed by modern field studies. See A.J. Santos Lima: Organização Economica e Social dos Bijagos, (Bissau 1947), p.98.

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the Geba - Ria Grande area, was in the forefront of a move to enlist the aid of the Portuguese government to put down the Bijagos, because they were decimating the Beafadas, among whom he traded. On the whole, however, the more important consideration for the Portuguese was that they could buy slaves from the Bijagos, and the more frequent and ferocious the attacks, the better were the slave merchants pleased. Up to 1594, De Almada seems to have been quite happy with the fact that the Bijago attacks yielded large numbers of Beafadas and Papels as slaves. (1) Later, in 1669, another Cape Verde trader with long experience on the coast, provided a lengthy description of trade among the Bijagos. He waxed ecstatic over the capacity of the small Bijagos islands to provide slaves. In 25 trips over a period of years in his own boat, Coelho had personally acquired well over 1,000 slaves, apart from large quantities of other merchandise. (2)

The extent of the Bijago response to the European demand for slaves can be measured by the development of unity among the different islanders, with respect to the pursuit of slaves. By the early seventeenth century, each island decided to put aside insular jealousies in favour of joint campaigns against the mainland, amassing fleets of almadias for this purpose.(3)

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- (1) This information on the Bijagos comes from three sources: Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.315-320; Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor"; and the letters of Sebastião Casão to be found in the Bib. de Ajuda, Ms. 51-VIII-25 and A.R.S.I., Lus.74, fls. 79-87.
- (2) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições, pp.42-45.
- (3) A.R.S.I., Lus.74, fl.78 - Emchabolé, king of Biguba to the king of Portugal, 24 April 1607.

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As the century progressed, the Portuguese talk of defending the coast from the Bijagos was no longer heard. They and the other Europeans traders concentrated whole-heartedly in exploiting the potential of the Bijago market. When slavers arrived at the Bijagos, and found few or no slaves, they would reproach the islanders, insisting that this was a stain on the latter's good name. Other Europeans, they said, would ignore the Bijagos on hearing that these famous warriors had become decadent. Such appeals to the Bijagos' sense of honour, accompanied by the liberal distribution of alcohol, usually achieved the purpose of the Europeans of inciting the Bijagos to go out and bring in more victims for the slave merchants. (1)

The Beafadas were particularly exposed to the Bijago attacks, but they in their turn were active slave raiders who spread terror in the serão. (2) Similarly, the Papels, especially those on Bissau, organised slave expeditions against the Balantas, Beafadas, Bijagos and Nalus. The Bissau Papels had the direct assistance of the European traders. Like the ships' captains, the resident traders did not usually undertake slave raiding on their own initiative. However, there were exceptions, the most important being the lançados and grumetes on the island of Bissau. In 1686, three Spanish Capuchins carrying out missionary work on the Upper Guinea Coast prepared a description of the conduct of the slave trade. They reported aggrievedly that the Bissau lançados and their descendants not only

(1) Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas, Vol. II, p.135.

(2) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor".

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engineered hostilities, but had demanded of the missionaries that they should bless the slave raiding expeditions, threatening to hang them if they did not comply. (1)

No tribe was free from involvement in these hostilities. The Nalus, Balantas and Djolas did not take an aggressive stand, but they were liable to attack from other tribes: the Nalus from the Beafadas, Papels and Bijagos; the Balantas from the Papels and Bijagos; and the Djolas from the Mandingas. This last instance - that of the Djola-Mandinga confrontation - had the same piratical overtones as the Bijago attacks on the mainland. Sailing south out of the estuary of the Gambia in their almadias, the Mandingas fell upon the Djolas as they gathered sea-foods in large parties upon the coast. At first, the Djolas were taken unawares, but, obviously, they soon began to prepare themselves for these attacks, and many Mandingas in turn were made captive. (2)

None of these 'wars' were fought to gain territory or political dominance; few of them arose out of tribal animosities. This was the view consistently maintained by Catholic observers like Thomas de Mercado in 1569, the bishop of Cape Verde at the end of the sixteenth century, (3) and Baltezar Barreira and Manuel Alvares in the early seventeenth century. Even though their eye-witness reports on slaving on the Upper Guinea Coast in the era

(1) Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas, Vol. II, p.141

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.288.

(3) Thomas Mercado: Tratos y Contratos de Mercaderes, pp.63-68; and Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. I, p.400. (For the protests of the Cape Verde Bishop, D. Fr. Brandão, see below, p.237.)

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of the registros were usually as brief as they were condemnatory, the picture can legitimately be filled in by evidence taken from later in the seventeenth century, which was also generated by Catholic missionaries: namely, the three Capuchins mentioned above. They were resident on the coast for a few years, they had nearly forty years of intermittent Capuchin activity on the Upper Guinea Coast behind them, and they fully corroborated comments made in the previous century and earlier in the seventeenth, while adding further details and illustrations.

One of the things about which the Capuchins were quite definite was that all the conflicts which they heard termed 'wars' were nothing more than robberies and man-hunts. The expression caer guerra ("to wage war"), which was commonly in use among the lançados, referred to the raids deliberately undertaken with a view to procuring slaves. (1) The coastal lingua franca was rich in such words, denoting the violent seizure of persons for sale into slavery. Amarrar was one of these, being the Portuguese word for "to bind"; panyar was another, derived from apanhar ("to seize"); while tomadia was yet another meaning "a captive expedition", and derived from the Portuguese word tomada ("capture").

With the incentive of European goods, slave raiding became a profession, with persons dedicating themselves entirely to the service of the slave trade. The heir to the throne of Bissau in 1606 was one such

(1) Also the expression ir a la guerra - See Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas, Vol. II, pp. 137,141,144.

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individual. (1) In 1663, the Franciscan, André de Faro, encountered (and baptised) a noble on the river Nunez, who had a retinue of over sixty servants, all employed solely in man-hunting. His name was Salim, but the Portuguese called him Salteador ("Highwayman"). (2) Such professional slave hunters were called gampisas in the Beafada language. It was their custom to acquire with the purchase-price of their captives some wine or food, which was offered to the captives. This, apparently, was a sop to the gampisas. (3) The Portuguese found it cheaper to baptise the slaves.

There was thus no real distinction between persons kidnapped by "gangs of natives" and those who were "prisoners of war". Bracketed together, those categories undoubtedly constitute a very considerable proportion of the Africans on the Upper Guinea Coast who were sold to European slavers. Equal in importance to the methods of force were the 'legal' methods which produced 'criminals' for sale. Just as there were very few tribal wars which supplied victims to the slave ships in a purely incidental manner, and just as the slave trade gave rise to the violence upon which it in turn battened, so the 'criminals' who were transported to the Americas were more often than not, the creation of the slave trade.

By the end of the sixteenth century, the individuals who could be deprived of their freedom by process of law were those condemned to death, those who administered poison or placed a fatal fetish on others, adulterers

(1) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 1, p.411

(2) Andre de Faro: Peregrinação, p.83

(3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.337.

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with one of the king's wives, and those who solicited war against the king or asked the Xinas to bring about his death. (1) To these it must be added that debts often led to slavery, and the same can be said for the variety of offences which came under the term chai, namely, the failure to comply with prohibitions or taboos. (2) The slaves obtained in these several ways could be considered in one sense as criminals, since they were duly convicted by the law of the land. At the same time, it is clear that customary law on the Upper Guinea Coast was functioning in a radically different way during the slave trade era than it did before and after.

Many of the charges which resulted in enslavement were complete fabrications. "Subversive plots against the local government became surprisingly common in seacoast towns off which the slavers dropped anchor. The king almost always discovered a number of dangerous conspirators, and they naturally had to be sold." (3) However, most of the 'crimes' were of a more prosaic character. Adultery, as many observers realised, was one of the charges which offered great scope for fraud. Marital infidelity was a common affair in the polygamous societies of the Upper Guinea Coast, where the kings, chiefs and nobles had dozens of wives, many of whom were simply domestic servants. (4) If in the normal course of things enough accusations were not made, traps were set by husbands, with the complicity of their wives, so that

(1) B.R.A.H., Papeles de Jesuitas, tomo 185, No. 1346, Barreira 1606.

(2) Matea de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas, Vol. II, p.134

(3) D. Mannix and M. Cowley: Black Cargoes, p. 41

(4) Mateo de Anguiano: op. cit., p.136.

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"woman palavers" could be raised.

Above all, the allegations relating to the deaths of individuals were the ones which gave opportunities for chicanery. Crimes were essentially of two sorts: those which were concretely discoverable (such as murder, theft, or adultery) and those which were discoverable because sickness or death had come about. (1) Many deaths, whether resulting from disease or accident, were attributed to evil influences. In most cases, this evil influence was said to have emanated from a feticeiro. He was sought out and charged with the offence of "eating the spirit" of the deceased. (2) Sometimes, the evil was conceived of as residing in the deceased himself; whose death was constructed as proof of and punishment for his misdeeds. The Africans were prone to come to this latter conclusion when death resulted from an accident or a stroke of fate.

Clearly, offences in the above category had to be detected in a manner that was quite different from that of ordinary crimes. It was the interrogation of the dead person by the priest or jambacouce, which yielded the information as to whether a given person had died because of a fatal 'fetish' being placed upon him or not, and it was the jambacouce who ferreted out the guilty party, though ostensibly, it was the dead man who acted as the accuser. The possibilities for fraud in these cases were infinite. It was not that every death was attributed to a feticeiro - at least things had not deteriorated to that extent before the end of the

(1) L.V. Thomas: Les Diola, Vol. 2, p.496

(2) A.R.S.I., Lus.83, fls. 349-352, Manuel de Barros, 19 April 1605.

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sixteenth century when De Almada was writing, but when the interrogation led to someone being branded as a feticeiro, this had all the ~~appearances~~ of a deliberate plot, with the slave trade as the incentive. (1) Travelling in 1822, in a section of Temne country where the slave trade had been stamped out, Major Laing was witness to the interrogation of a dead girl. On that occasion the answer was that nobody was responsible for her death, but, as Laing remarked, "had the slave trade existed, some unfortunate individual might have been accused and sold into captivity". (2).

When anyone was successfully arraigned on a charge, his family and dependants often followed him into slavery - as though he had committed Adam's original sin, reported the Capuchins. (3) This was always the case with feticeiros, and sometimes a whole settlement or apollonia could be wiped out in one sale. (4) In part, this was a safeguard for those who were responsible for enslaving others, since they were freed from the possibility of vengeance being taken by the victims' families. (5) In some cases, however, it was the family alone who were sold, because the supposed feticeiro was already dead. If, as outlined above, accidental death was held to be proof of evil dealings, then the person's family was also liable to penalties. De Almada was at the court of Masatamba, the Casanga king, in 1570, when a

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.295

(2) A.G. Laing: Travels, p.85

(3) Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas, p.136

(4) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.263,295,332.

(5) B.R.A.H., Papeles de Jesuitas, tomo 185, No. 1346, Barreira.

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man fell from a palm tree and died. Immediately, the officials of the king went to the house of the dead man; seized his wives, children and relatives; and sold them all. (1) This was not an isolated instance. By the end of the sixteenth century, it had become the law on the Upper Guinea Coast that a fatal fall from a palm tree was a 'crime', the punishment for which was that the deceased's family was automatically sold. (2)

From the above example, it can be discerned that, in the slave trade era, not only was there scope for fraud on the basis of the pre-existing law, but that the customary laws were themselves changing, especially with respect to the penalties imposed. This is the aspect of the situation which stands in need of the greatest emphasis. One is presented with the picture on the Upper Guinea Coast of sale into slavery becoming the punishment meted out for a greater and greater number of crimes, descending to the most trivial, so that even when a charge was not spurious, there was a ludicrous disparity between crime and punishment. Before exemplifying this, it is necessary to lay bare the nature of legal punishment on the Upper Guinea Coast as far as they can be discerned in operation when the factor of slaving had not intruded.

Perhaps the assumptions of savagery which were long current in relation to the "Dark Continent" may lead to the belief that, slavery or no slavery, the system of punishment on the Upper Guinea Coast may have been cruel. This is far from the truth. Valentim Fernandes reported in the

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.295

(2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. I, p.405.

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opening years of the sixteenth century that only murder was punishable by death among the Bulloms, while the Temnes had no capital punishment. (1) Indeed, on the whole West African coast, capital punishment was a rarity in distinct contrast to Europe at that date. (2) The only other punishment was in the form of fines. Adultery, for instance, was easily resolved, by the offending male paying the husband agreed damages. (3) Deprivation of liberty seems to have been entirely unknown as a form of punishment. (4) Yet, with the advent of the Atlantic slave trade, the Africans of the Upper Guinea Coast were led to become parties in plots which resulted in the lifelong deprivation of the liberty of their fellows.

Chais were understandably very common on the Upper Guinea Coast. When the lançados committed chais, they were subject to fines, and they claimed that every pretext was used against them. (5) Some of the Africans themselves were open to the same kind of exploitation, with the vital difference that they suffered slavery as a consequence. (6) The treatment of debtors is another example of the severity and ruthlessness introduced by the Atlantic slave trade. To borrow and fail to repay the most trifling

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- (1) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.96
 - (2) For the Gold Coast, Mannix cites Bosman to this effect. See Black Cargoes, p.38.
 - (3) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.96
 - (4) See below, Ch. X, p. 574
 - (5) See above, Ch. III, p. 170.
 - (6) Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas, Vol. II, pp.134,142.

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item in the seventeenth century on the Upper Guinea Coast was sufficient warrant for arrest, conviction and execution of sale. (1) That people should have been sold for debts may seem plausible in the light of the imprisonment of debtors in Europe, but it must be reiterated that it was by indigenous standards that the punishment of offences by slavery was lop-sided and vicious.

For the fabricated charges to have been successfully carried, and for the scale of penalties to have been so radically altered, the local courts obviously had to be parties to the travesties of justice. The procedure of the courts appears to have undergone alteration in the interests of injustice and the slave trade. The judges, along with the king, usually gave their decisions on the basis of the evidence. (2) However, there were certain ordeals to which the accused were subjected in doubtful cases. The use of the hot iron on the tongue or in the palm of the hand, with a few leaves placed beneath it, was the most common of these ordeals, and was used in simple cases. (3) One seldom hears of this method as the seventeenth century progressed. Instead, the most dreaded ordeal, that of the "red-water" was the most prominent. This test consisted in the drinking of the bark of a certain tree infused into water. (4) The innocent party was supposed to escape with his life after drinking the poisonous solution. But the court was in a position

(1) Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas, Vol. II, p.145

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.348,349

(3) Ibid: p.262; and Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor".

(4) The tree in question appears to have been sasswood (Erythrophleum guineense)

See Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, p.160

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secretly to vary the strength of the infusion, as well as to add other ingredients, which could act as anti-toxins or emetics, so that the guilt or innocence was pre-determined - and it was usually guilt. (1) In many instances the accused preferred to refuse the test, and accept being sold; while, alternatively, if the accused died drinking the "red-water", his relatives were still available for enslavement.

The Djolas and Balantas were hostile to the slave trade, and did not indulge in preying upon each other by using the various dodges and stratagems just outlined. (2) On the other hand, the Casangas and the Beafadas were prolific in producing criminals for the benefit of the Portuguese lançados and European slavers. (3) Perhaps this may lie at the basis of the charge which the neighbours of the Beafadas levelled at them, and that is, that it was the Beafadas who introduced slavery into the world. (4) On the Upper Guinea Coast, taken as a whole, during the period of intensive trade with the Spanish Indies, the victims produced as alleged criminals were substantial in number. No lengthy list of slaving methods is required. The two overwhelming forms of conducting the slave trade were force of arms (wielded by Africans) and the chicanery of a warped system of

(1) Fernão Guerreiro Relação Anual, Vol. I, p.404

(2) For the Djolas, see De Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.290; and for the Balantas who were said never to have preyed on each other, see J.B. Labat: Relation Nouvelle/de l'Afrique Occidentale, Vol. V, p.200.

(3) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. I, p.404

(4) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições, p.55

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customary law.

From the methods of the slave trade there sprung certain consequences. Since some tribes were more predatory than others, it is possible very broadly to assess the results of slaving on individual tribes. The small Bijagos islands appear to have held a unique position in being largely cushioned from the effects of slaving. To begin with, the mainland peoples did not counter-attack the Bijagos in their island homes; and in the second place, the Bijagos were not favoured as slaves by the Europeans. De Almada claimed that the Bijago children made good slaves, but adults (especially the men) were not good bargains, as they were able to wish death upon themselves and frequently did so. (1) Lemos Coelho pinpointed the Bijagos of the island of Formosa as being prone to committing suicide, because of the belief that if they died abroad their spirits would return home. (2) It is indeed true that the inhabitants of Formosa believe that the spirits of the initiated return to an adjacent islet. (3) In any event, the Portuguese on the coast steered clear of the Bijagos as far as securing slaves for service on the coast was concerned, and the Bijago reputation in the Americas was equally bad. Labat, who was a well-informed commentator on the American scene, said that the Bijagos were noted for rebellion on the slave ships, and that they were sold with great difficulty

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.318
 (2) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições, p.45
 (3) J. Faria Leitão: "Bijagos da Ilha Formosa", in Inquérito Etnográfico, pp.145-147

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in the Caribbean because of their natural ferocity and tendency to escape. They would not work except under the whip, they wounded themselves, and they frequently committed suicide. (1) The Bijagos, therefore, could scarcely have qualified as escravos de ley.

A few other tribes may also have escaped with relatively slight losses from the slave trade in the period under discussion. De Almada felt that the Djolas were increasing in numbers because they did not indulge in the slave trade. This is not difficult to believe, because though the Djolas were raided, from all accounts, they were quite capable of defending themselves. (2) The same can be said of the Balantas, (3) so that relatively few of these tribes must have appeared on the market.

The Upper Guinea Coast was unfortunate in that it comprised so many petty polities offering scope for inter-group conflicts; and it was doubly unfortunate in having the powerful Mande peoples as its neighbours. When the Portuguese reached the Gambia in 1455, their reputation as dealers in human

(1) J.B. Labat: Nouvelle Relation de l'Afrique Occidentale, Vol. V, p.198

(2) See below, Ch. X, p.489 for counter-attacks against the Mandingas. In 1780, the Djolas also gave an excellent display against a European attack. See J.M. Gray: A History of the Gambia, p.270.

(3) When the Balantas were provoked by Bissau slave expeditions into counter-attacking the praça of Bissau, they made successful sorties right under the walls of the fort. See A.H.U., Guiné, maço V - Relação of 2nd Nov 1778

(4)

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kind had already preceded them from the Senegal, and the Mandingas would have nothing to do with them. (1) However, the very next year, the Mandingas accorded a friendly welcome to the Portuguese, and, for the remainder of the long period of pre-colonial trade, they were the chief collaborators with the Europeans on the Upper Guinea Coast. In the light of the Mande inclination towards trade, it was not surprising that the Europeans and the Mande should have forged strong trading relations. If human beings were the most saleable objects, then the Mande were willing to provide them. Not only were they willing, but they were also able, on the basis of their military superiority and the political control which they still maintained over several of the littoral groups in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. (2) It was no accident that the Mandinga Farim Cabo was the biggest slave dealer in his part of the world, and he obtained his victims by raiding. (3) The Mandinga sea raids on the Djolas have already been cited, and Mandinga attacks were also carried out on land in the area around the Hereges river. The Mandinga ruler of Hereges, known as the Emperor of Fogany, was still attempting in the seventeenth century to exercise dominion over the Djolas and the Banhuns and to collect tribute from them. He attacked them when they refused to comply, and sold large numbers as slaves. (4)

Not only the Mandingas, but tribes who had come under close Mandinga

(1) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.34

(2) See above, Ch. I, p. 56.

(3) Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas, Vol. II, p.136; and P. Cultru: Premier Voyage de Sieur de la Courbe, pp.250-252.

(4) J.B. Labat: Nouvelle Relation de l'Afrique, Vol. V, p.19,20

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influence, took the initiative in raiding their neighbours to provide slaves for the European traders. The Casangas were outstanding in this respect, and their ready supply of slaves and exceptionally favourable treatment of the lançados made Casanga territory a haven for the Portuguese. That the Casanga king should have been in the habit of bestowing on his Cape Verde friends who came to visit him gifts of at least ten or a dozen slaves attests both to the amicable relations with the Portuguese as well as his ability to produce this particular merchandise. (1)

The powerful position of the Casanga king was due in part to the role which he played within the Mandinga system of hegemony over the littoral peoples. He was directly under the Farim Braço, and other subject peoples of the Farim, such as the Banhuns and the Balantas, paid their tribute to the king of Casanga. (2) In the latter half of the sixteenth century the Banhuns were vigorously rejecting the supposed Casanga sovereignty, and this was associated with a serious conflict between the two tribes in the 1560's. When the Casanga king Masatamba, chose to dictate on what terms the lançados should reside in Banhun territory, this led to further violence, and the powerful Casanga king overran Banhun territory in 1580. (3) Thus the Banhuns must have featured prominently among the victims whom the Casanga king offered to the Europeans.

The Cocolis were another tribe who were agents of Mandinga

(1) André Dornelas: "Relação sobre a Serra Leoa"

(2) See above, Ch. I, p. 57

(3) See above, Ch. III, p. 174.

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expansion on the Upper Guinea Coast. They played a key role in the Nunez slave trade. The Portuguese and Spanish traders, seeking to fill the quotas of their registros, proceeded up the river Nunez through Nalu country until they arrived at Kagandy among the Cocolis. (1) Kagandy was a great slave mart and the slaves must have been drawn mainly from within the domains of the Farim Cocoli. Right up to the middle of the nineteenth century, the Cocolis were still in the forefront of slave trading in that district. (2)

Unlike the Mandingas, the Susus and Fulas did not wield political or military dominance over the coastal peoples in the sixteenth century, but one effect of the Mane invasion was to set the Bulloms, Temmes and Lokos at odds with the Susus and Fulas. (3) Once conflicts flared, the captives invariably found their way into the holds of the slave ships. The Susus themselves began to move closer to the sea after routing the Manes. By the mid-eighteenth century they had found an outlet on the Atlantic between the Pongo and the Scarcies, largely at the expense of the Bagas. (4) By this time, the Susus and the Fulas had joined the Mandingas as the most active agents of the slave trade on the Upper Guinea Coast, but long before that the Susus and Fulas had begun to abandon their former peaceful trade with the coast. During the second half of the seventeenth century, the majority of the slaves shipped from

(1)Alonso de Sandoval: De Natureleza de Todos Etiopes, p.40

(2) William Shreeve: Sierra Leone (London) 1847)

(3) See above, Ch. II, p. 90

(4) See below, Ch. IX, p. 501.

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Sierra Leone were provided by these two tribes. (1)

The greatest victims of the slave trade may well have been not the peoples of the littoral fringe, but the "Paleo-Negritics" who occupied the interior plateaux and parts of the Futa Djalon. The Tenda country, as described by Mungo Park, was a vast tract of land along the Gambia between 10° and 14° West Longitude. (2) All this was under the rule of Mandinga chiefs and Farims from the earliest European reports, but a few discerning observers in the seventeenth century had noticed that the supposed Mandinga population was not homogenous. Jobson, for example, found that above Barracunda on the Gambia the men wore hides instead of cloth, the women were heavily tattooed, and a different language was spoken, though Mandinga was understood "by the better sort". (3) Lemos Coelho was also able to point out that the population of the Gambia and Cabo was Mandinga only in the sense that this tribe had come to dominate the original inhabitants in every cultural sphere. The Mandingas had become 'naturalised', and the indigenous people had taken the name of the Mandingas. (4) Thus, many of the slaves who may have been described as Mandingas must have been Tendas or 'Paleo-Negritics' in the process of assimilation. Apart from these, Coelho also specified that the

(1) Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas, Vol. II, p.132; and P.R.O., T70/14 - Greenaway, 26 Jan 1703.

(2) Mungo Park: Travels, 1785-1787. See accompanying map.

(3) R. Jobson: The Golden Trade, p.128. (Barracunda is around 13°30 West Longitude.)

(4) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições, p.117.

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Bassarels, a distinct Tenda group, were the principal captives sold by the Mandingas; (1) and some years later De la Courbe found that the slaves on the Gambia had become merchantable because of war, crimes, sorcery or the fact of belonging to "a subject race". (2) The latter could hardly have been other than the 'Paleo-Negritics'.

To circumstantiate the above claim, two pertinent parallels can be drawn. Firstly, the Manes considered themselves as licensed to exploit and sell the populations that they had conquered; and, secondly, the Fulas, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, practised a similar oppression over groups that they had defeated. (3) It seems very probable that after having established their dominance over the middle Gambia and the plateaux of Cabo, the Mandingas would have asserted similar rights over the various groups of Tendas who dwelt there. It is to be noted in the cases of the Mane and Fula empires that these supposedly sovereign tribes had to resort to violence on every occasion on which they wished to lay hands on the auctoctones for sale to the Europeans. The very likely pattern in the intermediary zone between the coast and the Futa Djalou, therefore, was one where the submerged groups were continually fighting for their existence in the face of dominant tribes such as the Mandingas, who were being spurred on by the European demand for slaves.

(1) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições, pp. 25, 134.

(2) P. Cultru: Premier Voyage de Sieur de la Courbe, p. 194.

(3) See below, Ch. IX, p. 520 and Ch. X, p. 594.

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For the period 1562-1640, the great slave raiding tribes on the Upper Guinea Coast were the Manes, the Mandingas, the Casangas, the Cocolis, the *Biagos* and, to a lesser extent, the Susus and the Fulas. It is therefore accurate to represent the littoral non-Mande peoples of the Upper Guinea Coast as being to a considerable degree encircled and exploited by their Mande neighbours of the interior in the interests of the Atlantic slave trade. One principal result of the slave raiding was to emphasise and prolong the harassment of those ethnic groups who had sought the Upper Guinea Coast as a refuge from the political turmoil and subjection of the Western Sudan. Thus, when the lançados met the Mande on the "mangrove line" of furthest river travel they forged a slaving partnership which boded evil for the peoples of the Upper Guinea Coast.

With respect to intra-tribal slaving operations, it is equally imperative to seek out the aggressors and the aggrieved parties. The slave trade exacerbated personal rivalries of all sorts, and no section of the society was exempted from these. There must have been conflicts among nobles, and among individuals in the lesser ranks of society, bearing in mind that every act of violence and every piece of chicanery perpetrated in the interests of the slave trade often brought on its own train of vengeance and retribution. But ~~the~~ superimposed upon these personal struggles, and indeed upon the inter-tribal conflicts also, there was a definite pattern of class exploitation, with the ruling class as the offending party.

(1) Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas, Vol. II, p.132

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The "ruling class" must be taken to mean the kings, chiefs and nobles. (1) At times it appears possible to draw a dividing line between the king and his nobles. The slave ship offered a most convenient vehicle for the disposal of rivals to the king's authority, and the noble was obviously a profitable target for plots leading to the sale of his numerous family and dependants. De Almada stated that the persons who died after submitted to the 'red-water' ordeal in Casanga territory were the rich ones whom the king wished to kill. (2) But the king of Casanga was unusually autocratic. The typical king or chief of the Upper Guinea Coast was simply primus inter pares as far as the other nobles were concerned. The possibility did not exist for the kings or chiefs to victimise their principal subjects at will. Only with the substantial support of the nobles themselves can one envisage the king taking measures against one of their number. In the latter sixteenth and the early seventeenth century, the ruling class in Sierra Leone was not ethnically homogenous, and the Mane element was bent on the extermination of the Sape nobility. Elsewhere, however, there is no evidence to suggest divisions between king and noble or between noble and noble, leading to any significant export of the privileged class.

It is necessary to recall, firstly, the nature of most of the tribal societies of the Upper Guinea Coast, as discussed previously, and to re-emphasise that there was a definite cleavage between those who held

(1) See above, Ch. I, p. 71
 (2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p. 294.

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authority in the society and those who did not. (1) Secondly, it must be borne in mind that when the Europeans arrived they dealt with the Africans through the ruling class. Only the ruler of a given area could grant the lançados permission to reside and trade there, and only he could extend protection to them subsequently. (2) The responsibility for the slave trade, as far as the Africans themselves bear part of this responsibility, lies squarely upon the shoulders of the tribal rulers and elites. They were in alliance with the European slave merchants, and it was upon the mass of the people that they jointly preyed.

The law of the land was the king's law. It was a law administered by the king and his judges, all of whom were drawn from the nobility. When this law was made into the handmaiden of the slavetrade, this could only have come about because the ruling class wished it to be. It was only the king and the nobles who stood to benefit from the perversion of justice. Another examination of the question of adultery will illustrate this. Though polygamy was theoretically possible for all, it was wealth which determined how many wives a man possessed. Only the nobles had dozens of wives, and thus plenty of opportunity to encourage "woman palavers". Besides, the very definition of adultery depended upon class considerations. Actual copulation constituted adultery when the wife of a Beafada commoner was involved; when the wife of a noble was concerned, physical attempt was sufficient for a

(1) See above, Ch. I, p. 71

(2) See above, Ch. III, p. 163

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charge; while an indelicate proposal to one of the king's wives was enough to convict. (1)

As with adultery, so with every other charge - the ruling class were the ones who instituted them, and the common people were the victims. Contemporary European observers had no difficulty in discerning this. Ogilby, for example, affirmed that individuals became slaves either through war "or else under the pretext of some imperious and arbitrary laws by the kings and great men of the country". (2) The Capuchins were very explicit on this latter point. "The crimes for which innumerable men, women and children are condemned to slavery usually consist of deceits, frauds and acts of violence of the powerful men; these latter are the judges, plaintiffs and witnesses, and in the end the unfortunate poor who cannot resist them are enslaved. (3) The same observers added that "the rich and powerful enjoy the privilege of making captives, because there is nobody to resist them. They (the nobles) look upon so many persons with dislike, and when they feel so inclined, they easily exercise their privilege, because their own interests are not harmed by their greed. The king proceeds with the same licence." (4)

Apart from the unlikely possibility of being sold by the king, the noble could be certain that the law offered him protection. In Sierra Leone, in the mid-eighteenth century, the rich still paid only fines if they were

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.324,333.

(2) John Ogilby: Africa: p.363

(3) Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas, Vol. II, p.134

(4) Ibid, p.136.

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guilty of crimes, except where the offender transgressed any basic rule of the Poro. (1) Where slave raiding was concerned, the noble remained to a large extent inviolate, because if captured, he was almost always returned to his own people, on payment of a ransom. Even the fearsome Bijagos were prepared to offer captured nobles for ransom in return for two commoners or five oxen. (2) Up to the end of the eighteenth century, the ruling class on the Upper Guinea Coast continued to follow this practice of ransom for their own security. (3)

If the noble was actually sold to the Europeans, he still had an excellent chance of recovering his freedom. In June 1622, the residents of Cacheu complained to the Governor of Cape Verde and to the Conselho da Fazenda in Portugal that the trade factor in Cacheu had been so foolhardy as to seize (amarrar) a noble, related to the king. (4) The consequences of the factor's actions were not stated, but other incidents of a similar nature indicate that the Cacheu traders had good cause for complaint. For instance, in June 1680, the chief factor of the Royal African Company in Sierra Leone reported that two English private traders had stolen a noble from the Nunez, and the residents had threatened to kill all the Englishmen who fell into their power. Fortunately, the private traders carried the noble to the Company's factory at Sherbro, and the chief factor thought it wise to purchase the individual in

(1) Nicholas Owen: Journal of a Slave Dealer, p.48

(2) J. Labat: Nouvelle Relation, Vol. V, p.134

(3) See below, Ch. X, p. 559.

(4) Boletim do Arquivo Historico Colonial, Vol. I, Doc. No. 28.

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question and make sure that he was returned to his homeland. (1) It therefore seems to have been the convention that nobles were not to suffer servitude, and that every effort should be made to secure the release of any noble who inadvertently fell into the hands of the slave traders. (2)

The noble suffered a minimum of disadvantages because of the degeneration of the customary law and the rise of slave raiding, and if he was sold he stood a very good chance of regaining his freedom; the commoner was the target of all the abuses of the law, he was the victim of the slave raids, and when he was sold his position was desperate. In the early years of the seventeenth century, in the Cacheu-Ria Grande area, there was a tacit agreement between the kings and the Portuguese buyers that when a king knew that one of his subjects captured in a raid was about to be sold to the Portuguese, he should make no protest. According to Barreira, this was "because they (the kings) prefer to see their subjects in the hands of the Portuguese, rather than in the hands of the Bijagos, who would eat them if there were no buyers". (3) The cannibalism ascribed to the Bijagos is only a red herring, because Barreira himself says that the agreement held good for the tribes other than the Bijagos, tribes against which the spurious charge of cannibalism was not levelled.

The agreement really seems to point to a harmonisation of the cupidity of all who stood to gain. In the first place, the lançados could purchase any captive without enquiring after the 'title' by which he had been

(1) P.R.O. T70/1 - Edmund Pierce, 5 Jan 1681, fls.77,78

(2) See below, Ch. X, p. 570.

(3) B.R.A.H., Papeles de Jesuitas, tomo 185, No. 1346.

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acquired, and with the assurances that they were not to be perpetually challenged to return human purchases on the grounds that the individuals concerned had been stolen. Such an arrangement was obviously essential if the lançados were to trade simultaneously in the territories of the Casangas, Banhuns, Djolas, Papels, Beafadas and Bijagos, all within a limited compass, and each one selling its neighbours. When De Almada said that the river Cacheu was a slaver's delight, (1) it must have been made so, not only by 'Balkanisation', but by the conjoint action of the ruling groups in each tribe to allow the lançados to buy persons freely, irrespective of how they were acquired. In the second place, Barreira's report that the kings of the Cacheu-Ria Grande area did not challenge a sale when any of their subjects was involved implies that the several tribal rulers on the coast had come to a reciprocal understanding to equalise their greed. King 'A' had no fear of turning a blind eye when he saw his subjects being sold by king 'B', because perhaps the very next day the positions would be reversed.

There was another reciprocal agreement between the lançados and the African ruling class of the Upper Guinea Coast, which militated against the ordinary individual who sought to escape after being sold. When a captive escaped from a lançado, the latter turned to the nearest chief or noble (with a 'gift') and asked him to announce on his bombalon that such and such an individual had fled. (2) Such communications were the exclusive preserve of the ruling class, and, without their co-operation the lançados could not have

(1) See above, Ch. IV, p. 203

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p. 326.

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coped with the frequent escape of captives for whom they had already paid. Later, the Royal African Company also found it necessary to pay neighbouring fidalgos to return fugitive slaves. (1)

It is an obvious and well recognised fact that the African chiefs and kings were actively engaged in partnership with the European slavers all along the coast. (2) But the impression given of inter-tribal conflicts has usually seemed to outweigh that of internal struggles. (3) On the Upper Guinea Coast at least, one is forced to give much more attention to the way that victims were produced for the slave ships from within individual tribes. As Basil Davidson points out, throughout the history of slaving all over the world, the distinction between selling people of a given in-group (such as an ethnic group or religious community) and those who were outsiders was not rigidly maintained. (4) The same applied on the Upper Guinea Coast, where the kings were just as likely to rob their own people as to attack their neighbours. The isolated exceptions only serve to reinforce this generalisation; because it could scarcely have been simple coincidence that the Djolas

(1) P.R.O., T70/360, Bence Island Accounts

(2) See, e.g., Basil Davidson: Black Mother, where the idea of partnership is a constant theme.

(3) D. Mannix and M. Cowley: Black Cargoes, pp.12,13

(4) Basil Davidson: Black Mother, (p.107, however, suggests that the African chiefs on the coast seldom obtained the slaves from their own ranks. This holds good only after the Atlantic slave trade was pushed further and further inland.)

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and the Balantas, who produced the least slaves either by raiding or by preying upon each other, were the very tribes with an amorphous state structure from which a well-defined ruling class was absent. (1)

Tribal divisions were not then the most important. When the line of demarcation is clearly drawn between the agents and the victims of slaving as it was carried on among the littoral peoples, that line coincides with the distinction between the privileged and the disprivileged in the society as a whole. The Atlantic slave trade was deliberately selective in its impact on the society of the Upper Guinea Coast, with the ruling class protecting itself, while helping the Europeans to exploit the common people. This is of course the widespread pattern of modern neo-colonisation; and, by the same token, the period of slave trading in West Africa should be regarded as proto-colonial. On the one hand, there was no semblance of European political control over the African rulers; but on the other hand, it was the Europeans who were accumulating capital.

In the midst of lamenting the trials and tribulations of the lançados, Barreira related that one day a Mandinga arrived at Cacheu, having journeyed there to resolve a doubt which was besetting him. He asked the Muslim imam of Cacheu: "Why is it that the whites are free, and the blacks are their slaves?" The reply was that God made the whites first and the blacks afterwards, and he decreed that the latter should serve their elder brothers. (2) This was an imaginative portrayal of the colonial relationship.

(1) See above, Ch. I, p. 63.

(2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 3, p. 283

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Indirectly, via European testimony, the African rulers made it manifest that they regarded the slave trade as an imposition, but were prepared to pay that price for European goods. On this point, the Capuchins offered evidence which they elicited by questioning the African rulers on their attitude to the Atlantic Slave trade. They found, as Barreira before them had done, that the African slavers recognised their profession for the evil it was, (1) but contended that they indulged in man-stealing because the whites would purchase no other goods. (2) In the long run, the terrible logic of this situation caused the African chiefs to cling to the Atlantic slave trade as their staple economic activity, even after it had become an anachronism within the capitalist system.

The European assessment of the Atlantic slave trade is quite unmediated as far as the historical sources are concerned, and thus it is all the more surprising that this is usually hopelessly misrepresented. O.A. Sherrard in treating the question of "the slave and his emancipation", provides a typical example. "It is a notable fact," he wrote, "that riddled as negro slavery was with every form of wrong and oppression, no one ever proposed its abolition until the trade had fallen into British hands. It is the more notable, because the Indian slavery, which went before it and out of which it sprang, had aroused misgivings in many persons who could, had they wished, have crushed it in its first beginnings ... Yet, as soon as Negroes had replaced the Indians, authority both civil and ecclesiastical, dropped the subject and with it their

(1) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 3, p. 411.

(2) M. Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas, Vol. 2, p.141

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hesitations... Almost overnight, negro slavery became, like the slavery of the pre-Christian world, an accepted fact - a mere matter of trade, which was of no interest to polite societies or to powerful hierarchies, or even philosophical academies... For rather more than one hundred and fifty years this state of indifference continued; and then, as England entered the trade and the facts of slavery began to seep through, the English conscience was stirred; and with that stirring, hope for the slave was born." (1)

There is no need to quarrel with this author's chauvinism, only with his purported facts. Clarkson's history of the abolition movement, as distinct from his observations on the contemporary scene, has been paid little attention. He gave a lengthy discourse on the early opposition to the Atlantic slave trade, a discourse which wobbles somewhat when he introduces Elizabeth I of England as an opponent of the slavetrade, but which also highlighted the very real debate between Dominicans and Franciscans, which Pope Leo X resolved in favour of the anti-slavery party, by declaring that "not only the christian religion, but that nature herself cried out against a state of slavery". (2) The literature on the Upper Guinea Coast has numerous references to clerical debate along these lines.

The Spanish, Portuguese and Italian Catholics who opposed the Atlantic slave trade couched their arguments mainly in theological terms.

(1) O.A. Sherrard: Freedom from Fear, the Slave and His Emancipation

(London) p.97

(2) Thomas Clarkson: History of the African Slave Trade (London 1808)

Vol. 1, p.38.

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They agreed that by doctrinal writ it was possible for an individual to be 'justly' enslaved, and that capture in war, for example, provided a "just title" for enslavement, if the process was incidental. But, they then proceeded to demonstrate that the Atlantic slave trade bore no relationship to this theoretical model, because the 'wars' themselves were products of the slave trade. (1) Even Alonso de Sandoval, who adopted a pro-slavery stance, did not deny that the captives from the Upper Guinea Coast and elsewhere in Africa were victims of "unjust wars", but he gave solace to those slave captains in Cartagena, who were nauseated and morally discomfited by their participation in the trade, by telling them that when they purchased slaves in Santiago or Cacheu, those Africans had already passed through the hands of two or three intermediaries, and it would therefore have been impossible to ascertain by what 'title' a particular slave was acquired. (2)

A few Catholic observers did not share Sandoval's nimble conscience. Mercado, for instance, felt that all who had anything to do with the slaves purchased in Santiago were morally contaminated and guilty. He expressed scepticism that the matter had really been thoroughly investigated by the

(1) Manuel Alvares: "E_thiopia Menor". Here the question is discussed at length. He cited Justinian law to the effect that one "just title" was provided when an individual over twenty years old voluntarily sold himself. Leviticus, Ch. 25 gave him reason to believe that poor fathers could in extreme circumstances sell their children. Crime was also another possibility.

(2) Alonso de Sandoval: Natureleza de todos Etiopes, pp.65-72.

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Mesa da Consciencia of the Portuguese king, and he mentioned that a number of letters on the subject had beendespatched to Lisbon. (1) In actual fact, the awareness of the methods of the trade and the protests against the slave trade on legalistic grounds led imperceptibly to a position of total condemnation. To contend that a 'just' slave was a rarity on the Upper Guinea Coast, as Manuel Alvares insisted, and to complement this by saying that the European traders should accept only those persons who had been 'justly' enslaved was in effect to call for the abolition of the slave trade.

Apart from citing the opinions of learned theologians, and pointing to the vicious discrepancies on the African coast, the Catholic priests involved in this protest waged their campaigns around the question of baptism. As Barreira had found, and as Sandoval admitted, the Spanish and Portuguese slave traders seldom bothered to baptise the slaves, or alternatively they were allowed mass baptism, a whole shipload being admitted to grace in one fell swoop. (2) D. Frei Victoriano Portuense, bishop of Cape Verde in the last years of the seventeenth century, was a vigorous campaigner against the failure to baptise slaves. The statements of this bishop were quite forthright. "Knowing the manifest injustices by which people are made slaves in Guinea the only excuse (and even this is not sufficient of an excuse) is

(1) Thomas de Mercado: Tratos y Contratos de Mercaderes, p.68

(2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 1, p.400. In most of the letters to his Padre Provincial, Barreira registered some protest against the slave trade. He also advocated that all Cape Verde slaves who served well should be manumitted. See A.R.S.I., Lusitania 74.

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to say that these gentiles are being taken out to receive the light of the church." But the slave trade as it was then conducted made no provision for the salvation of the blacks, and was indeed the greatest danger to the souls of white folk. D. Victoriano Portuense claimed that D. Frei Pedro Brandão, who held the see one hundred years earlier, was so disgusted with the injustice of the Atlantic slave trade that, failing to put a stop to it, he relinquished the bishopric of Cape Verde-Guinea, and returned to Portugal. "My scruples are not so great that I condemn totally this trade, seeing that it is tolerated by so many men of letters and great theologians", added D. Victoriano - perhaps with a humble tongue in his cheek. (1)

On the subject of the slave trade, only one letter of the redoubtable D. Frei Brandão appears to have survived, but it is enough to bear out the truth of Portuense's report. Written about 1598, it contains a scathing attack on the leading role of the Portuguese in the traffic of human flesh, and he proposed to the king that all blacks should be baptised and then declared free by virtue of this baptism and reception into the Faith. (2)

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- (1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa VI - the remarks quoted were in a letter to the Conselho on the 13th June 1700. Apparently, the correspondence on this question was going on for at least a decade. D. Frei Victoriano Portuense received a directive from the Conselho on the 23 Jan 1690 that no slaves should be shipped without being baptised. Other letters of his survive dated 4 June 1696 and 17 June 1697. His real name was da Costa.
- (2) A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, Africa Occidental 2nd series, Vol. III - No. 110, Letter from the bishop of Cape Verde to the king, pp.442-445. The editor notes that Brandão left Santiago in 1694 after spending six years there. He relinquished his mitre in 1606.

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Quite obviously, civil and ecclesiastical authorities had not dropped the subject of the Atlantic slave trade, as Sherrard would have us believe. The opposition of some Catholics to the Atlantic slave trade (and also to slavery in the Americas) was not carried on in obscure places. Such views were consistently placed before the highest civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Even at a glance, without pretending to come to grips with the views of all the priests in the New World or in parts of Africa other than the Upper Guinea Coast, it is clear that this subject was one of the most important pre-occupations of those who saw themselves as the guardians of the European conscience, and who came into contact with the harsh realities of the Atlantic slave trade. The records of the Propaganda Fide, the central co-ordinating body for Catholic missionary endeavour, show that this was the case, with letters of protest arriving from various parts of Africa and America; but the reply of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda Fide was that slavery was inevitable if the plantations were to survive. (1) The protests constitute a noteworthy epic in themselves, as well as

(1) A.P.F., Acta, Vol. 54, No. 19, fl. 19 - Report on the abuses of the slave trade in the Congo by the Procurator General of the Congregazione dei Negri, 6 March 1684; Vol. 55, No. 26, fl. 35, Capuchins in America and Africa complain about slaving in Africa, treatment of slaves on board ship and in America where they were overworked and underfed. (Dated 12 March 1685); and Vol. 56, No. 15, fl. 12, report on abuses of slave trading and slavery, 11 Jan 1686, with comments by the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda Fide.

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indicating (as one might reasonably have assumed) that Europeans were fully cognisant of the monstrosities of the Atlantic slavetrade. Those who did not know were those who did not want to know. The question was posed "What price profits?", and the answer was that no moral price or human suffering was too high to pay for monetary gain from the trade in slaves and from the extension of capitalist production into the New World.

A HISTORY OF THE UPPER GUINEA COAST, 1545-1800

CHAPTER FIVE

FREE TRADE -v- MONOPOLY

PART I - "PORTUGAL AND HER EUROPEAN RIVALS"

Flourishing though the Atlantic slave trade may have been, the Portuguese crown faced serious problems in attempting to secure for itself the major profits of the trade of the Upper Guinea Coast, just as the Spanish authorities struggled to cut down on the revenue leakages connected with the import of slaves into the Americas. (1) In the first place, the Portuguese monarch had to take into account the interests of the Cape Verde settlers, to whom some of the profits had to accrue. In the second place, though the lançado at the end of the sixteenth century was not the hunted outlaw he was at the beginning of that century, he still defied the provisions of his sovereign in many respects, making it difficult for the Portuguese treasury to collect revenues on the trade of the area.

The fiscal arrangements for the Cape Verde islands and the adjacent coasts involved the division of the mainland into districts or 'trades'. The Upper Guinea Coast itself was considered as two districts - that of "Sierra Leone" and that of the "Rivers of Guinea". (2) The boundary between the two was as far south as the river Scarcies, which, because of its kola supplies, was an integral part of the Cacheu trade. (3) The various 'trades' between the Cape Verde peninsula and Cape Mount were

(1) See above, Ch. IV, p. 190

(2) J.W. Blake; Europeans in West Africa, Vol. 1. p.37

(3) See below, Ch. VIII, p. 452

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leased sometimes separately and sometimes conjointly. At any rate, the same merchant or group of merchants often leased more than one simultaneously; and after 1521 it appears that one group of contractors generally enjoyed sole rights of trade on the coast between Beziguiché (Gorée) and Sierra Leone. (1)

In 1535, the Cape Verde Guinea contract was worth 8,000 cruzados per year; (2) a bid of 25,000 for a three-year period was offered in 1551; (3) while in 1607, the value was 27,000 cruzados. (4) Sometimes, the contract was sold for six years, as in the case of Alvaro Mendes de Castro, who leased it in 1586. (5) Frédéric Mauro, in his study of "Portugal and the Atlantic in the seventeenth century" provides a list of the Cape Verde-Guinea contract holders from 1589 to 1643, indicating the prices at which they obtained it. The price of the contract shows a marked decline from 27,000

(1) J.W. Blake: Europeans in West Africa, Vol. 1, pp.37,38

(2) Ibid: p.141

(3) Ibid: p.179

(4) Luciano Cordeiro (Ed.): Estabelecimentos e Resgates Portugueses na Costa Occidental de Africa em 1607, por um Anonymo, p.12 (At 5s to the cruzado, the value of the contract in 1607 would have been £6,750.)

(5) A.G.I., Casa de Contratación, No. 2875, slave registers from 1584 to 1599. Mendes de Castro was followed by Simon Ferreira Ambrosio in 1592.

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cruzados in 1607 to 9,400 cruzados in 1637, (1) though the records which establish these figures are not perfectly clear.

There were three main clauses in the contract - apart from a minor stipulation that the contractors should discharge charitable obligations to churches and hospitals in Portugal and maintain the clergy in Santiago. Firstly, the lessee was obliged to send at least twelve ships during his three years of control, preferably, four each year. These were to proceed to the African coast via Santiago. Secondly, he had to confirm to the general commercial regulations, which prohibited the sale of certain items (chiefly weapons) to the Africans. Finally, the contract protected the rights of Cape Verde settlers, guaranteeing that they could trade freely on the mainland in their own produce, and that they were able to import enough slaves for their own use. (2)

While, in the early part of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese government had at times considered it necessary to limit the role which the Cape Verdeans played in the trade of the Upper Guinea Coast, (3) when the Atlantic slave trade increased in volume and became a joint Hispano-Portuguese concern, the crown sought to buttress Santiago's position as the entrepôt of all overseas trade with the UpperGuinea Coast. All ships bound

(1) Frédéric Mauro: Le Portugal et l'Atlantique au XVII^e Siècle, 1570-1670, Etude Economique (Paris 1960) p.161
(2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa I - Copy of the CV-Guinea contract signed with Gaspar da Costa, Jan 1637.
(3) See above, Ch. III, p.142.

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to and from the mainland had to stop and pay duties at S_antiago, and the fiscal machinery for the recovery of duties was to be found in that island. On the mainland, the 'factors' were really agents of the holders of the contracts.,(1) and it was only in 1614 that a single official of the crown was appointed to serve on the mainland. (2) In theory, there was no need for trade officials to be stationed at Cacheu and other points on the coast, since S_antiago was a compulsory transit point for all trade to and from the Upper Guinea Coast; but, not surprisingly, the registered vessels seized the opportunity to load on the coast and by-pass S_antiago.

In the early seventeenth century, it can clearly be seen that it was the rule rather than the exception for the registered vessels to flout the commercial statutes. In September 1608, the municipality of Santiago petitioned for an end to the practice of ships proceeding directly from Spain and the C_ana_ries to the Upper Guinea Coast. (3) In June 1615,

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- (1) J.W. Blake: Europeans in West Africa; p.38 and Bib. de Ajuda, Ms.51-VIII-25, fl.87 - Description of Cape Verde and Cacheu by Sabastiã_o Casã_o, 1607.
- (2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I No. 1, Letter of appointment given by Nicolhã_o Castilho, governor of C_ape Verde, to João Tavares de Sousa, who was to become "captain of infantry, factor and receiver of the royal revenues" in Cacheu and the other rivers of Guinea. 29 Dec 1614. (Published in Boletim do Arquivo Historico Colonial, Vol. 1, p.203)
- (3) Bib. de Ajuda Ms. 51-VIII-48, fl.182, Consultas of the Conselho da India, 1603-1609. Petition of Sept. 1608.

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the governor of Cape-Verde - Guinea had cause to repeat the same request.

(1) while, in the following year, he complained that more than 2,000 Negroes had been despatched from Cacheu to the Spanish Indies, but only half of these had been entered in the books of Cahceu, and hardly any had been transhipped via S_antiago. (2) In July 1619, the crown republished a decree of 1608 by which all vessels were to trade with Guinea only through Santiago or suffer penalties. (3) Apparently, the effects of the second publication were as null as the first and those which went before it, because in 1627 the Casa da India was informed that for many years they were defrauded and nothing was accruing to the royal revenues. (4) In March 1634, there was a report that Alvares Gonç^alves, a prominent lançado, had been imprisoned in Cacheu for procuring slaves for export to the detriment of the royal revenues. However, he escaped and was practising his profession as middle-man trader at Joala in the Senegambia. (5)

The complaints of the Cape Verdeans against the violation of their privileges received legislative support, while the counter-claims

- (1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa I - No. 31, Nicolhão Castilho to the Conselho, 2 June 1615.
- (2) Ibid: No. 67, Nicholhão Castilho, 30 June 1616.
- (3) Ibid: No. 45, Treslado of 10 July 1619. (A treslado was a copy of a royal edict, which was transcribed into the books of the local authorities and signed by the notary.)
- (4) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 5, Minute of the Conselho, 1627.
- (5) Ibid: No. 12, Minute of the Conselho, 22 March 1634.

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which were presented, asking for the freeing of the coastal trade from the necessity of proceeding via the Cape Verde islands, met with no sympathy. In June 1610, João Soeiro, the then holder of the contract, petitioned the Conselho da India in a vain attempt to reverse the restriction imposed on the registered ships. (1) In reality, this trader was seeking official sanction for what he was already doing, and failure to obtain it did not deter him. Subsequently, he and his agents were asked to answer charges of breaking the contract and defrauding the royal revenues, (2) but this did not help to preserve the Portuguese monopoly on the Upper Guinea Coast. Here, as one governor of Cape Verde lamented, nothing could be done to stop ships trading on points of the mainland because of the attitude adopted by the resident Europeans and the African chiefs. (3)

Most of this period of intensive slaving, accompanied by inadequate revenue collection, was taken up by the union of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns, which lasted from 1580 to 1640. Some historians - Portuguese scholars in particular - have judged harshly the consequences of the Iberian union on Portuguese imperial fortunes. For them, this was an interregnum of alien rule. "The decline of Portuguese influence and commerce on the Upper Guinea Coast was a simple consequence of the incapacity and disorientation of the Kings of Castille and their representatives in

(1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa I - No. 88, petition of 5 June 1610.

(2) Ibid: No. 22, Minute of the Conselho, 9 Sept 1614.

(3) Ibid: No. 27, Nicolhão de Castilho, 1 Jan 1615.

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Portugal", writes João Barreto. (1) This thesis has at its base the erroneous contention that 1580 was a significant turning point in the pattern of events on the West African coast - the date after which Portugal's possessions became subject to attacks from Spain's European enemies. There was no such sharp change on the Upper Guinea Coast. Throughout the sixteenth century, there had been breaches of the Portuguese monopoly of trade on the West African coast by French, English and Dutch ships; and it was around the middle of the sixteenth century that English voyages to West Africa began in earnest, and if the Upper Guinea Coast was not touched during the well-known voyages of Lok, Wyndham, Towerson etc., it was mainly because navigational conditions induced the ships' captains to make their first landfall at the river Cess on the Malaguetta Coast. (2)

On the Upper Guinea Coast itself there were a number of English voyages in the two decades before 1580. John Hawkins made three trips to the Upper Guinea Coast in 1562, 1564 and 1567; while Francis Drake made his second voyage to those parts in 1578, when he attacked and seized a ship in the harbour of Ribeira Grande, Santiago. (3) Curiously enough, the Portuguese prince, Antonio, Prior of Crato, who was a rival of Philip II, was himself responsible for encouraging commercial ventures on the Upper Guinea Coast in the 1580's, from his place of refuge at the English

(1) J. Barreto: Historia da Guiné, p.85

(2) J.W. Blake: Europeans in West Africa, Vol. 2

(3) A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, 2nd series, Vol. III - No. 35, Relação of the pilot Nuno da Silva, 20 May 1579, p.82.

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court. (1) In so doing, he gave some fictional title of legality to the English ships which Philip II and his Portuguese administration would have regarded as 'interlopers'. In any event, the issue was not fundamentally one of international law. Growing mercantile capitalist states in Europe, such as England, the Dutch provinces, and France, were prepared to challenge the Iberian pretensions to a monopoly of world trade whether or not Spain and Portugal were hanging together. To the extent that there was an increase in the frequency of arrival of Portugal's rivals on the Upper Guinea Coast after 1580, this can scarcely be attributed to the union with Spain.

The Spanish monarchs and their representatives in Portugal were indeed incapable of putting an end to European infringements of the Portuguese monopoly of the commerce of West Africa. In October 1591, the governor of Cape Verde-Guinea wrote to the Conselho da India urging that a fleet should be sent to clear the rival European powers from the Upper Guinea Coast. (2) To this and similar pleas, the response was the proclamation of empty edicts. (3) But, such complaints were nothing new.

(1) J.M. Gray: A History of the Gambia, pp.17,18

(2) A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, 2nd series, Vol. III, No. 80
Memoranda by Bras Soares de Melo, Captain of Cape Verde, 7 Oct 1591.

(Cited by J. Barreto: Historia da Guiné, p.85)

(3) Ibid: No. 83, Royal letter to the Captain of Cape Verde, 18 Oct 1592.

(In this instance, two frigates were promised and may have been despatched, but even this gesture was an empty one, since hundreds of miles of coastline could not be blockaded.)

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In June 1542, to cite one of many examples, Jorge Vas, clerk of Cape Verde, wrote to King D. João III as follows: "At the time when the ships were captured in the island of Foguo, I wrote to Your Highness to tell you how needful it was that the coast should be guarded during the months of February, March, April and up to May, and that the contractors should be given authority to defend the coast, because otherwise Guinea would be lost, and there would be no trade". (1) No doubt, he would have been answered eventually by a royal decree forbidding Portugal's European competitors from sailing in African waters.

Another facet of the charge against the Spanish is that the abuses of the registered ships had created indiscipline and anarchy on the Upper Guinea Coast. (2) In this connection, an important point to recall is that the first registros were issued at Seville in 1562. The Spanish did not impose the system on the Portuguese after the union of the two crowns. On the contrary, the latter had themselves issued licences in Lisbon. Besides, in 1615, after the registro system had fallen into disuse, the Cape Verde administration was pressing for its return, realising that its replacement meant a decline in shipping. (3)

One particularly misleading suggestion from the "anti-Spanish

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- (1) A. Brasio: Op.cit., Vol. II - No.103, Letter from Jorge Vaz to the king 10 June 1542, p.345. See also J.W. Blake: Europeans in West Africa, pp.170-174 (translation of the above letter)
- (2) J. Barreto: Historia da Guiné, pp.82-84 (Supporting a view first expressed by Sena Barcelos.
- (3) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa I - No. 54, Nicolhão Castilho, Dec. 1615.

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school" is that the problem of the lançados and their encouragement of rival Europeans was in any way a product of the period of joint monarchy. (1) In carrying out his function as middleman, the lançado made no distinction with regard to the nationality of those with whom he traded. This was to have been expected. The resident traders seldom started with much capital. They took trade goods on credit from European ships, and, with these, they obtained the slaves and other items from the Africans. Their self-interest lay in trading with as many ships as possible, regardless of whether or not a given ship was considered by the Portuguese authorities as a threat to their monopoly. This was the principal reason why the crown waged its legislative war against the lançados. The legislation failed because there were no means of putting it into operation, and because it cut across the realities of the economic situation. Portuguese prices were very often ^{less} ~~more~~ competitive, and their range of trade goods was limited. The Portuguese from the metropolis and the Cape Verde islands were actually forced to desist from trading in the Senegambia because the lançados facilitated the trade with the English and French, which obviously offered them more profits. As early as 1568, because of this commercial competition, and because of piracy, Portuguese ships no longer thought it worthwhile to attempt trading north of the Gambia river. (2)

(1) Leite de Magalhães: "A Costa de Guiné", in A Restauração e o Imperio Colonial Portugues. (Agência Geral das Colonias, Lisboa 1940).

(2) See above Ch. III, p. 137

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South of the Gambia, the situation in the latter sixteenth century and early seventeenth was somewhat different from that to the north. The lançados did maintain contacts with European ships other than Portuguese and Spanish, especially since they needed to purchase iron from the Dutch, English and French. (1) The Dutch were more prominent, and had a trade house at Cacheu. (2) In Sierra Leone, the European competition was much greater; but, for the most part, the resident traders of Portuguese extraction on the Upper Guinea Coast did not find it necessary to do extensive business with Portugal's rivals. This was due largely to the Hispano-Portuguese partnership. The Spanish were able to provide the capital and the trade goods which the Portuguese lacked, and a ready and profitable market for slaves was provided in the Spanish Indies at a time when plantation slavery had not yet come of age.

As late as 1620, the Englishman, Richard Jobson, was in a position to refuse to engage in the slave trade in the Gambia. "We were a people," he said, "who did not deal in any such commodities, neither did we buy or sell one another, or any that had our owne shapes." (3) This widely quoted statement is as inaccurate as it is pious. The English had been trading in slaves during the sixteenth century with the full sanction and

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné, p.286; and see below, Ch.VIII, p.

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No.27, João Pereira Corte Real to the Conselho, Dec 1641.

(3) R. Jobson: The Golden Trade, p.120.

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participation of their queen. Yet, it does indicate that slaving had not assumed the priority for the English (and the French) in the sixteenth century as it clearly had in the case of the Portuguese. This was a further reason why the Portuguese monopoly of the commerce of the Upper Guinea Coast was not seriously challenged by rival powers in the sixteenth century.

The real challenge to the Portuguese would come, not in the form of voyages by 'interlopers', but when a rival European power or trading company sought to set itself up on the mainland or even to visit those shores on a regular basis. This would have presented no difficulty, because the Portuguese position on the Upper Guinea Coast was extremely weak. Arguin, Gorée, São Jorge de Mina and Luanda were either to the north or to the south of the Upper Guinea Coast, where the only point of Portuguese concentration was Cacheu, a site of negligible strength, which had been fortified on the initiative of the local traders to resist the Africans, not the artillery of European ships. Sierra Leone, to the extreme south of the Cape Verde trading zone, was the most vulnerable area. Its connections with the fiscal centre at Santiago were tenuous indeed. It seems that when Sierra Leone products were not sold to rival European ships, they reached Portugal or the New World, as the case may have been, after being shipped northwards to Cacheu in small coastal vessels.

European ships of all nations called at the Sierra Leone estuary without hindrance, and their captains inscribed their names at the

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watering place of the bay of Sierra Leone. (1) The patent granted by the English crown to Thomas Gregory in 1592, authorising him to trade between the Nunez and the Sherbro for ten years, (2) was a direct affront to the Portuguese, but nothing of consequence spring from this concession. After a single voyage to Sierra Leone, Gregory seems to have lost interest. (3) Before another venture of this sort could be launched, the Portuguese sought to strengthen their precarious hold on Sierra Leone.

The Portuguese crown had made a very early attempt to establish itself in Sierra Leone, with the construction of a fort near the Sierra Leone estuary some time during the reign of D. João II (1481-95). But, this was abandoned and demolished before the reign was over. (4) When interest in Sierra Leone was renewed in the sixteenth century, the idea proposed was that of white colonisation. The initiative, as in so many matters relating to the mainland, came from the Cape Verde settlers. In 1580, the residents of Santiago had elected Alvares de Almada as a delegate to treat with the administration in Lisbon for permission to colonise Sierra Leone. The enthusiasm behind this request can be gauged from the fears expressed by the captain major of Santiago that permission to settle in Sierra Leone would lead to the depopulation of the Cape Verde islands; (5) as it was, the project

(1) E.R. Taylor (Ed.): The Troublesome Voyage of Captain Edward Fenton; and André Dornelas: "Relação sobre a Serra Leoa".

(2) Richard Hakluyt: Voyages, Vol. 3, p.193

(3) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, p.41.

(4) Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, p.80

(5) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.377

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was shelved for more than twenty-five years.

The representations of de Almada must have had some effect - perhaps more so after 1594 when he placed his observations on the Upper Guinea Coast on record. Besides, there were other advocates for the colonisation of Sierra Leone. The Jesuits were in favour of the idea, (1) and in 1606, Bartolemeu André, a Sierra Leone trader, wrote to the crown, describing the prospects for European colonisation in glowing terms. (2) In that same year, Pedro Alvares Pereira, a Councillor of State, was given Sierra Leone as a doação. This grant was said to have been based on that made by D. Sebastião to Pablo Dias de Novais in Angola in 1574. (3) Pedro Alvares undertook to build up a white community on the coast between the river Scarcies and Cape Mount. Emphasis was placed on settling artisans; and, over a period of fourteen years, two forts were built for the protection of the colonists. (4) This plan was to be carried out in conjunction

(1) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 1, p.408

(2) Ibid, Vol. 2, pp.209-211

(3) James Duffy: Portugal in Africa, p.50 (Reference to the grant given to Novais) The comparison was made in what appears to be a memorandum of the Conselho da India, written around 1610. See B.R.A.H., Papeles de Jesuitas, tomo 185, No. 1348.

(4) Luciano Cordeiro: Estabelecimentos e Resgates Portuguezes na Costa Occidental de Africa em 1607, p.12; and Sousa Viterbo: Os Portugueses e o Gêntio", O Instituto, Vol. 43, No. 3, Coimbra 1896.

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with Jesuit missionary work among the Africans, and Father Baltezar Barreira was appointed legal agent for Pedro Alvares. (1)

Barreira carried on his proselytisation; but nothing came of the colonisation scheme after the first ship bringing men, building materials and munitions was ensnared by the French. (2) Within a few years, the crown became anxious to direct the activity itself, with Pedro Alvares being willing to renounce his rights for a compensation. The Hispano-Portuguese Conselho da India outlined an ambitious scheme which referred to settlement, defence, trade, exploration and Christianisation. The main activities were to have been sugar cultivation and the export of slaves. Once the sugar plantations and factories had begun to show a profit, the attempt would then have been made to proceed inland in search of gold, etc. (3) Here again there was plenty of promise, but no performance.

With the failure of the Portuguese attempts to organise the settlement of Sierra Leone, or even to set up forts or factories with officials of the crown, Sierra Leone remained the home of the lançados, who collected slaves, ivory, camwood and wax for export overseas, while doing a flourishing business by sending kola, dyes and slaves to the rivers

(1) A.R.S.I., Lus.74, fl.64, letter from Barreira on 4 March 1607.

(2) An account of this incident was given by Lemos Coelho, who mistakenly referred to Pedro Alvares Pereira as Pedro Alvares Cabral. See Duas Descrições Seiscentistas da Guiné, p.73; and Peter Kup: History of Sierra Leone, p.65.

(3) B.R.A.H., Papeles de Jesuitas, tomo 185, No. 1348.

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further north. It meant, too, that the coast was clear for rival Europeans to make their debut, as soon as they felt so inclined. When they took up the option during the course of the seventeenth century, Portugal did not bother to make even verbal pretensions to Sierra Leone.

It was the Dutch and the English who moved into the vacuum created by Portuguese weakness in the southern portion of the Upper Guinea Coast. A roteiro of the coast of Guinea, prepared in 1635 for the benefit of important Spanish officials, indicated that the English and the Dutch had several trade factories in Sierra Leone, and they had installed themselves comfortably in European-style houses. Between them, the Dutch and the English despatched ten to twelve ships per year, loaded with ivory, camwood, wax, gold and other goods. (1)

In the opening years of the seventeenth century, the Dutch built a fort at Cape Mount, which served to protect the terminus of a substantial gold trade which had its origin in the hinterland of the Malaguetta Coast. They were so well entrenched that they began the cultivation of sugar cane. The king of Sierra Leone, prompted by a Portuguese lançado, counselled his Mane 'brother', the king of Cape Mount, to be very careful, because the Dutch were taking away his land. This warning spurred the king of Cape Mount to expel the Dutch. (2) However, it appears from the account of Manuel Alvares in 1616 that the Dutch were still

(1) Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa, Vol. 2, "Relación para el Rey, Noss Senhor do Bispo de Malaca", 1635.

(2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 2, pp.209-211.

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in that area, (1) if not under the same conditions, and it is significant that such scarce information as has been preserved about conditions around Cape Mount has come mainly from Dutch sources. (2)

In the Sherbro area, the English held sway. Evidence in 1648 indicated that a London firm, Wood and Company, had been trading in the Sherbro region for about twenty-five years. They had obtained a grant from the local king, and were mainly concerned with the export of camwood. (3) Sherbo was one of the two nuclei, around which the English chartered companies trading to West Africa in the mid-seventeenth century were based, as the following recommendation during the Commonwealth regime shows: "the council states their opinion that 20 leagues on each side of the two chief factories, or residences by the sea coast, the fort of Cormantin, and the river Cerberro, near Sierra Leone, may be granted to the present Adventurers". (4) The 'Adventurers' referred to were the Company of Merchants Trading to Guinea.

The Sierra Leone estuary was the scene of both English and Dutch activity. Following upon the voyages made to Sierra Leone in the late sixteenth century, by captains like Hawkins and Drake, the English preserved their interest in this region. They were said to have been particularly favoured by the French, who were friendly with the Temnes to the

(1) Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor"

(2) See above, Ch. II, p. 74

(3) See C. Fyfe: Sierra Leone Inheritance, pp. 59-62.

(4) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, p. 66.

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south. When the Frenchman, Villault, of the French West India Company, visited Sierra Leone in 1666, he had to pay deference to an Englishman, by the name of Abrahams, who for many years lived on one of the islands of the Sierra Leone estuary, and who was "loved and protected" by the Bullom king. Abrahams was serving as factor of the Royal Adventurers, incorporated in 1662, and the Bulloms thought enough of him to effect his ransom for nine hundredweights of ivory, when he was captured by Villault. (1)

The Portuguese trader, Lemos Coelho, wrote in 1669 that the Dutch had two houses made of timber and two turrets for defence at a spot near the confluence of the Port Loko Creek and the Rokelle. (2) Both nations were primarily concerned with the ivory trade, but it was European rather than local trade rivalry which brought them into conflict. The Dutch Admirals, De Ruyter and Meppel carried out a successful attack on Tarso island in 1664, the main English factory being stationed there; (3) and that converted Sierra Leone into a minor theatre of the Anglo-Dutch wars. The rapid decline of Dutch trade in Sierra Leone over the following decade was probably a reflection of external conditions, related to the commitments of the Dutch in Europe and the East Indies.

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- (1) Nicholas de Villault: Relation des Costes d'Afrique, p.62; and Christopher Fyfe: Sierra Leone Inheritance, p.55.
- (2) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições Seiscentistas da Guiné, pp.74,234.
- (3) John Ogilby: Africa, p.376; and Sierra Leone Studies, (Old series) No. 19.

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When the Gambia Adventurers received a lease from the Royal Adventurers in 1672, they had a relatively clear field in Sierra Leone as far as competition from other Europeans was concerned. They traded profitably in Sierra Leone, (1) but the company as a whole was never placed on a sound financial footing and gave way to the Royal African Company in 1678. This latter continued to trade in Sierra Leone until 1728, and in the Gambia until the middle of the eighteenth century.

While in Sierra Leone the English had ousted the Portuguese almost without any opposition, to the north, Portugal had some semblance of control over the Geba - Gambia area, and after the 'Restoration' of 1640, the Portuguese crown fought bitterly against rival European encroachments in the region. Indeed, for a brief while, using Cacheu as a base, the Portuguese mounted something of a commercial counter-attack on the English in Sierra Leone. The events in this northern sector of the Upper Guinea Coast during the period 1640-1700 offer an opportunity to analyse the trade rivalries at greater depth. The question of Free Trade vs Monopoly was never simply one of the confrontation of European powers. On the Upper Guinea Coast, the lançados usually added another dimension to the problem; while, the Africans, as everywhere else on the coast, were always actively involved. How did the issue of Free Trade vs Monopoly fit into the African conception of the partnership with the lançados and visiting European traders? To answer this, one must embark on a fairly close and detailed narrative of events in the main centres of trade on the Upper Guinea Coast in the seventeenth century: namely Cacheu and Bissau.

(1) P.R.O., T70/10 - Edmund Pierce, 4 Aug 1679, fl.53.

FREE TRADE vs MONOPOLYPART II - FREE TRADE TRIUMPHS (CACHEU 1640-1684)

As soon as Portugal reverted to the status of an independent monarchy, steps were taken to assert the national interest on the Upper Guinea Coast - as elsewhere. The national interest was construed as being essentially antagonistic to that of Spain, so that the first measures of the new Portuguese regime aimed at terminating the partnership which had been established between the Upper Guinea Coast and the Spanish Indies. Shortly after his accession as monarch in his own right, D. João IV issued a decree prohibiting Santiago and Cacheu from dealing with Spanish registered vessels unless these deposited securities in Portugal. At the same time, all Spanish vessels in Guinea and Cape Verde ports were to be embargoed. (1) A few Spanish vessels were caught in the net, but this offensive was most ill-advised. The Spanish were capable of providing the varied imports to which Africans had become accustomed, while Portugal was not in that position; and the attempt to impose a monopoly without the ability to supply the market was bound to bring the Portuguese authorities into conflict with the Africans.

The authorities in Portugal, in Santiago and on the Upper Guinea Coast had also to reckon with the opposition of the lançados to any policy which would have limited trade and profits. As middlemen, the lançados had a vested interest in the arrival of as many ships as possible bringing goods at competitive prices. As argued earlier, the lançados had not found it necessary to do extensive business with foreign traders on the

(1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa II - Royal decree of 20 Dec. 1640.

Upper Guinea Coast, precisely because the Spanish were buttressing the Portuguese. As a result, the lançados were firmly pro-Spanish. (1) Then too, there were a number of Spanish citizens who had settled on the Upper Guinea Coast to help organise the export of slaves to the Spanish Indies. (2) Their position in relation to the new stringency of the Portuguese would have been in no doubt.

The residents of Bissau, Guinala, Geba and Cacheu sent affirmations of their fealty to D. João IV in 1641, but Luis de Magalhães, the then captain-major of Cacheu, in an accompanying letter, also took the opportunity to register their grievances. (3) Hardly any ships were calling. The Spanish were temporarily refraining from conducting any commerce because of the embargo, and no Portuguese ships had replaced the Seville registered vessels, so that trade was virtually at a standstill. The Portuguese citizens on the Upper Guinea Coast apologised for sending their congratulations to D. João IV in November 1641, nearly one year after the auspicious event of independence from Spain; but in that time they had seen no Portuguese ship, and, they added, with a fine touch of irony, it would hardly have been becoming to have sent the message in a Spanish ship. The

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 150, this report of 1648 stated that most of the Portuguese residents were on the side of the Spanish patacas, the silver coins of the Americas.

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 27, João Pereira Corte-Real, 23 Dec 1641.

(3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 23, Luis de Magalhães, 30 May 1641.

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Portuguese merchants emphasised that they had so far been obedient to royal provisions, but they wondered whether the price of loyalty was to be starvation. For them this was no flippant abstraction, for famine had actually prevailed upon the coast for two years, between 1639 and 1641, because of locust attacks. (1) Nor did the sale of a limited amount of relief supplies from Cape Verde at black market rates make the Cape Verde authorities any more popular.

It appears that after a brief hiatus in 1641, the Spanish ships began to return along with other European 'interlopers'. At Cacheu, they were welcomed by both the lançados and the Papel chiefs. The Papels of Cacheu, having control of a major port, were deeply involved in the trade with the Europeans. No ships meant no imports, no customs duties, no perquisites. This put the Papels into an ugly mood, because, according to João Pereira Corte-Real, one of the two local advisers to the Conselho Ultramarino, the Papels regarded the European articles as 'necessities'. For this reason, he said, they were desperate enough to threaten to kill the white inhabitants of Cacheu if the captain-major did not allow free trade. (2) This threat was almost certainly a bluff because the chiefs desired the presence of the Europeans, but the Papels could gain their ends by other means. Since its construction by subterfuge in 1589, the fort of Cacheu had been deliberately refused its own water supplies. Water had to

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 27, Paulo Barradas da Silva, 18 Oct 1641; and see above, Ch. IV, p.200

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 27, João Pereira Corte-Real, 23 Dec 1641.

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be obtained from a stream and a fountain some small distance outside the stockade. As soon as a ship was sighted, the Papels encamped around these spots as a guarantee that trade would be permitted. (1)

In one grim respect, the famine of 1639-41 had been useful to the Papels; namely, by decimating the numbers of Negro 'slaves' who were kept by Cacheu merchants, not only for purposes of trade, but also for defence. (2) Besides, the coercion of the captain-major into permitting free trade was not something against which the traders within the stockade were likely to take arms. On the contrary, the Portuguese residents instigated this course of action by the Papel chiefs, so that the captain-major had no option but to disobey the injunctions of his sovereign and permit all comers to trade freely in the port of Cacheu. (3)

The term of office of captain-major Luis de Magalhães was due to expire in May 1642. He did not actually leave until 1644. Whether it was because he had to spend the extra years on the fever-ridden coast, or whether it was because he grew tired of the unequal battle against the lançados and the African chiefs, Magalhães compromised himself with the Spanish. Complaints reached the Conselho from the governor of Cape Verde that when Juna Perez, a Spanish master boatbuilder of Cacheu had indulged in seditious vituperation against the king of Portugal, Magalhães had simply

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- (1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 124, Review of the history of Cacheu presented to the Conselho, 26 Sept. 1670.
 - (2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 23, Luis de Magalhães, 30 May 1641.
 - (3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 27, João Pereira Corte-Real, 23 Dec 1641

jailed him for a few days; and that the captain-major was making no attempt to stop trade which the Spanish slavers were openly carrying on in Bissau, Geba and Cacheu. (1) Furthermore, Magalhães was said to have been co-operating with Alfonso Villa Real, the most experienced Spanish trader in the region. (2) The governor of Cape Verde advised the recall of Magalhães, and when the latter did return to Portugal it was as a prisoner, accused of the crime of lesé majesté. (3)

It had not been the intention of the Conselho to leave Magalhães in office for so long. In 1641, the Conselho Ultramarino had nominated Paulo Barradas da Silva as captain-major of Cacheu, a post in which he had already served twice. (4) However, Da Silva wrote the Conselho intervening on behalf of one of the owners of a Spanish registered ship which had been sequestered, and recommending the resumption of trade to the Spanish Indies. This was hardly calculated to gain confidence in his willingness and ability to enforce the policy of monopoly, and, to make matters worse, there came reports that Da Silva, who was in Santiago at the time, was far too friendly with English traders. (5) As a result, the Conselho turned once more to Gonçalo de Gamboa

(1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa II - governor Serrão da Cunha, 14 Oct 1643
and 4 April 1644

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 36, Minute of the Conselho, 22 Aug 1644

(3) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa II - João Serrao da Cunha, 28 Jan 1645

(4) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 54, Letter patent of 26 Oct 1641

(5) A.H.U., Consultas of the Conselho Ultramarino, Cod.30, fls.107 and 219-23

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de Ayala, who had been nominated in 1638, but for some reason had not taken up the appointment. (1)

Some time late in 1643, the Conselho received word from Jorge Castilho, the second of its two advisers on the Upper Guinea Coast.(2) Castilho made several recommendations. Firstly, he urged that Ayala should be sent out immediately, along with sixty soldiers. Secondly, he returned to stress the need for a proper fort at Cacheu to replace the mangrove stockade which was in existence. (3) He advised that the fort should be built on the site of the fountain, where (apart from the obvious advantage of a water supply) there were stones which could help in the construction. Other building materials and artillery were to be brought out from Portugal. The finances for this scheme could, in his opinion, be met by utilising a sum of money which had long been kept for erecting a cathedral in Santiago, and had never been touched. To this could be added the goods seized from two Spanish ships consequent upon the embargo order of D. João, and the securities deposited in Santiago by a Dutch ship which was given permission to load slaves for Bahia, but carried them to Pernambuco instead. He also felt that Paulo Barradas da

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 22, Letter patent of 16 Aug. 1638.
(2) João Pereira Corte-Real and Jorge Castilho, the two advisers to the Conselho on the Upper Guinea Coast, were both former governors of Cape Verde.
(3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 28, information from Jorge Castilho utilised by the Conselho on the 20th October 1643.

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Silva would be the best person to superintend the building of the fort, because of his experience on the Upper Guinea Coast. The Conselho acted upon these recommendations. The governor of Cape Verde was instructed to make available from the Cape Verde treasury 10,000 cruzados towards the cost of constructing a fort in Cacheu - that being the sum accruing from the several sources mentioned by Castilho. (1) At the same time, Paulo Barradas was placed in charge of the funds, and the stage seemed set for a new era on the Upper Guinea Coast.

The creation of a fort was regarded as an absolute priority for the double purpose of defense against rival Europeans and against neighbouring Africans. This was explicitly stated in the letters of appointment of Da Silva to the post of treasurer of the finances of the fort. (2) The Portuguese had an obsession that they were to be deprived of Cacheu. On one occasion, it was rumoured that the Dutch were planning to take Cacheu. (3) More frequent, however, were the fears expressed about an impending Spanish attack. Reports came from the advisers on the Upper Guinea Coast, from the captain of Cacheu and from the governor of Cape Verde, all preoccupied with the danger from the Spanish. (4) In 1647, the Conselho itself discussed a supposed plot by

(1) C. da Silva Texeira: "Companhia de Cacheu, Rios e Comercio da Guiné (Documentos para a sua Historia)" in Boletim do Arquivo Historico Colonial,

Vol. I, (Lisboa 1950) p.91

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 34, Letter patent of the 30 July 1644.

(3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 58, Gamboa de Ayala, 29 June 1647

(4) E.g., A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 27, Jorge Castilho, 1 July 1642 and No. 52, Gamboa de Ayala, May 1647.

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the Spanish. Four or five frigates were said to have been preparing to sail from Cadiz for the Upper Guinea Coast, where they were to be supported by the Spanish citizens and the disaffected Portuguese lançados. The Spanish monarch had even appointed a provisional captain-major of Cacheu in the person of Manuel da Costa who had relatives who were important traders on the Upper Guinea Coast. (1) Nothing came of the Spanish scare, but that and the ever present Cacheu Papels provided the justification for the proposed construction.

Paulo Barradas da Silva proved an unfortunate choice as treasurer of the funds of the fort. The greater portion of the finances was in the form of goods which had to be disposed of to realise the money and building material required. Da Silva appeared to have been indulging in wholesale speculation, especially with regard to the sale of cotton. Ayala decided to withhold the 6% duty on the goods, which should have been Da Silva's due by way of salary, and force had to be used to recover goods in the latter's possession. (2) Cacheu, therefore, remained largely dependant on the goodwill of the Africans, goodwill which had to be procured by making European manufactures available.

Captain-major Gamboa de Ayala brought new vigor and determination to the job with his arrival late in 1644. He was quick to appreciate that it was essential to win the co-operation of the African rulers. One of his earliest requests was that the king of Portugal should write letters to the important rulers of the area, since this had been done in the time of the

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 60, Minute of the 24 Dec 1647

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 49, Barradas da Silva, 12 Oct 1646

(3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 58, Gamboa de Ayala, 29 June 1647

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Spanish monarchs, and had become part of the protocol, which was necessary for the successful conduct of trade. (1) More important were the supplies of wine, cotton and cruzados, which he requisitioned to woo the neighbouring Papel leaders, namely, the king of Mata and the chief of Mompatas. It would appear that in slack periods of trade, such as the one which would have resulted from the exclusion of Spanish ships from Cacheu, the Papel ruling class could be temporarily mollified by compensatory payments made by the captain-major and residents of Cacheu. Magalhães had already reported in 1641 that he had no option but to increase the 'gifts' to the neighbouring rulers. (2) In the era of official Spanish trade, the tribute which was paid to the Cacheu rulers was very trifling. The king of Mata received one pipe of wine (105 gallons), one barrel of bread, four strings of garlic, a similar quantity of onions, and two boxes of marmalade. The king's lieutenant was given one peruleira of wine (about five and a half gallons); while the chief of Mompatas received half a pipe of wine, along with the same items listed for the king of Mata. (3) This of course would have been supplemented by various irregular payments, once trade was in progress. With Cacheu trade on the decline, Ayala, like Magalhães, agreed to pay the Papel leaders seven and a half pipes of wine,

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I No. 38, Gamboa de Ayala, Oct 1644

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 23, Luis de Magalhães, 30 May 1641.

(3) Documentação Ultramarina Portuguesa (Centro de Estudos Historicos Ultramarino, Lisboa) Vol. 2, MS 3015 of the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid - Roteiro of the coast of Guinea, 1635, prepared for the bishop of Malaga.

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forty hundredweights of cotton, and one hundred and eighty seven cruzados. This subsequently became the standard fixed payment which the two Papel potentates of Cacheu expected, and which the Conselho Ultramarino was prepared to pay. (1)

This diplomatic policy must have worked, because Ayala excluded the Spanish from Cacheu, and yet no violent encounters with the Cacheu Papels were reported. Ayala also claimed to have won over the chief of Baorilla, in spite of lançado competition for the favours of this ruler (2) When Ayala had need to negotiate with the king of Bissau in 1647, he obtained the services of the chief of Baorilla as a go-between. (3) It was at this very juncture, however, that Ayala must have become convinced that the policy of peaceful persuasion was doomed to failure. He had attempted to apprehend two Spanish vessels, which fled to Bissau. There, Ayala wrote, the king of Bissau gave them full protection and all facilities, contrary to his former promises. Ayala suggested that this king should be severely punished, not only for his own lack of good faith, but as an example to others in Guinea. (4) As was to have been expected, there were limits to the extent to which the African rulers could be persuaded against their own best interests to co-operate in a policy of Portuguese monopoly of the commerce of the area. In Cacheu, Portuguese bribes appeared to have had some effect during Ayala's term of office, but elsewhere it

(1) A.H.U. 7 Cabo Verde, caixa IV - Antonio Galvão, 15 April 1665

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 52 Gamboa de Ayala, 25 Feb. 1647

(3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - Ibid

(4) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - Ibid.

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is clear that the African chiefs were availing themselves of the opportunity to trade freely with all-comers.

With the lançados, Ayala followed the same policy of trying to win support if possible. On the occasion on which he asked the Conselho to write personal letters to the Papel rulers, he also asked that they should do the same with regard to the lançados on the Geba and Gambia. This was the first step of a very important policy designed to control the activities of the lançados, by concentrating them in areas where it was not too difficult to keep an eye on them, and the substance of the letters must have been a request that the lançados on the Upper Guinea Coast should live on the Cacheu river. Since Portuguese authority was strongest on the Cacheu, the lançados had been using the rivers both to the north and to the south, especially the Gambia and the Geba, to do business with the Spanish and other European rivals to the Portuguese. The settlement of the Geba was a notorious centre of disobedience. The question of its disobedience had been mooted before in Magalhães' time, but he claimed that the task was beyond him. (1) North of the Cacheu, the traders had set up a line of communications leading across the Casamance to the Gambia by way of Bugundo and Bichangor, two villages in Banhun territory. (2) In fact the majority of the Spanish citizens had removed from Cacheu after the restoration of the Portuguese king and had set themselves up on the Casamance. (3) Again, Magalhães had confessed that he could do nothing although the

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 23, Luis de Magalhães, 30 May 1641

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 58, Gamboa de Ayala, 29 June 1647

(3) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa II - Serrão da Cunha, 14 Oct 1643

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Casamance was quite close to the Cacheu. Ayala, therefore, inherited all these problems.

It was proposed that the Geba settlers should be transferred to Farim on the upper Cacheu, with the obvious advantage to the Portuguese authorities that, with the captain-major controlling the estuary of the river, 'illicit' commerce on the upper reaches of the river would be difficult. Ayala, in return for a nominal annual tax of 8 or 9 slaves, offered the Geba residents a monopoly of the trade of the upper Cacheu to compensate for the loss of their commerce on the Geba. (1) In spite of strong opposition, Ayala scored a success; and he was doubly fortunate that his principal opponent on this measure, the powerful Geba trader, Christovão de Melo Coelho, later became Ayala's most trusted lieutenant. Several years afterwards, the Conselho recognised the services of Christovão Coelho, noting that he had to his credit a successful peace mission to the king of Bissau in 1648, and the arrest of some Portuguese dissidents in Sierra Leone. (2)

The trade outlet to the Gambia presented Ayala with a more difficult problem. In 1646, two frigates were requested to blockade the Gambia estuary. (3) Two ships did arrive in 1648, but it is doubtful whether they achieved any effect, since a blockade would have meant stationing them on

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- (1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 52, Gamboa de Ayala, 25 Feb 1647. (This issue is also discussed in Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, pp.36,49-51)
- (2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 108, Minute of 4 June 1668
- (3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 47, Gamboa de Ayala, 12 Sept. 1646.

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the lookout over a period of time, and Portugal lacked the resources to deploy naval forces on the Upper Guinea Coast. The Portuguese officials on the Upper Guinea Coast continued to keep the Conselho informed of developments in the Gambia. They reported the struggle there in 1650 between the Parliamentarians and the Royalists led by Prince Rupert, (1) they kept a close watch on the activities of the Duke of Courland when he tried to build a fort in the Gambia in 1652, (2) and they were most anxious with regard to the formation of the Company of English Adventurers Trading to the Gambia. (3) Coelho lamented that the exports of the Gambia went to the English, Dutch, French, Courlanders and Spanish; and he urged the building of a fort. (4) But the Conselho seemed to accept that the Gambia had passed out of the effective Portuguese sphere of influence, and even an invitation by the Mandinga kings of Barra and Fogy who controlled the Gambia trade failed to induce the Conselho in 1697 to re-assert its position there. (5)

The traders who remained in Cacheu kept in contact with 'contrabandists' elsewhere, especially in the Gambia. Ayala told the Conselho - perhaps on a note of desperation - "his majesty does not have three loyal

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- (1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa I - No. 108, Minute of 4 June 1668.
 - (2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa II - Mesquita de Castel Branco, 15 June 1652.
 - (3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 90, Minute of 24 Dec 1660
 - (4) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, pp.12;28
 - (5) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 249, Letters from the kings of Fogy and Barra, forwarded by captain major Castanho, 9 Nov 1697.

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subjects here". (1) Like the African chiefs, the lançados were unlikely to accept a monopolist policy which reduced trade, though they did try to remain in good standing with the Portuguese crown if it were possible. In 1647, a number of Portuguese merchants of Cacheu despatched a strong complaint to the Conselho directed against the captain-major. (2) They rejected the accusation that they were traitors, and claimed that Ayala, instead of giving them credit for the useful work that they had always done to preserve the praça of Cacheu, was treating them worse than he treated the Spaniards. He was enforcing absurd customs duties and killing trade. They cited one trader who had made a journey which cost him 80 'Negroes' in taxes. (3) Already, they informed the Conselho, no Portuguese fidalgo would come to Cacheu, and now they had reached the end of their tether, and were demanding the recall of Ayala.

However, the petitioners received little sympathy, and it is clear that the Conselho supported Ayala's "tough line". It was typical of this policy that when in January 1647, three Spanish Capuchins arrived in Cacheu with the intention of conducting missionary work on the Upper Guinea Coast, Ayala branded them as commercial agents of the Spanish and promptly shipped them off to Santiago. He claimed that they arrived on a Spanish vessel trading illegally on the Gambia, and that they had made enquiries after Sebastião Rodrigues, formerly of Cartagena, and at that time resident at

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 58, Gamboa de Ayala, 29 June 1647

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 52, Petition of residents of Cacheu, June 1647

(3) 80 'Negroes' here means the value of 80 prime slaves. (See Below, Ch.VIII, p.416)

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Bichangor. (1) In the same vein, Ayala recommended that eight of the principal merchants should be imprisoned. The Conselho must have given him authority, because these traders are next heard of in 1651, petitioning for their release from gaol in Santiago, where Ayala had sent them for safe-keeping after sequestering their goods. (2) They included Fernão Mesquita, the most powerful trader on the coast, said to have had substantial capital in Spain. (3)

For his services in Cacheu, Ayala was rewarded with governorship of Cape Verde-Guine. (4) Yet, he had after all achieved very little, except to reveal the limits of Portuguese power and authority on the Upper Guinea Coast. Spanish ships may have avoided Cacheu, but they still traded on the Upper Guinea Coast, especially on the Gambia. Besides, as early as 1641, Magalhães reported one Spanish ship which had by-passed Cacheu and went to Sierra Leone,

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- (1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 52, Gamboa de Ayala, 25 Feb 1652. Evidence relating to this incident is to be found in A.P.F. Letters Antichi, Vol. 97, fls. 130, 147-150; Vol. 248, fls. 26-40 and in B.N.M. 3818, Misiones de Capuchinos en el Congo y Cumana, fls. 11-13, 29-33, 63-64. See also Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas en Africa, Vol. 2, pp. 62-67
- (2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa II - Mesquita de Castel Branco, 17 June 1651
- (3) Ayala died in June 1650, only four months after taking up his appointment as governor of Cape Verde. See João Barreto: Historia da Guiné, p. 262.

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so there is a possibility of an increase in the number of slavers who traded directly with Sierra Leone. (1) Most important of all, the volume of trade carried on by the Europeans other than the Spanish was on the increase. In 1644, an English slave ship sailed to the Geba, using three launches to speed up the recovery of its cargo. The governor of Cape Verde wrote that, to the best of his knowledge, this was the first time that an English ship had traded on the Geba. (2) The French too were entering the area south of the Gambia for the first time, and in March 1645, the Conselho protested to the English and French ambassadors in Lisbon against the activity of their nationals on the Upper Guinea Coast. (3) This of course was to no avail. In February 1647, the Conselho examined a memorandum from the Visitor to Guinea, in which he asserted that the French, English and Dutch imported annually more than 12,000 quintals of iron and more than 80,000 cruzados worth of glass, amber various types of cloth, tin, bronze, copper, knives, etc. With this they purchased more than 10,000 hides and pelts, more than 4,000 quintals of wax and ivory, close to 20,000 quintals of camwood, some gold and some ambergris

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 23, Luis de Magalhães, 30 May 1641.

(Lemos Coelho was with his uncle, Christovão de Melo Coelho in 1646, when the latter apprehended a Spanish slave ship off the Baga coast:

Duas Descrições, p.205.)

(2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa II - Serrão da Cunha, 28 Jan 1645.

(3) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa II - Minutê of 24 March 1645.

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apart from slaves. (1) As always, the attempt at monopoly was encouraging the growth of 'contraband' trade.

It was impossible for the Portuguese to overcome growing commercial competition by exchanging diplomatic notes in Lisbon; and it was equally impossible to convince the African rulers and the lançados on the Upper Guinea Coast to adopt a course of action which was contrary to their own economic interests. In the light of these considerations there were always those who advocated brute force, in the form of forts and armed patrols to keep the Europeans at bay and to discipline the Africans and the lançados. (2) This was a dream never to be realised as far as the Portuguese were concerned, and in order for them to survive on that section of the coast they had to evolve some serious commercial policy which was more in accord with reality.

The Conselho was urged in 1641 to send an assurance in the royal name to prevent the Portuguese traders from embarking on any trading opportunities that were offered them. (3) The only practical assurance would have been the substitution of Spanish enterprise by Portuguese. The Portuguese authorities did make some attempt to tackle the problem of a market for the slaves of the Upper Guinea Coast. During the period of joint monarchy

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 51, João de Almeida, 5 Feb 1647; and No. 43, Serrão da Cunha, 15 April 1645.

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 51, João de Almeida, 5 Feb 1647. The word 'quintal' was often used interchangeably with 'hundredweight', but strictly speaking a quintal was 100 lb.

(3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 23, Luis de Magalhães, 30 May 1641.

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it seems that the Portuguese in Lisbon were already dissatisfied that the slaves of the Upper Guinea Coast were destined for the Spanish Americas instead of their own possessions in Brazil. It was with reluctance that the Conselho da Fazenda granted permission in 1635 to a Lisbon trader who wanted to sail for Guinea to procure slaves for the Indies, its reluctance being due to the fact that he was not carrying any slaves to Brazil. (1) The seizure of Luanda by the Dutch in 1641 also made the Upper Guinea Coast trade to Brazil more important as far as the Portuguese were concerned, and at the same time it forced a modification of the procedure by which Upper Guinea Coast slaves destined for Brazil went via Angola. (2) The Conselho for a few years in the early 1640's tended to conceive of the Upper Guinea Coast as an instrument for the preservation of Brazil. It is certainly only within the context of the loss of Luanda and the tremendous importance attached to Brazil that it could have made a statement to the effect that the loss of Cacheu would mean the end of the sugar plantations of Bahia and Rio de Janeiro. (3)

- (1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 17-18, Minute of the Conselho da Fazenda, 18 July 1635.
- (2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 40, 24 Nov 1644. (The numbers of slaves from the Upper Guinea Coast to Brazil were probably small, and must have been collected by ships bound for Angola and Brazil in much the same way as some English ships in the late seventeenth century acquired a few slaves at Sierra Leone before proceeding further south for their main complement. See below, Ch. VI, pp. 370, 371)
- (3) See above, Ch. IV, p. 196.

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Some Upper Guinea Coast slaves probably did go to the Portuguese possessions in Brazil during the period immediately after the restoration. In 1641, Paulo Barradas reported that a ship had just left with 600 slaves for Brazil. (1) Two years later, Fernão Mesquita petitioned to be allowed to carry slaves to Portuguese Brazil. The Conselho not only conceded permission, but was also willing to allow the duties on the slaves to be paid at Cacheu instead of at Santiago, making it unnecessary for ships to be delayed at the latter port. (2) Legal provision to this effect came about in November 1644. As a result, the administrative establishment in Cacheu was statutorily increased in 1644 by the addition of a purveyor, a factor and a notary. (3) All these preparations were made with a view to encouraging trade with the Portuguese possessions in Brazil, and Ayala wrote that Cacheu would be able to supply 2,000 to 3,000 slaves per year to this new destination. (4) However, the possibility of a genuine diversion from the Spanish Indies to Brazil did not materialise; because ships left the Upper Guinea Coast with Bahia or Rio de Janeiro as their ostensible destination and went elsewhere, either to the Spanish Indies, or to the Dutch at Pernambuco. (5) For example, Fernão

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 27, Barradas da Silva, 18 Oct 1641

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 37, Minute of 27 Sept 1644

(3) In fact, this administrative decree was not fully implemented. The captain major of Cacheu was officially designated as "captain and factor", and it was only in 1676 that the two posts were separated.

(4) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 52, Gamboa de Ayala, 25 Feb 1647

(5) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa II - Serrão da Cunha, 4 April 1644.

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Mesquita, who claimed to have been willing to carry slaves to Brazil, was a Spaniard and the leader of the lançados at the time. His imprisonment by Ayala suggests that any shipments made by him might have been diverted to a different destination.

Apart from the fact that the business connection between the Upper Guinea Coast and the Spanish Indies was very strong and the probability of higher prices, Mexico and Cartagena could not have been ousted by Bahia and Rio de Janeiro because of a lack of Portuguese shipping. Magalhães had urged that all ships proceeding from Lisbon to Brazil should call at the Upper Guinea Coast. (1) Whether by design or inability, the Conselho took no heed of this advice. Indeed, it must have been inability, because the Portuguese were constrained to risk licensing Dutch ships to go to Bahia though it was known that the cargo was likely to end up at Pernambuco. It meant, therefore, that the question of substituting Brazil as the principal or exclusive market for the slaves of the Upper Guinea Coast remained largely theoretical.

Within the Portuguese camp, the advocates of trade with the Spanish had not been silent. Some of them, like the lançados, were not of course in good standing with the Conselho, and even officials like Magalhães and da Silva aroused suspicion when they sought the renewal and legalisation of the trade as it had existed prior to 1640. But Corte-Real, a trusted adviser, had expressed the belief as early as December 1641 that permission to trade should be given to the Spanish registered vessels, because then they would at least be liable to the payment of duties. (2) His colleague, Jorge Castilho, suggested

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 23, Luis de Magalhães, 30 May 1641

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 27, Pereira Corte-Real, 23 Dec 1641.

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another expedient. He felt that permission should be given to the English or the Dutch to trade in the area and carry slaves to the Indies. Before they sailed, they would lodge securities in Cacheu, and on their return they would pay duties out of the silver they obtained from the Spanish. (1)

When the Conselho Ultramarino finally decided to reconsider the question of commercial relations with Spain, the decision was based primarily on the need to obtain gold and silver. In December 1645, the Conselho proposed to D. João IV that his subjects in Africa should be free to carry slaves to the Spanish Indies, because there they would receive gold and silver. The American products brought to Europe via Lisbon, such as hides, indigo, ginger, cochineal and dyewoods, paid 23% duty on entry into Lisbon as well as duty when they were re-exported. All this meant supplies of silver and gold which could be used to trade with India and China. In turn, the black cloths from India would find a market in Angola and Guinea. The king saw the wisdom of this global imperialist strategy, and concurred in January 1646. (2) Those persons who wished to ship slaves to Spanish America had to be approved by the Conselho, and were obliged to carry at least one-third of their slave cargo to Brazil.

With the enactment of the above regulations, the old rivalry

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 27, Jorge Castilho, 1 July 1642.

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 40, (The first proposal made along these lines was rejected.) No. 44 is a similar proposal of the 22 Dec 1645 by the Conselho. The king's signature was appended to this document the following January.

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between the Cape Verde islands and the mainland broke out anew. This rivalry had been muted while both parties sought the resumption of Spanish trade. In Santiago, the Spanish trade was looked upon as being virtually indispensable, because the island had a monetary economy based on the influx of Spanish coin. (1) Now they successfully demanded that the resumed Spanish trade should be conducted via Santiago, as was supposed to have been the case during the earlier phase of the trade. But, as happened before, the Upper Guinea Coast traders and the visiting slavers concentrated on by-passing Santiago in practice, while striving to obtain legislative sanction for so doing. In June 1647, the Conselho considered a request by the principal traders in Cacheu seeking the privilege of shipping directly to the Spanish Indies, having the security lodged in Cacheu and the duties paid there (as Castilho had suggested before). The Conselho, however, was of the opinion that Cape Verde could not maintain itself without the mainland, so that the Upper Guinea Coast had to remain "the Guinea of Cape Verde". (2)

By the middle of the seventeenth century, the Portuguese, having reversed the logical commercial pattern of the period before 1640, decided to take a timid step towards re-establishing that same pattern. Events in Santiago show a marked similarity during the 1650's and 1660's to the opening years of the century. Ships from Cartagena started to return. An occasional Spanish vessel tried to do business without seeking the permission of the

(1) A. Lerenos: Subsídios para a Historia da Moeda em Cabo Verde
1640-1940

(2) C. da Silva Texeira: "Companhia de Cacheu" (Op.cit.) p.96.

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Conselho, and in 1652 one such ship had its goods seized. (1) But whether or not they had the consent of the Portuguese Conselho Ultramarino to trade on the Upper Guinea Coast, the slave ships managed to avoid paying duties in Santiago. (2) In 1664, it was lamented that for nearly three years no Spanish ships had traded at Santiago, and complaints about lack of specie substantiated this. (3) However, though this might have been suggestive of a decline in the numbers of Spanish ships on the Upper Guinea Coast, it did not mean that there were no ships calling at the ports of the mainland, but simply that contraband trade was the order of the day.

In 1655, the Visitor to Guinea indicated that there was one Spanish ship which had lodged securities in Santiago as stipulated before trading at Cacheu, but elsewhere trade was being carried on 'illegally'. (4) Early in 1657, a Dutch ship chartered by four Spaniards, arrived at Cacheu with 8,000 bars of iron and a considerable amount of wine and spirits from the Canary Islands. When Portuguese ships turned up shortly afterwards their cargo was a dead loss, partly because the small market could easily be glutted, but also because the Portuguese could not offer the goods such as iron and alcohol which were top priorities. (5) Neither the lançadões nor the Africans intended to

(1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa II - Mesquita de Castel Branco, 15 June 1652
 (2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa II - Mesquita de Castel Branco, 9 Aug 1652.
 (3) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa III - Antonio Galvão, June 1664
 (4) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 76, Minute of 20 Dec 1655
 (5) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa III - Pedro Barreto, 8 May 1657. (For a discussion of iron bars, see below, Ch. VII, pp.430)

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wait upon the arrival of ships under the flag or sanction of Portugal. When a French ship carried 1,000 bars of iron to Bissau in 1661, the lançados did not hesitate in purchasing this cargo - or, more correctly, in accepting it with the intention of exchanging it for slaves at a commission. (1) The Conselho continued seeing the answer to such situations in military terms. Indeed, even with the benefit of hindsight, a modern Portuguese historian still avers that "the real remedy would have been to mobilise naval forces". (2)

The Cacheu merchants were dissatisfied with the legislation of 1647, which still left the trade to Spanish America in trammels as far as they were concerned. With the Spanish slavers presumably in the same frame of mind, the Portuguese officials continued to live in fear of a Spanish attack, which would be welcomed by the disloyal Portuguese subjects on the Upper Guinea Coast. The Conselho considered evidence in December 1649 that two Spaniards of consequence D. Juan Morfeo and D. Francisco de Medina, at the instigation of several residents of the Spanish Indies, and with the approval of the House of Trade in Seville, had decided to take Cacheu and install a garrison of at least 200 soldiers. As a result, the Conselho ordered the despatch of two caravels, each with fifty men and two or three pieces of cannon. These ships were to carry the new captain-major, João Carreiro Fidalgo, along with supplies of arms. Fidalgo arrived in 1650, and, like Ayala, one of his principal tasks was to see the construction of a strong fort at Cacheu - this time with the aid of Gaspar Vogado, vicar of Santiago, who had been appointed treasurer of the funds after

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 95, Fonseca Dornelas, 25 May 1661

(2) C. da Silva Texeira: "Companhia de Cacheu" (Op.cit.) p.98

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the death of Paulo Barradas da Silva in 1647. (1)

Gaspar Vogado complained in June 1656 that the Africans could not be persuaded to work on the building of the fort. All that they turned up for was their 'gifts'. It seemed to have come to him as a great discovery that the Papels were "very self-interested people". (2) Besides, he stated, to build a proper fort it was necessary to get materials from Papel territory and to acquire more land so as to enclose the water supplies. (3) The Papels did not concede any of those things in Vogado's time. They never did. When captain-major Manuel Dias Quatrim arrived in December 1657, he found the praça in a state of dilapidation, with the artillery lacking carriages and embedded in the ground. (4) In 1661, the Papels invested the water supplies and threatened to set fire to the settlement. (5) In other words, the same old themes were being played out.

With the lançados and the Africans holding fast to their free trade position, and with European ships willing to break Portugal's fragile monopoly, the balance between these two positions became to a great extent dependent on the personal character of the captain-major of Cacheu, and the quality of the other lesser officials like the factor and purveyor of Cacheu, and the factors in places like Geba, Bissau, Farim, Zeguichor and Bolor.

(1) C. da Silva Texeira: "Companhia de Cacheu" (Op.cit)pp. 97,98

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 78, Gaspar de Vogado, 24 June 1656

(3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 80, Gaspar de Vogado, 25 June 1656

(4) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 87, Manuel Dias Quatrim, Dec 1657

(5) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa III - Minute of 1 Sept 1655

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A man like Ayala was an outstanding exception, and most of his successors lacked either honesty or resourcefulness or both, as far as the service of the Conselho was concerned. Ayala was rewarded with the captaincy of Cape Verde. His successor, João Careçira Fidalgo retired to prison in Santiago in 1654. Presumably, the sum of 650:080 reis which he remitted as the duty he had collected during his four year term of office was judged inadequate. (1).

Little was said of Fidalgo's immediate successor, Manuel de Paços Figueroa. The next captain-major who projected a clear image was Manuel Dias Quatrim, who served from December 1657 to about the beginning of 1662. He was pre-occupied with the question of the state of fortifications, and with the need to garrison Cacheu. His own suggestion was that exiled couples should be sent out to the Upper Guinea Coast. (2) One may conclude from this that Quatrim was diligent in the service of the Conselho, and, conversely, he appears to have been over-zealous as far as the Africans were concerned. In February 1662, Antonio Fonseca Dornelas arrived to find that relations between the Papels and the captain-major had deteriorated to the point where the Papels were resorting to their old tricks with regard to the water, and the king of Mata was threatening to set fire to the settlement. (3) Quatrim was also involved in hostilities with the Djolas of Bolor. Lemos Coelho reported in 1669 that these Djolas or Baiotes, as that section of the tribe was called,

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- (1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa III - Antonio Galvão, 3 July 1663
 - (2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 89, Manuel Dias Quatrim, 1659.
 - (3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 98, Fonseca Dornelas, 6 March 1662.

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killed all whites upon whom they could lay their hands subsequent to burning of some of their villeges by Quatrim. (1)

After settling the dispute with the Papels, which he found on his arrival, Dornelas embarked on a term of office full of intrigue. Within a short while, reports were reaching the governor of Cape Verde and the Conselho that Dornelas was indulging in peculation and was consorting with interlopers. (2) One specific charge was spelt out in great detail. On the 15th February 1662, a Spanish ship arrived in Cacheu with a cargo of 1,200 iron bars, 200 pipes of wine, a large quantity of silks and twills, some speci and worked silver, and other small items. All that Dornelas entered in the books of Cacheu were 4 bars of iron, 50 pipes of wine, 40 yds of serge, 10 yds of bombasine (a twill) and 1 lb of ribbon. When the ship sailed on the 20th June 1662 it took 700 slaves, but only 170 were recorded and made liable for duty. There were also other charges that three ships were admitted by Dornelas without the permission of the Conselho and he had pocketed the profits. Not content with this, Dornelas allowed his greed to arouse the anger of the Papel rulers. He refused to pay them the agreed annual rent, though he made up his accounts as though he had done so. He also committed the cardinal error of selling four Papel nobles, each for 130 pieces of silver (3) Not surprisingly, a warrant was issued for his arrest in 1664. (4)

(1) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições, p.33

(2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa III - Antonio Galvão, 2 July 1663

(3) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa IV - Antonio Galvão, 15 April 1665. (The nobles were each sold for 130 patacas)

(4) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa III - Antonio Galvão, June 1664.

A few years later, captain Manuel Roiz de Mendonça surpassed Dornelas in his disregard for the official policy of exclusivism. Mendonça avowed frankly that he was in Cacheu to make money, that he could not care less about the royal restrictions, and that if the Turks came to Cacheu he would do business with them. Seven foreign ships were admitted into port by Mendonça in 1670 and 1671. First there was an English ship with 10,000 bars of iron and 30,000 'bars' worth of other items. This should have paid 4,000 cruzados duty, but Mendonça only entered 700 cruzados in the books. The ship sailed with 600 quintals of wax and ivory, less than a quarter of which was recorded. Next came a large English launch which took about 40 quintals of produce. A French launch obtained 50 to 60 quintals of wax and ivory late in 1670. In January 1671, a French ship took 180 slaves. Another French ship carried 500 quintals of wax and ivory; while yet another brought a cargo of specie, linen and utensils and took wax in return. Finally, a Dutch ship was allowed to enter. Mendonça collaborated with two important private traders, Vicente Roiz and Ambrosio Gomes. When it was felt that the regulations should not be flouted too blatantly, these traders made arrangements with the English factory on the Gambia for business to be conducted in launches at a mid-way point off Cape Roxo. In these enterprises, they had Mendonça's full support, and the profits were shared. The Conselho ordered that Mendonça be arrested. (1)

Arresting defaulting captain-majors was hardly any use. A

(1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa IV - Manuel Pacheco, 26 April 1671; and Minute of 1 Sept 1671. (For 'bars', see below, Ch. VII)

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captain was given very little choice when faced with the demands of the lançados and the threats of the Africans. The fundamental reality of the commercial situation on the Upper Guinea Coast had remained the same since 1640; namely, Portuguese inability to compete with other European powers. As can be seen from the above references, the Spanish were no longer the problem. Trade with the Spanish Indies was by no means over, but the English, French and Dutch were now Portugal's chief rivals for the trade of the Upper Guinea Coast. In the first instance, merchants on the Upper Guinea Coast saw the English ships in the role of carriers of slaves to the Spanish Indies. (1) but as early as 1645, an English ship called at Santiago to procure slaves for Barbados. (2) The English were also purchasing mules, donkeys and horses for work on their own plantations. The scope of this line of trade must have been considerable, because in 1671, the Conselho repeated an earlier prohibition against the sale of young livestock from the Cape Verde islands to foreigners. (3) In 1657, the residents of the Cape Verde islands made a plea for trade with English nationals to be freed from restrictions. (4) The Conselho was willing to license the occasional English ship and it did with respect to two ships in 1658, but complete freedom of trade was never legally conceded. In 1663, the Conselho found it necessary to warn

(1) This was suggested by Jorge Castilho in July 1642. See Guiné, caixa I

- No. 27.

(2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa II - Minute of 2 Dec 1645

(3) C. da Silva Texeira: "Companhia de Cacheu" (Op.cit) p.103

(4) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa III - Petition of May 1657.

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the Cape Verde officials that no English ship which called at any of their ports was to receive anything but water. (1)

Apart from sending isolated ships, the English had for some time been attempting to conduct settled trade on the Upper Guinea Coast. The Commonwealth party formed a Guinea Company to trade with the Gambia in 1651, and the following year a trading factory was established on the Bintang. However, Prince Rupert entered the river shortly afterwards and destroyed the undertaking. After the Restoration, Prince Rupert encouraged the formation of a company registered as the Royal Adventurers of England Trading in Africa. This company and the Gambia Adventurers of England, to whom they sublet their monopoly in 1668, were not very successful, but their presence first of all dispelled any pretence that the Portuguese had control of the Gambia, and, secondly, made it much easier for the pretended Portuguese monopoly of commerce south of the Gambia to be broken. Most of the Casamance trade was diverted through the Gambia outlet, Cacheu was in constant contact with the Gambia, (2) and Bissau, which was the emporium for the trade south of the Geba, was a favourite port of call for the ships of these new companies. (3)

There was a succession of French companies from 1664 onwards, all making claims to a monopoly of commerce over most of the West African coast, but invariably concentrating their attention on the Senegal. Like the

(1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa III - Minute of July 1663

(2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa IV - Reports on the activities of captain-major Mendonça in 1671.

(3) For the importance of Bissau, see below, pp. 303 *et seq.*

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English, the French first started trading on the Geba in 1644. (1) After the middle of the century, they became more interested in the slave trade as far as their own possessions were concerned. Thus in January 1665, the governor of Cayenne wrote the governor of Cape Verde attempting to establish regular trade in slaves, cattle and foodstuffs. (2) When the French took Gorée from the Dutch in 1677, their operations took a shift southwards, and they were to be reckoned with as competitors on the Gambia. Setting themselves up at Albreda, near the Gambia, the French also began exploratory moves on the Upper Guinea Coast. In 1682, a Portuguese ship was seized by a French vessel off the Gambia, and carried to Gorée, where the cargo was unloaded and the captain detained. The rest of the crew were set free with the warning that "no one could trade on that part of the coast without permission, because it was part of the dominion of the king of France". (3) A few years later, the officials of the French Company of the Senegal forwarded to the captain-major of Cacheu a copy of their charter which conceded a monopoly of the commerce between Cape Blanc and Sierra Leone. (4) The Portuguese monopoly of trade on the Upper Guinea Coast, long a thing of rags and tatters, was now being challenged in theory also.

The Dutch, too, were still trying to retain a foothold in the Gambia during the second half of the seventeenth century, and at their settlement of Gorée, the Dutch produced the necessary trade goods, especially iron.

- (1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa II - João Serrão da Cunha, 28 Jan 1645
- (2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa IV - La Febre de la Barre to Galvão, 12 Jan 1665
and minute of 31 Aug 1665
- (3) João Barreto: Historia da Guiné, p.111
- (4) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No.166, Antonio de Barros, 24 June 1686.

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The Portuguese at Cacheu were themselves forced to go to Sierra Leone and the Gambia to purchase iron from Portugal's European rivals, (1) with Gorée being the chief resort of the lançado coastal vessels. They were said to carry to this Dutch trading fort some 1500 to 2000 quintals of ivory and wax every year. (2) Those goods which Portugal did supply were more expensive (3) and even the Cape Verde cloths which were the single commodity which the Portuguese could sell advantageously, had dropped in value by the early 1670's. The wax and ivory trade was almost completely captured by the French and the English, (4) and the scarcity of references to slaves being exported from Cacheu suggests that this mainstay of African commerce of that time had also passed out of the hands of the official Portuguese administration. In certain lines of exports, such as kola from Sierra Leone and dyes from the Nunez, which had always been the preserve of the Portuguese, the problem was now one of shipping and capital. "Formerly, fifteen to sixteen ships went to Sierra Leone and to the Nunez every year now only three go to Sierra Leone and two to the Nunez", attested a report in 1674. (5)

Overlooking the ad nauseam repetition of the need for a fort and for naval craft, there was one idea in the air which was proposed by Portuguese interests as a solution for all the difficulties of conducting trade on the

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- (1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No.133, Antonio de Barros Bezerra, Aug 1673
 - (2) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições, p.6
 - (3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No.131, Sebastião Vidigal Roiz, 24 April 1673
 - (4) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No.133, Antonio de Barros Bezerra, Aug 1673
 - (5) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No.131, Sebastião Vidigal Roiz, 24 April 1673.

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Upper Guinea Coast: the creation of a joint-stock company. The idea of a Portuguese joint-stock company trading to West Africa was first mooted as early as 1654 by Duarte Nunez, a Portuguese representative in Hamburg. (1) In 1664, an attempt was made to create such a company to trade at Palmeirinho in the Senegambia backed by two brothers, Lourenço and Manuel Martins. (2) This attempt was short lived, and it was until after 1670 that more serious attention was given to the scheme. The initiative came from certain individuals in Santiago and Cacheu offering to provide the capital for a company which would supply the necessary goods to compete on the Upper Guinea Coast, and which would build a fort within six years. (3) For two or three years this proposal was subjected to bureaucratic scrutiny. Antonio de Barros Bezerra, one of the principals behind the scheme, wrote the Conselho in August 1673, urging that a trading company was the panacea for the ills of Cacheu and the Portuguese trade on the Upper Guinea Coast as a whole. As a result, it appeared that the Conselho was ready to take definite action, but the matter was again deferred, and in January 1675, Manuel Preto Valdes, another trader interested in the scheme, was still appealing for the urgent resolution of the question. (5) The Conselho proceeded to work out the terms on which the company's charter

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 69, Minute of 10 Nov 1654

(2) C. da Silva Texeira: Companhia de Cacheu (Op.cit.) p.110

(3) Ibid: p.109

(4) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No.133, Antonio de Barros Bezerra, Aug 1673.

(5) C. da Silva Texeira: "Companhia de Cacheu" p.119.

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would be granted, and finally in May 1676, the first Company of Cacheu was launched. (1)

The sixteen-clause contract of the Company of Cacheu attended to four main subjects: defence, revenues, the Cape Verde islands and emergencies. The Company was required to reinforce the old stockade, build new walls of brick and lime, dig a trench around the circumference and a tunnel leading out of the fort, and provide artillery. Fifty soldiers were to be enlisted in Portugal and were to be equipped and maintained at the Company's expense during the six year duration of the contract. The fiscal provisions stated that all duties recoverable on the Nunez dye trade, on the Sierra Leone kola trade and from the trade of the river Casamance were to accrue to the Company of Cacheu, with a new impost of three barafulas was to be collected on every slave exported.

(2) One of the primary considerations of the Conselho was that Portuguese goods and Portuguese shipping were to be utilised. The importation of Spanish goods was prohibited, though the Company was free to ship slaves to the Spanish Indies. When it did so it was encouraged to use Portuguese shipping and if it employed Spanish transport half the duties collected on the export of slaves were forfeited by the Company and went instead into the Portuguese treasury. An allowance was also made for the ships of friendly European powers provided they were freighted in Portugal. No duties were payable on goods imported

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 134-137 discuss the contract of the Company of Cacheu

(2) A barafula was worth 200 reis. See below, Ch. VII, p. 400

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into Africa by the Company, and on African produce sent to Portugal only 50% of the normal import duties into Portugal were to be paid. But goods exported to Cape Verde were to pay the full duties into the Cape Verde treasury, and, as far as possible, the rights of the Cape Verde settlers were safeguarded, owing to their powerful lobbying. (1), Cape Verdeans were free to trade in all ports of the Upper Guinea Coast, except that, like the lançados, they were not supposed to do business with Europeans other than Portuguese. The Company of Cacheu was obliged to reserve one-third of its cargo space for goods which the Cape Verde residents wished to transport to and from the mainland. Finally two emergency provisions were attached. In time of war and short shipping, the ships of friendly nations would be allowed to trade freely, while heavy losses at sea would free the company from the obligation to continue paying its expenses for a reasonable period of time.

Within the Company's charter, a captain-major of Cacheu was named on the recommendation of the Company. It was Antonio de Barros Bezerra, himself a principal shareholder, who was selected. He was a trader of 35 year experience on the coast and had already served once as interim captain of Cacheu. (2) It is difficult to trace in any detail how the Company of Cacheu fared during its first four years of operation under Bezerra, and for the two

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 133, the governor of Cape Verde forwarded a memorandum in May 1674, requesting that the rights of the Cape Verde settlers be protected. The Conselho constantly bore this consideration in mind.

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 125, Minute of 16 Oct 1671.

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years which remained of the contract after that. The Conselho had reserved the ultimate authority over Cacheu and all complaints against the Company were to be sent to Portugal, but the routine reports did not reach the Conselho. However, it is quite clear that the Company of Cacheu was not the panacea that it had been represented to be, as far as rescuing the scraps of Portuguese monopoly were concerned. This can be ascertained in relation to the two principal problems of disciplining the Africans and excluding all but Portuguese shipping or shipping authorised by the Conselho.

Bezerra was convinced that nothing short of total conquest of the Africans could provide a sound basis for the conduct of trade on the Upper Guinea Coast, and he proposed to the Conselho since 1673 that such a conquest should be effected. (1) Salvador de Sa e Benavides, the hero of the Portuguese reconquest of Angola and Brazil, (2) was then a member of the Conselho, and, not surprisingly, he advanced suggestions based on his imperial experience. He agreed that conquest of the Africans was necessary if Portuguese authority was to be respected, and to this end he advised that 500 infantry and 200 cavalry should be despatched from the Cape Verde islands to Cacheu. In addition, the area was to be peopled by sending 100 married couples in the first instance, and augmenting this number later. The main function of these settlers was to penetrate inland, because "experience in

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 133, Antonio de Barros Bezerra, Aug 1673

(2) See C.R. Boxer: Salvador de Sa and the Struggle for Brazil and Angola
(London 1952)

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Angola has taught me that only when we hold the interior can we preserve our position". (1) But the same importance was not attached to the Upper Guinea Coast as to Angola, and no such bold steps were attempted.

In July 1679, the Conselho examined a request for help to Bezerra in Cacheu, because of hostilities with the neighbouring Papels. It was argued that the king of Bissau was very friendly with the Portuguese at that time, and that the rulers of Mata and Mompataz were the only ones who had to be dealt with. Indeed, some chiefs had offered to supply men to fight against the Papels of Mata and Mompataz. This was therefore presented as the ideal opportunity for the conquest of the area. (2) Santiago was asked to provide 100 men, 15 horses, 30 carabines and 30 pistols, but the defence of Santiago had also gone to seed, and help on that scale was not forthcoming. The governor of Cape Verde was willing to send 50 men and 4 horses, but before he could intervene, hostilities came to an end, (3) and the conquest of the Papels remained for the distant future.

With respect to commercial affairs, it was also clear that the Company was not powerful enough to cope with the increasing English and French pressure. Like most of the captain-majors before him, Bezerra was accused of financial irregularities and the encouragement of rival European ships. The governor of Cape Verde sent a special magistrate to Cacheu in 1680 to conduct an enquiry into the captaincy of Bezerra and the activities of the Company of

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 135, undated but around 18 June 1674.
(2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa IV - Minute of 12 July 1679
(3) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Minute of the Conselho Sept 1682 and 31 Jan 1685.

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Cacheu. As a result, both Bezerra and his son, João, were arrested. The son apparently remained in gaol in Santiago, (1) while the elder Bezerra was sent to Lisbon, where he was released on a bail of 12,000 cruzados. (2) Within a short time, Bezerra's fortunes revived. After a petition from the residents of the Upper Guinea Coast, (3) he was once more nominated captain of Cacheu and returned there in 1685. (4) The Conselho must presumably have found that the charges laid against Bezerra by the governor of Cape Verde, Manuel da Costa Pessoa, could not be sustained.

It has been suggested that personal rivalry between Bezerra and Pessoa was at the bottom of the allegations. (5) Pessoa had originally been interested in trading on the Upper Guinea Coast, but he was not a party to the Company of Cacheu, and he continued trading to the mainland on his own account. As soon as Bezerra had been removed, Pessoa was said to have begun ruling Cacheu in his own interest, and was taking out twice as many slaves as the Company. (6) Shortly afterwards, Pessoa tried to initiate a new company, so he obviously had a large personal stake in discrediting Bezerra. But there was more to the issue than simple personal rivalry. Pessoa was representing

(1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Minute of the Conselho, Sept 1682 and 31 Jan 1685

(2) João Barreto: Historia da Guiné, p.110

(3) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Ignacio de Franca Barbosa, 20 July 1684.

(4) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Ignacio de Franca Barbosa, 12 Sept 1685

(5) João Barreto: Historia da Guiné, p.110

(6) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Manuel de Sousa Mendonça, Dec 1680.

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the Cape Verde interests in opposition to Bezerra. (1) The Cape Verde interests were not reconciled to the Company of Cacheu, in spite of large concessions embodied in the charter of the Company. They objected most of all to the duty of three barafulas placed on all slaves exported from the Upper Guinea Coast, since this affected the Cape Verde import and re-export trade in slaves. (2) It is significant that when Bezerra was re-appointed captain of Cacheu he immediately pressed for the separation of the mainland from the jurisdiction of Santiago, and he was nearly successful. (3) In short, the conflict between the continental and insular interests was again very much to the fore during the era of Company rule.

Though Pessoa was not a disinterested person, and though Bezerra was approved for a second term by the Conselho, it did not mean that Bezerra did not trade freely with the Europeans. There was scarcely any alternative for the Company of Cacheu than to trade with Portugal's European rivals. As shareholder, Bezerra stood to benefit personally from promoting as much trade as possible. That he was so much beloved by the resident traders that they petitioned for his return further suggests that he was not exactly diligent in carrying out the Conselho's policy of excluding foreign shipping. From an

(1) The residents of Santiago petitioned the Conselho for Pessoa to have a second term of office.

(2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Petition of July 1684

(3) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Minutes of the Conselho, 19 Aug 1686 and 13 Oct 1686. (Bezerra in fact seemed to have won a great deal of autonomy.)

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entirely different source, one gets confirmation of this. In March 1678, agent Thurlow of the Gambia Adventurers wrote an account to his principals in London, stressing that the Cacheu trade was more important than that of the Gambia itself. Haphazard trade was then going on, and Bezerra had just offered to make a contract with Thurlow to trade with the Gambia Adventurers and no one else, if the English company was prepared to pay certain prices. Thurlow judged the prices to be extremely high, and he was not prepared to commit his own company because they were about to go into liquidation. (1)

At the end of 1682, when the Company of Cacheu^A came to an end, the Cacheu and Santiago merchants were more friendly than ever with the English in Gambia. (2) Again, this is substantiated by English records. John Castle, Thurlow's successor, and the first chief factor in the Gambia for the Royal African Company, carried through an agreement with the captain of Cacheu in 1681 and was trading regularly with the Portuguese. (3) When Castle wrote in October 1682, he was able to report that he just had concluded a bargain for 20 tons of wax and ivory, and he was sending a ship across to Cacheu. He complained that on the previous venture he made little profit because the Company of Cacheu took 10% duty on all goods, but they had promised that the ship he was about to send would pay nothing. The captain-major and all officials were resolved to trade with the English until they were recalled, which would be at any moment since the charter of the Company

(1) P.R.O., T70/10 - Thomas Thurlow, 15 March 1678, Fl.1
(2) João Barreto: Historia da Guiné, p.110
(3) P.R.O., T70/10 - John Castle, 2 March 1681, fl.56.

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had come to an end. Besides, he said, the Africans were determined to have trade. (1)

When the idea of a Portuguese joint-stock company was first aired, it had been the fervent wish of the Conselho that such a company would be able to send at least six ships annually to the Upper Guinea Coast. (2) Instead the Company of Cacheu could only muster one. (3) As a result it was reduced almost completely to the role of a trading intermediary. Like the lançados, the Company of Cacheu worked on a system of credits, under which they received a certain amount of goods from a visiting European ship, and hiked off into the sertão on the promise that an agreed number of slaves and quantities of wax, ivory, etc. would be forthcoming. Bad debts could obviously be incurred by this form of credit trade. But John Castle in the Gambia was confident that he could trust the captain of Cacheu with large quantities of trade goods, because the captain's position was precarious in relation to his own superiors. He could not afford to give offence to the English and risk the matter coming to light, because, as Castle put it, when the Portuguese traded with any other Europeans it was "Inquisition business" if they were found out. (4)

The Company of Cacheu concentrated on guarding its position as middleman. Shortly after the Company began operating, the English factor in

(1) P.R.O., T70/16 - John Castle, 14 Oct 1682, fl.44

(2) C. da Silva Texeira: "Companhia de Cacheu", p.99

(3) P.R.O., T70/16 - John Castle, 20 Feb 1683, fl.46.

(4) P.R.O. T70/16 - John Castle, 20 Feb 1683, fl.46.

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Sierra Leone wrote that prices had gone up. (1) It appears that south of the Nunez the Company of Cacheu was organising the lançados to demand more for their services, as was happening simultaneously in the Cacheu-Gambia area. Both in Sierra Leone and in the Gambia, the agents of the English companies were eager to break the stranglehold which the Company of Cacheu was applying by virtue of its role as intermediary in all trade. From the Gambia came the suggestion that a well-equipped launch could visit the rivers and trade directly with the Africans. (2) The shortage of river craft hampered the adoption of this policy. From Sierra Leone came the suggestion that the principal trading establishment should be transferred from the Sierra Leone estuary to a point near to present day Conakry, as this would put them in a better position to negate the effects of the Cacheu Company. (3) This was not judged feasible, and instead attempts were made to set up small factories or trading houses in areas such as the Pongo and Nunez, again with the intention of entering into direct contact with the Africans. The Company of Cacheu followed on aggressive policy of hindering the establishment of such factories (4) Their success must obviously have been based on the co-operation of the

(1) P.R.O., T70/10 - Edmund Pierce, 29 Jan 1681, fl.57

(2) P.R.O., T70/10 Thomas Thurlow, 15 March 1678, fl. 1

(3) P.R.O., T70/1 - Edmund Pierce, 4 Aug 1679, fl.33; and T/70 10 Edmund Pierce, 25 June 1678, fl. 3

(4) P.R.O., T70/10 - Edmund Pierce, 14 June 1680, fl.55; and T70/10 - Thomas Thurlow, 10 June 1679, fl.53.

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lançados who were resident in the given areas. The Company of Cacheu therefore achieved a grip on local distribution, though this was far from the monopoly that the Conselho expected.

In the light of contemporary resort to the joint-stock company as a capital-raising venture, and especially because of its utilisation on the West African Coast by the French, the Dutch and the English, it is not surprising that the Portuguese should have been attracted to the idea. But a company could have been more effective than direct national administration only if it had boasted considerable capital. This the first Company of Cacheu did not. It did not even have the support of financial interests in Portugal, but was the property of a few Guinea traders who were in no position to compete with the companies and traders proceeding from European countries, where capital and trade goods were in greater circulation. Under these circumstances, it could hardly have acted in any other capacity than that of middleman, co-operating with one and all. Instead of monopoly, the Company of Cacheu encouraged free trade.

PART III - "A QUESTION OF SOVEREIGNTY, BISSAU 1683-1701"

It was only in August 1915 that the Portuguese finally 'pacified' the Papels of Bissau, and took complete de facto control over their colony in Guinea. (1) That was the climax to more than two centuries of sporadic conflict between the Portuguese and the Papel inhabitants of the island of Bissau. Curiously enough, Bissau first appeared to the Portuguese in the nature of a haven. De Almada singled out the king of Bissau as the best friend that the Portuguese had on the coast in the late sixteenth century, and his ports were used as refuge when other Europeans attacked Portuguese ships on the nearby seas. (2) Possibly, it was the same king whom Barreira found as an old man, when he visited the island in 1605. In any event, the ruler at that time was also a great friend of the Portuguese. (3) The king, O Equendé, reigning in 1663, was equally friendly, (4) and Coelho was so impressed with the treatment of lançados on Bissau that he urged that the whole population of Cacheu should be transferred there. (5)

A high point in the relations between the Portuguese and the Papels of Bissau was reached in 1680, when the latter sent forces to help the

(1) João Barreto: Historia da Guiné, p.318

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.308

(3) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 1, pp.410,411

(4) André de Faro: "Relação do que obrarão os Religiozos Capuchos em a terra firme de Guine", p.38 in Peregrinação de André de Faro a Terra dos Gentic

(5) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições, p.41

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Portuguese merchants of Cacheu to free themselves from a threat posed by the Papels of ~~Bissau~~ Cacheu. (1) Quite probably, this was linked with the internal struggles for power within the Papel tribe, since the king of Bissau at that time was said to have held sway over the Papels of the adjacent islands and coast. (2)

Bissau was advantageously sited to serve as an entrepôt for trade with the Bijagos, the rivers entering the Geba Channel, and the Ria Grande de Buba; and this was probably the factor which attracted settlers from the Cape Verde islands in the sixteenth century. (3) It was in Bissau that the lançado-grumete community came into greatest prominence, prosecuting the slave trade to the point where they themselves undertook slaving expeditions against neighbouring peoples. (4) Bissau's increasing importance during the seventeenth century can be seen from the serious consideration which the Conselho gave to a proposal that the first Portuguese company on the Upper Guinea Coast should operate from Bissau rather than Cach

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, Caixa II, No. 229, Manuel Cordeira Santos, Oct. 1694.

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 229, Frei Francisco da Guarda, 8 Oct 1694

(3) That there was a sizeable number of Portuguese settlers on the island at the beginning of the seventeenth century can be inferred from Barreira's distress concerning the number of souls who were in danger of perdition on the island because they were without a priest. See Fernão Guerreiro:

Relação Anual, Vol. 1, p.410

(4) Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas en Africa, Vol. 2, p.141

(5) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 134, Consulta of the Conselho Ultramarino
17 Aug 1674.

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Though the second Portuguese trading company on the Upper Guinea Coast, which was formed in 1690, was called the "Company of Cacheu and Cabo Verde", the centre of interest had really shifted to Bissau some years previously, and the Portuguese crown was anxious to consolidate its position there.

The Portuguese Franciscan, Fr. Francisco de Pinhel, arrived in Bissau early in 1687 bearing gifts for the king, Bacompolco. (1) In return, the king of Portugal was offered a man, a woman and a child by the king of Bissau. (2) Over the next six or seven years, favourable reports reached the Conselho concerning Bacompolco's friendship with the Portuguese traders and priests. (3) Yet, during that time, evidence was already forthcoming of the issues which were to cause Papel friendship to change to enmity. Several questions, such as the construction of a fort, the policy towards other European traders, the possibility of conversion to Christianity, and the legal status of the Afro-Portuguese in Bissau were involved. They can all be summed up as "a question of sovereignty".

It should be recalled that during the captaincy of Gamboa de Ayala the king of Bissau had ignored the Portuguese attitude and had welcomed all ships to trade in his ports. Nor was Bacompolco, friendly though he was to the Portuguese, unmindful of the benefits of free trade. The French were

(1) A.H.U. Guiné, caixa II, No. 186 @ Fr. Francisco de Pinhel, 26 March 1687

(2) A.H.U. Guiné, caixa II - No. 187, Verissimo Carvalho da Costa, special commissioner in Cacheu, 2 April 1687.

(3) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V, Verissimo Carvalho da Costa, 17 June 1687

(3) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Bishop of CV, 28 June 1690, and caixa VI - Governor of Cape Verde, 26 April 1694

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particularly anxious to trade with his subjects. During the 1680's, the French had stepped up their activities on the Upper Guinea Coast, especially after June 1685, when the French king renewed the concession of the French company of the Senegal, extending its area of privilege to Sierra Leone. (1) Later that year, the Company sent an official overland from the Gambia to the Cacheu, and then by ship among the offshore islands before returning to Gorée. The official, De la Courbe, negotiated with several rulers, including the king of Bissau. (2) Bacompolco refused the French permission to build a fort, but trading factory was allowed, (3) and Bissau became the centre for French trade south of the Gambia.

The French factor resident in Bissau in 1685-86 was Jean de la Fond, who shipped 1,800 slaves and nearly 400 quintals of wax during that period. He returned in 1689, and acquired 300 slaves in three months; while in the interval (1687-88) another French agent, Bourguignon, despatched

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 166, Antonio de Barros Bezerra, 24 June 1685

He was given a copy of the French charter by the Company's agents on the Upper Guinea Coast.

(2) P. Cultru: Premier Voyage de Sieur de la Courbe fait a la Coste d'Afrique en 1685, pp.211-214,220 for visit to Bissau.

(3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 166, Antonio de Barros Bezerra, 24 June 1685 (Refers to French factory), and No. 187, Verissimo de Carvalho, 2 April 1685 (Refers to failure of French to gain permission for fort.)

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700 slaves in eighteen months. (1) The Conselho Ultramarino was kept informed of these developments not only by its own officials but also by the clerical establishment on the Upper Guinea Coast.

Proselytising had always been a minor sub-theme as far as the Portuguese on the Upper Guinea Coast were concerned. (2) Such missionary activity as was carried on was usually associated with the conduct of trade, but never more blatantly than on the island of Bissau. From 1683 to 1686 three Spanish Capuchins maintained a church in Bissau. They attempted to christianise the Papels, but not to influence their commercial policies in favour of the Portuguese monopoly. Indeed, they must have had good relations with Jean de la Fond of the French Company of the Senegal, because in June 1686 when they wrote a letter to the king of Portugal on the state of Bissau

(1) J. Labat: Nouvelle Relation, Vol. V, p.85

L. Abdoulaye: Un Navire de Commerce sur la Côte Sénégalienne en 1685 (Dakar 1964). This is based on the journal of the French ship, Amité, and indicates clearly that while the French were based in the Senegambia they did a brisk trade with areas south of the Gambia. See pp.17, 19 for arrival at Gorée of de la Font with slaves, and his despatch with iron and other trade goods

(2) For a review of the missionary endeavour on the Upper Guinea Coast, see Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições, pp.75-84. For the Capuchins, see Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas en Africa, Vol. II, and P. Rosco Corrado: "Le Missioni dei Cappuccini sulle coste della Guinea Superiore nel Secolo XVII" - Unpublished thesis in the library of the Propaganda Fide, Rome.

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christianity, they forwarded a supporting testimonial from this French agent.

(1) The parish priest of Cacheu complained to the Conselho that the Spanish missionaries in Bissau did no good to the Portuguese cause, because they did nothing to stop the English and French from trading. He cited, by way of contrast, the actions of the Portuguese priest, who in 1681 went to Bissau from Cacheu, and succeeded in keeping out the English agent, John Booker, as well as preventing the French from obtaining the guides they needed to trade among the Bijago islands. It was imperative, he felt, that only Portuguese priests should be given permission to go to the Upper Guinea Coast, and with this judgment the Conselho was in full agreement. (2) The Spaniards were recalled in 1686, and, the following year, Portuguese Franciscans were sent out. (3)

In the above context, there was nothing incongruous in the title of a memorandum written by the notary of Cacheu in 1694 - "Advice on the best method of introducing the Catholic faith into Bissau and expelling the foreigner". (4) The subject matter of the memorandum was mainly of commercial interest. It pointed out that a French vessel had arrived at Bissau some months before, and in a short while was loaded with 200 quintals

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- (1) Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas en Africa, Vol.2, p. 278, Note II, which refers to A.H.U., Guiné, Caixa II, No. 165.
 - (2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 174, Antonio Moreira, 22 July 1685 and No. 178, Minute of 9 Dec 1686
 - (3) Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas, p.203 (Editor's notes)
 - (4) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 229, Manuel Cordeira Santos, Oct 1694.

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of ivory. Another French ship took 300 slaves in less than two months, while at that very moment, An English ship was loading at Cacheu. Both the Portuguese residents and the Africans facilitated this 'illicit' trade, but basically the Africans were pro-Portuguese, calling them brancos ('whites') as opposed to estrangeiros ('foreigners' or 'strangers') who were Europeans other than Portuguese. Indeed, the Papels of Bissau had a special grudge against the French, because a French frigate had attacked the island some time previously. The two things which would be needed to win the complete favour of the Africans and the resident traders of Portuguese extraction were goods in sufficient quantity and at competitive prices, and at least two more ships to take out exports from Bissau, because, as it was, the residents often had slaves, wax and ivory left on their hands.

On hearing of the activities of the French and the English, the Conselho Ultramarino had decided to temporise, laying their hopes for the future in the construction of a fort on the island of Bissau. (1) The Portuguese missionaries were soon able to report definite progress in this direction. Fr. Francisco da Guarda wrote that Bacompolco had been converted and that Bissau had a much better harbour than Cacheu and other mainland ports. Bacompolco was offering a site for a fort, and he was willing to keep out 'foreigners'. (2) The king of Bissau also wrote the king of Portugal in April 1694, telling of his conversion. He needed more churches, weapons, missionaries, some footstools, a bed, a sun hat and a gown (since

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 171, Minute of 28 Sept. 1686

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 228, Minute of 27 Oct 1694.

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the one brought him by Fr. Francisco de Pinhel in 1687 was worn out); and he was giving eight of his 'sons' to the Bishop of Cape Verde as a guarantee of good faith. (1) Seven of them were to be given a Christian education in S_antiago, while the eldest, Batonto, was sent to Lisbon, where he was made much of, being baptised by a high ecclesiastic, with the king of Portugal as his godfather, and 'Manuel' as his new name. The events reached as far as the Paris Gazette of October and November 1694. (2) Shortly afterwards Bacompolco became the first Christian king of Bissau, and the Conselho gave orders for the building of the fort of Our Lady of Conception on the island. (3)

Hitherto, Bissau had only been semi-officially connected to the Conselho through the intermediary of the missionaries and the bishop of Cape Verde. There was one official, known as a lieutenant-captain, who held a commission from the Portuguese crown, but the post seems to have been purely honorary, being conferred on Barnabé Lopez, an influential Afro-Portuguese, related to the ruling house of Bissau. (4) In 1696, after the decision to establish a praça, Bissau was given the status of a captaincy, though subordinate to the captain-major of Cacheu, and José Pinheiro, former captain of Cacheu, was entrusted with the job of organising Portuguese authority on the island. (5)

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 229, Bacompolco, 26 April 1694

(2) Bertrand - Bocandé. "Guinée Portugaise"

(3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 229, Minute of 21 Dec 1695

(4) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 241, José Pinheiro, 16 June 1696

(5) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 240, Minute of 21 Jan 1696.

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All seemed set for smooth relations between the Bissau Papels and the Portuguese, when fate intervened. Bacompolco died.

Pinheiro arrived in Bissau on May 5th, 1696, to find the island in two hostile camps, with the succession being disputed by two fidalgos, Incinhate and Toroco. Pinheiro wisely refrained from committing himself behind either contestant,⁽¹⁾ though both he and the bishop of Cape Verde, Fr. Victoriano Portuense, favoured Toroco. Fears were entertained that life under Incinhate would not be very pleasant; while, on the other hand, Toroco was already a Christian convert, and it was felt that he would preserve the religio-commercial ascendancy of the Portuguese in Bissau. Nine points of policy for the king of Bissau were detailed by the Bissau ecclesiastics and the bishop of Cape Verde: (i) the king should allow the fort to be built on the chosen site, (ii) he should treat the Christians with love and courtesy, (iii) he should himself be a Christian, and publish a proclamation that whoever wanted to accept the new religion was free to do so, (iv) he must give permission for the removal of all Xinas (images of the traditional religion) from the area settled by Christians, (v) Christians were to be subjected not to local laws but to those of Portugal, (vi) Christians and non-Christians were not to live together, (vii) no non-Christians should inherit the goods of a Christian, (viii) the king should have no commerce with 'foreigners', but should defend the port against them, and (ix) he should favour no Christian who had committed a crime, but should return all fugitives to the captain-

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 241, José Pinheiro, 16 June 1696

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major, who would punish them according to Portuguese law. (1)

Portuguese hopes for the implementation of these provisions lay in Toroco, so the Conselho was given a lengthy justification of Toroco's claims to the throne, in the belief that they would intervene militarily. In the process, the tenets upon which the Papel succession was based were incidentally exposed.

The kingdom of Bissau was inherited by the king's maternal sister's son, or by the nearest male relative descended through the king's maternal grandparents. Toroco's claims were urged to be superior for three reasons. Firstly, he was the maternal brother of Bacompolco, the former king; while Incinhate, though an older relative, was descended through another female line, and did not have a better claim than the mother of Bacompolco and Toroco. Toroco's adherents advanced the following hypothesis: if Toroco's mother had been a man she would have been king, and as it was her rights were transferred directly to her sons. Secondly, it was pointed out that when Bacompolco ascended the throne he did so without any opposition from Incinhate, who had already inherited the goods of his elder brothers, as was the custom. Incinhate's late assertion of a claim was, therefore, just an ambitious act without legal foundation. Thirdly, Antoma, the noble to whom belonged the right of crowning the king, had crowned Toroco, placing in his hands the insignia of the kingdom and on his head the crown of his predecessors. He was thus duly consecrated and took possession

(1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa VI - Jesus Maria Joseph, 24 May 1696 and the bishop of Cape Verde, D. Frei Victoriano Portuense, 15 June 1696.

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of the house of his brother, the former king.

However, the matter did not end there. Apparently, the Beafada king of Guinala had some rights over the throne of Bissau, and it had previously been the custom for every Bissau king, after governing for two or three years, to request a crown from the king of Guinala. Bacompolco had ruled for more than ten years using the crown of his predecessor, but Incinhate decided to ask the king of Guinala for the crown, along with a few forces to see what it was securely placed on his head. The king of Guinala acceded, and Incinhate found himself another noble to perform the actual coronation. Incinhate took control of the main port of Bissau, and placed a boycott on trade with Toroco, ^{gaining the support of} ~~He having on his side~~ Bernabé Lopez and most of the Afro-Portuguese community. Within a short while he was de facto king, and full constitutional sanction seems to have followed. "This only goes to show what little respect they have for law in that kingdom" wrote the Bishop of Cape Verde⁽¹⁾ in a spirit of righteousness which would have been better applied to European monarchical intrigues.

With Incinhate as king, the Portuguese nine-point policy did receive some slight support. Most important of all, the Conselho's plan for a fort was put into operation, and there was a garrison of 30 degredados sent out since 1692. (2) Incinhate also nominally accepted Christianity, entitling him to refer to the Catholic monarch of Portugal as "my brother";

(1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa VI - Bishop of Cape Verde, 15 June 1696

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 218, Minute of 11 Feb 1692; and No. 221,

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while at the same time this Bissau king saw nothing incongruous in protesting to the Catholic king of Portugal that Pinheiro was sacrilegious in his conduct towards the Papel Xinas. (1)

Differences of religious and commercial interests were serious enough, and the chances of an amicable compromise were jeopardised from the inception by the poor personal relations between Incinhate and the bishop of Cape Verde, between Pinheiro and the bishop, and later between Incinhate and the bishop.

In the first place, Incinhate was of the opinion that those of his relatives who had been entrusted to the bishop by Bacompolco were sent to Lisbon as slaves; (2) and in the second place, the bishop's support of Toroco could not have endeared him to Incinhate. For some reason, Pinheiro and the bishop were also at loggerheads. In November 1696, some slaves escaped from the praça of Bissau and fled to Balanta territory. They were pursued by an adjutant, four soldiers and several grumetes; but the party met disaster. Two soldiers were drowned, and the rest captured by the Balantas. The bishop tried to effect a ransom, but to get to Balanta territory he had to cross the island, and on returning there was an attempt on his life, reputedly inspired by both Pinheiro and Incinhate. Incensed at this, the bishop had five Papels seized and sent to Geba, including two relations of the king.

(1) Sena Barcelos: Subsidios para a Historia de Cabo Verde e Guiné, Vol. K Ch. III, pp.110-136 for the whole of the Bissau episode.

(2) Ibid.

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In the early hours of the next morning, the church and living quarters of the priests were burned to the ground. The bishop retired to a house within the praça, and twenty days later this too was burnt. (1)

Several witnesses gave evidence that Pinheiro was deeply implicated in all this, though he attempted to saddle the Papel king with all the blame. This partly accounted for the rift which developed between himself and Incinhate, though the most violent clash was to come over matters of trade. In December 1696, Pinheiro turned away two English ships which arrived at the main port of Bissau. Incinhate despatched his alcalde and three other fidalgos to ask Pinheiro "whether he thought he was the Senhor da Terra, that he had dared to turn away shipping". Pinheiro replied that he was doing his duty as required by the king of Portugal, and that the Papels stood to benefit by the Portuguese presence. But the Papel delegation returned from Incinhate with the same query: "Are you the Senhor da Terra?" This time Pinheiro shouted that they would trade with foreigners only over his dead body. The Papel king took him literally, and he was sentenced to death. The fort was not yet finished, but Pinheiro decided to withstand a siege. He and his small garrison were deprived of food and water, in much the same way as the Papels of Cacheu had held the settlement there at their mercy. Fortunately for the Portuguese at Bissau, help was rapidly forthcoming from Cacheu and Geba, organised by Santos de Vidigal Castanho, the the

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II, No. 244, Pinheiro's version of events; and Cabo Verde, Caixa VI - Affidavits on this matter seen by the Conselho on 4 Feb 1698.

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captain of Cacheu. Castanho brought 92 lançados, 200 grumetes and other Africans, who brought the total force to more than 400. (1) These forces did not need to go into action, since Castanho and Incinhate's nobles came to peaceful terms, incorporating the condition that Pinheiro should be removed **as soon** as possible. (2)

Only four days after Castanho left Bissau, Pinheiro found himself in difficulties again. A Dutch ship arrived, and Pinheiro fired upon it. The praça was surrounded by Incinhate and 400 Papels, who warned that if the captain-major should continue in his contumacy, they would pull down the walls of the fort and cut off the heads of all those inside. Pinheiro was determined to resist, but the priests prevailed upon him to at least wait until the fortifications were completed, if he was going to fight the Papels. (3)

Rodrigo de Fonseca, Pinheiro's successor, wrote the Conselho that Pinheiro had died in the service of his country on the 5th February 1698, after having been imprisoned and beaten up by the king of Bissau. (4) The Conselho was not particularly impressed by this martyrdom. They had specifically urged that the Bissau situation should be handled with caution and prudence, (5) and Pinheiro had displayed none of these qualities.

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 243, José Pinheiro, 7 March 1697; and No. 247, Vidigal Castanho, 24 March 1697

(2) Sena Barcelos: Subsidios, loc.cit.

(3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 245, José Pinheiro, March 1697

(4) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa VI - Minute of 3 Oct 1698

(5) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 229, Minute of 27 Oct 1694.

Rodrigo de Fonseca was much more restrained than his predecessor. He was unable to put an end to free trade, because the Papels let him know that "they had to eat", and that "the land was theirs, and we (the Portuguese) could not call it ours". To offer resistance would have been suicidal, since the garrison had been reduced by mortality to twelve soldiers, the artillery carriages were destroyed by termites, and any altercation would lead to the stoppage of food and water. Fonseca's advice was to allow the other Europeans to trade, collect duty from them, and temporise with the Africans until the Portuguese commanded enough force. To preserve Portuguese dignity in the meanwhile, he had managed to persuade the Bissau king that all European ships should anchor outside the range of the fort's guns, though even this small concession had been costly. Having made these compromises, Fonseca was able to report in March 1699, after nearly one year on the island, that so far he had managed to maintain peaceful relations with the Papels. (1) He was also fortunate in that the king of Guinala had been assassinated, and Incinhate, who had derived his authority from the king of Guinala, was said to have been most chastened by this event. (2)

However, Incinhate had already made his position clear to the Conselho, as far as matters of trade were concerned. After thanking the Portuguese king, D. Pedro, for past favours, and after averring that he had no wish to incur the enmity of any king - least of all "his brother", the king of Portugal - Incinhate proceeded as follows: "On the subject of the

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 266, Rodrigo de Fonseca, 16 March 1699

(2) Sena Barcelos: Subsidios, loc. cit.

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foreigners whom the captain-majors do not wish to allow to do business in this country, Your Majesty should know that I am a poor king, and that my country requires foreign goods, such as iron, alcohol and swords. Your Majesty's Company which is here does not sell me alcohol or iron, nor does it have sufficient goods for my country...nor are the goods of the same quality as those brought by foreigners. Your Majesty should be well aware that the price paid by the foreigners for my slaves suits me better than that of the Company."(1)

It was perhaps with Incinhate's letter in mind that a member of the Conselho noted a few years later that "the Negroes are not so barbarous that they do not know the advantage of having free trade with all nations". (2) Were it not for the jaundiced attitude of which this remark is typical, the Portuguese might have been able to appreciate fully that more than elementary mercantile considerations were at stake. When the Papels asked Pinheiro if he was setting himself up as the Lord of the Land, they reached to the heart of the matter. Pinheiro had rightly insisted that he was in the service of his king, What was at issue, therefore, was a clash of sovereignty.

In the welter of claims and counter-claims which the European nations made among themselves, they found it easy to overlook the basic fact that any claim to sovereignty over any part of Africa immediately introduced ^{to} the potential clash with the African rulers concerned. During the pre-

(1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa VI - Incinhate to the governor of Cape Verde and to the king of Portugal, 25 May 1698.

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, maço I - Minute of 28 Nov 1707.

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colonial era of trade, this question seldom came to a head, because the European powers did not embark on conquest or try to wrest political authority from the African rulers. But an area of overlapping authority did exist. Though Portugal and the other European powers trading to West Africa legislated primarily for their own citizens and functionaries, the action of the law inevitably fell on the Africans also. Thus, when the chiefs and the kings of the Upper Guinea Coast espoused free trade, in opposition to the regulations of the king of Portugal, the question of whose authority and competence it was to determine such matters was never far from the surface. Bissau was no exception, though on that island several facets of the question were fully exposed.

Since Fonseca was much more tactful than Pinheiro, his difficulties with the Papel king were particularly meaningful in revealing the essential points of difference of policy rather than personalities. When Fonseca tried to collect taxes for his own sovereign, he did not find it an easy matter. He reported in April 1699 that Maria Soares, an Afro-Portuguese trader, was en route from Sierra Leone to Bissau with a cargo of kola, and she stopped at Bissau. On being asked to pay duties to the Portuguese she immediately protested to Incinhate, who intervened in her favour. (1) An incident of this sort should have forewarned the Portuguese authorities that it was unlikely that, having granted free trade, they could collect revenues from foreign ships; but this was the plan adopted late in 1699. (2)

(1) A.H.U., caixa II - No. 271, Rodrigo de Fonseca, 23 April 1699

(2) A.H.U., caixa II - No. 279, Minute of Nov 1699.

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Predictably, Fonseca had a tale of woe to tell in his subsequent correspondence. Two Dutch ships had not paid the 10% duty required by the Portuguese, and when Fonseca tried to stop them they had recourse to the king of Bissau. Incinhate ordered that his bombalon be sounded, saying that whoever wanted to sell could do so without fear, because he was the Senhor da Terra who could order as he pleased. (1)

When the king of Portugal styled himself Senhor da Guiné, what then did it mean? The Conselho had made specific reference to this issue in a memorandum on Cacheu in 1670 - "Your Majesty carries the title Senhor da Guiné, though having out of all that coast only a small parcel of land; and what is worse, Your Majesty conserves that at the cost of your reputation,... because you pay a tribute or feu-duty to the Negro king." (2) The Conselho was, therefore, regarding payments made to African rulers on the Upper Guinea Coast as an affront to and a derogation from Portuguese sovereignty. Their prescribed remedy for this situation was a fort.

As with the lançados in the sixteenth century, so with the Portuguese crown in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries - the most crucial issue was always that of fort-building. The commercial regulations made by the Portuguese crown could normally be ignored by the African rulers, but the construction of a fort provided a physical sanction. The Papel rulers recognised this as a threat to their authority, but (apart from the instances

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, maco I - Rodrigo de Fonseca, letter seen by the Conselho on 26 March 1701

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 124, 26 Sept 1670.

FREE TRADE vs MONOPOLY

of building by subterfuge) the rulers were often prepared to grant permission as a calculated risk, and in the light of their own conception that land and the rights that went with it could not be permanently alienated. (1)

Consequently, one finds in the fort-building episodes of Bissau and Cacheu a phase of seemingly contradictory behaviour on the part of the Papel leaders, first conceded the Portuguese the right to construct fortifications on a given site, and then did their best to make this concession invalid.

One very practical problem in building a fort was the shortage of labour. The Papels of Bissau refused to provide labour and raw materials to facilitate the Portuguese, and sometimes went so far as to withhold the water which went into the building operations. (2) This was not the first experience of its kind which the Portuguese had had on the Upper Guinea Coast, for in Cacheu in the 1650's work on the much discussed fort had been held up because of the negative attitude of the Papels, who were not prepared to supply labour even for wages. (3) Their motive could scarcely have been any different from the one advanced for the behaviour of the Bissau Papels: namely, "because they did not want to lose their freedom". (4) Barbot was well informed about this situation in Bissau, and gave an independent judgement which confirmed the official Portuguese reports. He noted that in 1686 the Portuguese had

(1) This question was much more important on the Gold Coast; where there was a network of European trading forts.

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 269, Rodrigo de Fonseca.

(3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 78, Gaspar Vógado, 24 June 1656.

(4) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 269, Rodrigo de Fonseca, 28 Nov 1699.

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obtained permission to construct a fort by offering the Papel king a considerable present. However, after two pieces of cannon had been mounted, the reaction set in, "for the Blacks in general are not pleased with this grant made to the Portuguese, which excludes all other Europeans from trading with their nation; and it is likely things will not continue so long, those Blacks being great sticklers for liberty". (1)

As predicted, things did not continue so for very long. The Conselho itself came to realise that the fort of Bissau was not serving its purpose of protecting their monopoly, and thus represented unnecessary expense. The members of the Conselho were advised that even when functioning perfectly, the fort of Bissau could not stop 'contraband' trade from being carried on at other points which were relatively close. In fact, this argument would have applied to any other site on the Upper Guinea Coast, with its many-channelled estuaries, rias, bays and off-shore islands. The Conselho did not draw the conclusion that all fortifications were likely to prove futile, but when they reviewed the position of the Portuguese crown on the Upper Guinea Coast at the end of the seventeenth century, they decided that it was better to concentrate what limited funds they had for such purposes on the fort of Cacheu. (2) The fortress of Our Lady of Conception on the island of Bissau was abandoned in 1701, so that when Incinhate died later that year, the sovereignty of the Bissau monarch was untrammelled by European cannon, and his ports were open to the trade of all nations.

(1) John Barbot: The Coasts of North and South Guinea, p.87

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 271, Minute of Nov 1699.

A HISTORY OF THE UPPER GUINEA COAST, 1545-1800

CHAPTER SIX

PRODUCTS OF THE FOREST

Products of the Forest

Resident lancados, European governments, joint-stock companies and individual ships from Europe were all concerned primarily with the Atlantic slave trade; and it was in the interests of this trade that the Portuguese strove so desperately to maintain a monopoly of the commerce of the Upper Guinea Coast. But, although the Atlantic slave trade so obviously dominated Afro-European relations in the pre-colonial period, slaves were never the exclusive export of West Africa. The slave trader, Captain Canot, made a comment on this subject. He wrote: "As it may be interesting to learn the nature of trade on this coast - which is commonly misunderstood as consisting in slaves alone - I thought it well to set down the inventory I made out of the daravan's stock.

3,500 hides	\$ 1,750
19 large and prime teeth of ivory	1,560
gold	2,500
600 pounds small ivory	320
15 tons rice	600
40 slaves	1,600
36 bullocks	360
sheep, goats, butter, vegetables	100
900 pounds beeswax	95
	<hr/>
	\$ 8,885 "
	<hr/>

Products of the Forest

The above list relates to a Fula trading caravan proceeding from the Futa Djalou in the early nineteenth century. (1) It by no means includes all of the varied products of the forests of the Upper Guinea Coast, which, in greater or lesser quantities, were exported to Europe. A comprehensive list of those exports would comprise gold, ivory, beeswax, camwood, malaguetta pepper, hides and pelts, civet, ambergris, indigo, orchilla (a violet dye), cotton, gums, resin, soap and raphia mats; apart from palm oil, rice, millet and citrus fruit, which served as provisions for slaves and sailors. Several of these forest products provided valuable supplements and even alternatives to the trade in slaves, and thus clearly warrant consideration in their own right.

It is convenient to begin this discussion by singling out gold, because this metal was the principal factor motivating the navigational achievements of the Iberians in Africa. Though both the Senegambian shores and the Upper Guinea Coast proved disappointments as far as extensive gold supplies were concerned, the possibility of finding gold was a great incentive, seldom absent from the minds of the Europeans on the Upper Guinea Coast, as elsewhere. Because of the xenophobia of the Balantas, and because of the fact that this tribe paid its tribute to the king of Casanga in gold,

(1) Captain Canot: Adventures of an African Slaver (London 1928) pp. 89, 90.

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the Portuguese were misled into thinking that gold mines were located in Balanta territory. In 1695, the Portuguese of Bissau, along with three hundred Papels, invaded Balanta territory, partly motivated by the expectation of gold. This foray proved a costly failure.(1) Apart from this instance, the Portuguese realised that most of the gold in circulation on the Upper ^{Gambia} ~~Gold~~ Coast had to be imported from the deep hinterland, though there were small deposits of alluvial gold on the coast. The English and French were not as well informed, and continued to believe for a long while that there was an El Dorado on the river Gambia. There was some substance for this belief, but the gold mines of Galam and Boundou were a long way from the coast, as the French were to discover.(n)

When the Portuguese reached the Gambia in the middle of the fifteenth century, they were able to purchase a small amount of gold at the estuary.(2) However, they had to proceed to the furthest navigable point on the river before they came into contact with the interior gold trade. (3) The terminus of this trade was in the district of Cantor. There the Mandinga merchants brought their gold to exchange for cloths, hats, beads and, above all,

(n) P. Labarthe: Voyage au Sénégal, pp. 56-60.

(1) J. Labat: Nouvelle Relation, Vo.IV, pp. 191-193.

(2) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p. 34.

(3) Ibid: p.36.

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This was obviously the same expertise in measurement as displayed on the Gold Coast, and the comparison with this latter region is apt for another reason. From Pereira's account, it would appear that the Mande merchants on the Gambia came from the hinterland of the Gold Coast. (1) It was a long and dangerous journey, requiring the protection of well-armed soldiers, (2) and such difficult conditions would explain why the Gambia never became an outlet comparable to the Gold Coast.

South of the Gambia, it was even more difficult to make contact with the Western Sudan, since the rivers did not penetrate far enough. Supplies on the Gambia represented a trickle from the Gambia; while in Sierra Leone the gold arrived on the coast, in the sixteenth century, by way of the Susus and Fulas.(3) Although the traders on the coast believed that the mineral came from within Fula domains, later sources show that the Fulas too were a link in the chain of trade which started in the Western Sudan. The merchants of Sangara, east of the Niger, purchased gold at Segou and sold it to the

(1) Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, p. 64.

(2) Alvares De Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p. 273. (See also the discussion of the Manes, Ch. II, p.83.)

(3) Alvares De Almada "Rios de Guiné", pp. 353, 355.

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copper bracelets. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, when war did not interrupt this trade, the Portuguese could count on carrying away some "5,000 to 6,000 doubloons of good gold" every year, according to Pacheco Pereira. (1) This commerce continued throughout the sixteenth century. In 1551, the captain of Santiago acknowledged receipt of fifty-seven marks, three and two-eighths ounces, and twenty-four grains of gold brought from Cantor; (2) while another report of 1581 indicated that the Portuguese obtained on an average 10,000 to 12,000 cruzados of gold from the Gambia every year. (3)

What the Portuguese encountered on the middle Gambia (and perhaps stimulated) was a branch of the well-developed Sudanese network. The Cantor markets were dominated by long-distance merchants, who were professional gold dealers. De Almada was impressed that "these merchants are extremely skilful, in weighing and in every other respect; they carry very delicate scales inlaid with silver".(4)

(1) Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, pp. 62, 64.

(2) A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 128, Letter of João Afonso Cedofeita to the king, 20 Nov., 1551, p. 422.

(3) A. Brasio: Op.cit., Vol. III - No. 42, Relação of Francisco de Andrade, 26 Jan., 1582, p.104. (The most worthwhile comparison between these three estimates of gold supplies from the Gambia would be on the basis of weight, but I have been unable to ascertain the weight of the gold doubloon and cruzado for the relevant dates.) For a rough idea of the value and fluctuating gold content of the Portuguese cruzado, see Frédéric Mauro: Le Portugal et l'Atlantique, pp.413,414.

(4) Alvares De Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.276.

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Korankos and Fulas in the hinterland of Sierre Leone.(1) Such tenuous connections with the source of supply did not encourage any substantial trade.

According to Pacheco Pereira, the Temnes called gold tebongo, (2) a word which actually means 'jewelry'. (3) Up to the beginning of the seventeenth century, most of the gold purchased by the Portuguese in Sierre Leone was in the form of rings and bracelets,(4) and this could mean that this was the form in which gold reached the coast from the interior, after passing through the hands of Mande craftsmen.(5) But, whether the jewelry was fashioned on the coast or in the interior, the fact that so high a percentage of gold on the coast was in the form of jewelry further reduced the prospects, as far as the Europeans were concerned, especially when certain social customs are taken into account. The Sapes hoarded gold ornaments to bury with the dead. This practice led the Mande invaders to disturb the Sape graves,(6) but in turn the

(1) A.G. Laing: Travels in the Timmanee, Kooranko and Soolima Countries, pp. 356, 372.

(2) Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, p. 82.

(3) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, p. 6.

(4) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vo. 2, p. 211.

(5) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, p. 7.

(6) Hakluyt Society, N^o. LVII, The Hawkins Voyages, p. 17; ~~Alvares~~ Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp. 353, 362.

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Manes too adopted the same burial customs. In 1606, a Portuguese trader lamented that far more gold would have been available for sale in Sierre Leone if the kings and nobles had not considered it such a high honour to be interred with this precious metal. The lançados were frustrated by not generally knowing the burial places,(1) and even when they did, fear of the consequences kept them from desecrating the graves.(2)

It is at first sight somewhat surprising that, in spite of their constant verbal preoccupation with gold, the Portuguese did not exploit the gold trade to its full potential on the Upper Guinea Coast. De Almada attested that he was himself present in 1578 at Cantor when, at the conclusion of the trade, an immense quantity of gold was not taken up by the Portuguese because they had brought insufficient merchandise.(3) A report from Santiago in 1581 also claimed that the year's return of gold from the Gambia was below the usual quantity, because the small Portuguese trading vessel failed to carry enough goods.(4) De Almada went on to add that since 1586 no Portuguese ships at all had travelled up the Gambia to the annual gold

(1) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol.2, p. 211.

(2) A.R.S.I., Lus.74 (Epistolae Lusitaniae 1599-1655) Fls. 68-73, Baltezar Barreira to the P. Provincial, 9 Sept., 1607.

(3) Alvares De Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p. 279.

(4) A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, Vol.III, p.104.

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fair, and the trade had passed into the hands of the Moors, who offered items such as glazed pottery and red cloth. (1)

The explanation is that the Portuguese did not find the Gambia gold trade profitable. During the course of the seventeenth century, they continued to take some interest in it, (2) but Lemos Coelho, who personally participated in that activity for three years, did not give a favourable account. Only six to seven pounds of gold were purchased every year, because it was far more profitable to use one's trade goods to purchase slaves, ivory and cloth. (3) The French traders learnt the same lesson before the end of the seventeenth century, finding that gold in the Gambia was almost as dear as in France. (4)

Similarly, at Cape Mount the Portuguese did not take a great interest in the gold trade. In the early sixteenth century, the Portuguese knew that the Bulloms were exchanging salt for gold from the Coyas in the near hinterland of Cape Mount. (5) Yet it was the Dutch who constructed the first fort at this point on the coast. One Portuguese lançado was incredulous when told that the Dutch were netting

(1) Alvares De Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p. 279.

(2) R. Jobson: The Golden Trade of the Moors, p. 33.

(3) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, pp.23,24.

(4) P. Cultru: Premier Voyage de Sieur de la Courbe fait a la Coste Occidentale d'Afrique en 1635, p.194.

(5) Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, p. 82.

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huge quantities of gold from the area between Mina and Cape Mount. This lançado knew that gold was not available on the Malaguetta Coast in any appreciable amounts, but the explanation of his "trustworthy Dutchman" was that the Africans knew that the Dutch wanted gold, and were thus encouraged to seek and guard it for sale.(1)

Since European goods constituted such an attraction to the peoples of the coast, it is obvious that they could have been prevailed upon to increase the amount of gold made available for sale, if the European merchants had seriously pressed the issue. But the latter were interested in discovering gold mines or in regular and substantial supplies of this commodity, and they did not consider the pickings of the Upper Guinea Coast as worth their while. As the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries wore on, one seldom heard of the acquisition of gold direct from the littoral peoples. As Barbot was aware, the gold purchased in Sierre Leone in the late seventeenth century was brought from "Mandinga and other remote countries, towards the Niger".(2) The trade thus became tied to the arrival of Mande and Fula merchants from the interior; and though, as in Canot's inventory, gold ranked high in value, it should still be considered as incidental to the slave coffle, which was wending its way towards the coast.

Ivory, too, was a product which the Europeans were unlikely to overlook once it was readily available. The Upper Guinea Coast,

(1) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol.2, p.211. After the state of Liberia had been established, some gold was known to be obtainable from the native Africans, both in the interior and on the coast. See G.U. Brown, An Economic History of Liberia.

(2) J.Barbot: Description of North and South Guinea, p.102

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though a comparatively poor African region was far as fauna is concerned, (1) was never lacking in elephants, even on the islands fringing the shore. Along the Gambia, it was a common sight to see herds of these animals on the banks.(2) The reputation of the Gambia was shared by the Nunez (3) - not surprisingly, since the belt of highland stretching inland from Cape Verga is a more suitable savannah habitat than the thick coastal forests. The Cocolis and the Landumas of the upper Nunez were particularly well known for their ivory, and coastal lore had it that these tribes used ivory tusks for delimiting the boundaries of their fields.(4)

English ships calling at Sierre Leone in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries usually availed themselves of the opportunity to pick up the occasional tusk. In 1582, Captain Fenton acquired a monkey and a large tusk for one and a half yards of broad red cloth, two ells of coarse narrow linen cloth and ten pounds of gunpowder.(5) Several years later, Captain Keeling called at Sierre Leone in the same

(1) J. Machat: Les Rivières du Sud et le Fouta-Diallon, p. 202.

(2) Alvares De Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p. 272.

(3) Ibid: p. 340. Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, p. 74.

(4) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guine, p. 49.

(5) E.G.R. Taylor: The Troublesome Voyage of Captain William Fenton, Hakluyt Society, No. CXIII, p. 108.

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way for wood and water, and bought a tusk of sixty-eight pounds for five yards of blue calico and a few bars of iron.(1)

Long before the above incidents, the Portuguese of Cape Verde and the mainland had put the ivory trade on a much more regular basis, and at the beginning of the sixteenth century, they were exporting considerable quantities of ivory from the Upper Guinea Coast.(2) In a brief statement on the finances of Santiago in November 1551, prominence was given to the revenues derived from handling ivory. At the time, eighty quintals were in stock on the island, and further supplies from Sierra Leone were anxiously being awaited.(3) Yet it was after the Dutch and English had established their factories in Sierra Leone that ivory was most intensively exploited.

The European factories on the Port Loko Creek and the Rokelle were concerned primarily with the export of ivory. When the Dutch admiral, De Ruiter, took Tarso Island from the English in 1664, he found some four hundred to five hundred 'teeth', as the Europeans always called the tusks.(4) The previous year, Tarso had been visited by a Portuguese missionary, André de Faro, who was struck by the scale of operations. He wrote: "The thing which caused me greatest astonishment was to witness with my own eyes the arrival of an English ship to load

(1) Purchas his Pilgrimes, Vol.II, Ch VI, p. 506.

(2) Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, p. 90.

(3) A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, 2nd ser., Vol.II, No.123, p.422.

(4) John Ogilby: Africa, p. 376.

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a cargo of ivory, at the factory which they have in the Sierra. Before my eyes, it loaded 28,000 teeth, many of which weighed four arrobas, some weighed six arrobas, and there were numerous smaller ones. Every year, a ship comes to take a similar cargo. Judge from this how many elephants are killed here every year, because each one has only two teeth, and thus 14,000 elephants must be slain annually. This does not take account of the ivory that is purchased in the other rivers of Guinea, where there are similar factories, which despatch other ships; and the Dutch are also buyers in the ports of these rivers. There are, therefore, more elephants in Guinea than there are cattle in the whole of Europe."(1)

André de Faro must have allowed his imagination and his arithmetic to run wild; but the intensity of operations was undeniable, being reflected some years later in the depletion of the elephant population at Cape Mount. Barbot wrote that it was formerly a great centre for ivory, but that the trade had fallen off considerably due to exhaustion of supplies.(2) Perhaps the same may have been partially true of the rivers leading into the Sierra Leone channel, because the factor of the Royal African Company on Bence Island informed London in June 1678 that no ivory came from upriver, and to the best of his

(1) André de Faro: Peregrinação, pp. 85, 86. 1 arroba = 32 pounds.

(2) J. Barbot: Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea, p.109.

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knowledge that had been the state of affairs for several years previously.(1) However, since the Sierra Leone factories had previously received most of its ivory supplies from the Susus and Limbas of the interior, (2) the cessation could have been due to disturbed conditions in the interior.(3) As far as the more northerly sections of the Upper Guinea Coast were concerned, Labat reported that the elephants on the island of Bulama were indiscriminately slaughtered. He thought, however, that around the Geba, where five tons of ivory per year were extracted, there was no apparent impact on the elephant herds.(4)

In the 1660s the English began concentrating on the rivers north of the Sierra Leone estuary, with the Nunez and Pongo being the most favoured. The Gambia factories were at first responsible for the Nunez trade. They set up a factory there in 1664, from which they took out 300 quintals of ivory every year.(5) After 1681, Bence Island and James Island (the Gambia headquarters) duplicated efforts in the Nunez, until a directive to the Gambia factory arrived from

(1) P.R.O., T70/10 - Edmund Pierce, 25 June, 1678. fl.3.

(2) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, p. 74.

(3) See below, Ch.IX, p.509

(4) J. Labat: Nouvelle Relation, Vol. V, pp.151,152,165.

(5) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, p.59.

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London in 1636, stipulating that Bence Island should conduct the Nunez trade.(1)

There was also a Bence Island outpost at Tassily, obtaining its ivory from the Pongo. It will be recalled that the first Company of Cacheu proved a strong competitor to the English on a local level,(2) and the collection of ivory was one of the major issues in dispute.

Unlike ivory, beeswax (to take another item on Canot's list) is not a well-known supplementary to slaving in West Africa. Neither Pacheco Pereira nor Valentim Fernandes included wax as one of the exports of the Upper Guinea Coast at the beginning of the sixteenth century; but a century later, each of the three or more registered ships which left Cacheu every year carried over 400 quintals of wax. With three quintals valued as the equivalent of one slave, this was obviously a lucrative sideline.(3)

Beeswax was obtainable at most points between the Gambia and Sierra Leone, apart from other sections of the West African coast. Most of the accounts of the commerce in the rivers of Sierra Leone in the seventeenth century show that some wax was exported; but it was procured in greatest quantities from the Geba and from the Casamance district, whose product was said to have been of the highest quality.

(1) P.R.O., T70/50 - To Alexander Cleeve, 6 June, 1636. fl.13.

(2) See above, Ch.V, p. 301

(3) Sena Barcelos: Subsidios para a Historia de Cabo Verde e Guiné, Part I, Ch.VII, p.221.

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During the era of the registered ships, the Casamance alone accounted for 500 quintals of the total exports.(1)

Many of the issues generated by the Atlantic slave trade were played out in a lower key with respect to wax and ivory. The Portuguese were anxious that European rivals should not breach their monopoly, whether or not slaves were involved. Indeed, since the European interest in slaves from the Upper Guinea Coast was not fully aroused until the second half of the seventeenth century (and then only in the Gambia-Geba area), their penetration into the commerce of the area was initially on the basis of products such as ivory and wax. Furthermore, such products did not necessarily lose all of their appeal as the slave trade intensified. From the time of Captain-Major Gamboa de Ayala to the formation of the first Company of Cacheu, the English, French and Dutch appeared at Cacheu and in the other rivers of Guinea in search of whatever appeared to offer profit in addition to slaves.(2) Coelho noted in 1669 that when the Afro-Portuguese travelled from Cacheu to Gorée to do business with the Dutch, they carried ivory and wax amounting to between 1,500 and 2,000 quintals.(3) A few years later, the Portuguese Conselho Ultramarino was informed that the 'foreigners' were shipping 3,000 quintals of

(1) Alonso de Sandoval: Natureleza de Todos Etiozes, p. 33.

(2) See above, Ch.V, part II

(3) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, p.6.

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wax and ivory every year from the whole region between the Gambia and Sierra Leone.(1)

In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, the English, as represented by the Royal African Company, were taking a definite interest in the beeswax trade. In 1678, the Bence Island factory recorded the purchase of 569 pounds.(2) This was a small purchase, as can be seen from a reprimand given to the chief factor in 1699, after the trade had begun to fall off. The directors stated that "It has been usual for our ships to receive quick dispatches with 20 or 30 tons of beeswax and 20 to 30 tons of elephants' teeth per each ship, but of late we have found the contrary practice, that for some humour of our Factory our ships have been detained without reason untill their bottoms are eaten with worms".(3) It was in the Gambia, however, that the English could best prosecute trade in commodities like ivory and wax, relying upon the Portuguese free-lance traders as well as upon the official establishment at Cacheu.

Reference has already been made to the way most captain-majors of Cacheu co-operated with the English and the French in Gambia, and it has also been stressed that this was to the benefit not of the Company or of the state but to that of the lançados and the officials

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No.133, Antonio Bezerra, Aug.1673.

(2) P.R.O., T70/360 - Bence Island Accounts.

(3) P.R.O., T70/51 - To Robert Loadman, 5 Sept.,1699.fl.44, and to Thomas Corker, 3 Oct.,1699, fl.48.

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of Cacheu.(1) One cargo sent by agent Castle from the Gambia to Cacheu in 1682 did indeed pay the 10% duty on all goods demanded by the Company of Cacheu, but this appears to have been the only instance. Besides, Castle was aware that the very inadequate servicing of Cacheu by the metropolitan Portuguese meant that the market was open to other competitors. Only one ship per year was being sent out by the Company of Cacheu and its cargo fell far short of the import requirements of the area. (2)

As was the case with slaves, the Portuguese merchants on the coast protested to the authorities in Lisbon that the prices paid by the Portuguese ships for local produce were far too low, and that they had every intention of selling to the French and English who paid more. The Cape Verde traders were worse off, having to buy goods from the lançados, transport them to the islands and resell to European ships. In 1689, the Cape Verde traders protested that one quintal of wax bought from the Guinea traders cost eight barafulas or sixteen cruzados; freight to Santiago added another cruzado; they were being asked to pay a duty of 2.875 cruzados; and yet the price which the Portuguese ships were offering was only fourteen cruzados.(3)

(1) See above, Ch.V, part II
(2) P.R.O., T70/16 - John Castle, 14 Oct.,1682, fl.44.
(3) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Petition from the municipality of Santiago, 4 Aug.,1689.

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Because of these commercial considerations, both the French and the English gained a firm hold on the ivory and wax trade north of the Geba. The French, for example, during the period of slaving which began in 1665 with Bissau as the headquarters, also showed an interest in wax, and in that very year, De La Fond took four hundred quintals, (1) most of which must have come from the Geba area, for which Bissau was the clearing house.

For the ruling class of the Casamance, beeswax was an important basis for their partnership with the Europeans as were slaves. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, there was a serious rift between the Banhun king of Zeguichor and the Portuguese, which led to a lengthy interruption of the wax trade with Cacheu. Friendly relations were re-established by João Baptista, a locally-born son of a former captain-major of Cacheu, who was sent to take command of Zeguichor in 1707. (2) At that time, wax was of special importance to the Portuguese because French competition had for a while virtually driven the Portuguese out of the slave trade. In June 1707, the captain of Cacheu prognosticated pessimistically that soon the Portuguese ships would be reduced to taking cargoes comprised exclusively of beeswax, because, as it was, they could scarcely muster one shipload of slaves per year. (3)

(1) J. Labat: Nouvelle Relation, Vol.V, p.85.

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, maço I - Testimonial of Paulo de Lima, June 1703; referred to by the Conselho on 29 Jan., 1729.

(3) A.H.U., Guiné, maço I - Paulo de Lima, 30 June, 1707.

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Even the wax trade, however, was slipping out of the hands of the metropolitan Portuguese. The Africans (Banhuns, Casangas and Djolas) of the Casamance found it more profitable to market their wax in the Gambia, with the help of the Afro-Portuguese. Captain-major João Carvalho (1734-36) was particularly concerned with this development. He began writing ^{to} the Conselho in August 1734, relating that Zeguichor was trading with the Europeans on the Gambia, and stressing the importance of wax as a principal item in this commerce. ^{The Conselho replied} after its traditional manner by having the captain-major promulgate an edict in the name of the crown, banning such activities. (1)

On a more practical note, the next captain-major posed the problem in terms of which rulers needed to be won over by the Portuguese authorities if the Casamance trade was to flow through Cachêu. The Djola chief of the river Jame (a tributary of the Casamance) was the foremost, because his domains produced the greatest quantity of wax; but there were others like the king of São Domingo and the fidalgo of Bagargole (Banhuns), who controlled the routes, and had to be given 'presents' to permit free passage. (2) Similarly, a Portuguese assessment of the commerce of the Upper Guinea Coast in 1778 suggested that friendship should be maintained with the Bahun, Djola and Casanga peoples of the area. (3)

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- 1) A.H.U., Guiné, maço VI - João Carvalho, 20 June 1736
 - 2) A.H.U., Guiné, maço VI - Damião de Bastos, 15 August 1734
 - 3) A.H.U., Guiné, maço V - Bernardo de Azevedo Coutinho, 2 November 1778

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While slaves, ivory and beeswax were the principal commodities which Europeans sought and wrangled over in the region north of the Geba channel, to the south, camwood was given a much higher priority than wax, so that ivory and camwood were the two products which featured most often as the exports of Sierra Leone in the seventeenth century. Camwood (Baphia nitida) is a species of dyeing wood, which was well-known in Brazil, and was consequently often termed 'Brazil-wood'. It yields both yellow and red dye, but is generally associated with the latter colour, and hence its other popular name, that of 'redwood'. The Sherbro variety had an excellent reputation, being capable of yielding colour up to the seventh time that it was put through the extractive process.(1)

The Portuguese knew of the existence of camwood in Sierra Leone, and the Lisbon authorities were told of its quality;(2) but they never made use of the product. Only in the middle of the eighteenth century was it rediscovered by the Portuguese, when the captain-major of Bissau despatched a specimen to Lisbon.(3) In 1776, a Portuguese captain, sailing under the orders of the Company of Grao Para

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.354 and John Ogilby: Africa, p.373. (Camwood was also used for manufacturing furniture, violin bows and a number of other items.)

(2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol.2, p.211.

(3) A.H.U., Guiné, maço VIII - Francisco Sottomayor, 25 May 1753.

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and Maranhão, approached a ruler in Sierra Leone, who controlled the river giving access to certain camwood supplies, and paid him seventy-five cruzados for the right to use the waterway.(1) Very little seems to have stemmed from this - no doubt for the same reason that the Portuguese had never displayed serious interest: namely, that they had a regular trade with Brazil in this item,(2) even though the Sierra Leone dye was held to be of finer quality.

As mentioned earlier, the first English establishment in the Sherbro was that of Wood and Company, who began trading about the year 1623.(3) They obtained permission from the king of Sherbro, and organised along lines designed to meet the requirements of extracting camwood. All the rivers leading into the Sherbro estuary were used as feeders into the coastal forest where the camwood grew in commercial quantities; while an island in the Sherbro estuary was selected as a point of despatch for ocean-going ships. Wood and Company used Limberman on Sherbro Island, while subsequently, the main clearing-house for camwood was shifted to another smaller island in the Sherbro estuary, which was given the name "York Island", when taken over by the Royal African Company in 1678.

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, maço VIII - Germano de Matta, 17 Feb 1767.

(2) For a description of the commerce in "Brazil-wood", see R. Mauro: Le Portugal et l'Atlantique, pp.115-145.

(3) See above, Ch. V, p.257

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From the days of Wood and Company until the termination of English company trade in Sierra Leone in 1728, commerce on this section of the coast was dominated by forest products, particularly camwood and ivory. The overriding importance of the forest products is mirrored in the struggles which took place over them.

When the rights which Wood and Company, derived both from the British crown and the Bullom king of Sherbro, were challenged, the company's competitors were also interested in camwood. This competition was of a violent nature, and Wood's chief factor, James Holder, was murdered; leading to proceedings in the High Court of Admiralty in 1648) In many respects, this affair is a prototype of the situation for the next eight decades. On the one hand, there was the struggle in England to establish the legal position of trading rights in Sierra Leone (and on other sections of the West African coast); while on the other hand, keen competition always took place on the coast itself, occasionally erupting into violence.

The charter of the Royal African Company, granted on the 27th September 1672, gave it a monopoly of trade between Cape Blanco and the Cape of Good Hope for a thousand years. No Englishman was to visit this area without the Company's permission, and certain goods might be carried to or from Africa only with the Company's special licence. Those who broke these provisions were deemed 'interlopers', and were actionable at law. The charter sanctioned the erection of a court of judicature to sit on the African coast to hear and determine cases of seizure of interlopers and other mercantile suits. The court was to comprise two ~~mer-~~
~~cantile suits. The court was to comprise two~~ merchants and a civil lawyer,

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all to be nominated, by the Royal African Company. (1) In 1678, the directors of the Royal African Company sought to have commissions drawn up, empowering the factors in Sierra Leone and the Gambia to seize interlopers and send the vessels to Cape Coast Castle to be condemned. At the same time, they were agitating to set up an Admiralty Court at James Island in the Gambia. (2)

ships of the Royal Navy were occasionally placed at the service of the monopoly of the Royal African Company, but, like the Portuguese before them, the English had no success in avoiding serious infringements of their mercantile policies of exclusivism - infringements which amounted to de facto free trade, at times. One such period of free trade was that between 1689 and 1698, at the end of which the situation was reviewed by an act of Parliament. (3) This act opened the African trade to all private traders, provided that a payment of ten per cent of the value of all goods exported from England to Africa was paid to the Company. Thus began the era of the "ten per cent ships".

The Royal African Company campaigned to have the Gambia and Sierra Leone specially treated under the Act of 1698. When trading in the area between Cape Blanco and the Sherbro, which the Company called "Our North Parts", English private traders had to pay a further ten per cent duty on the goods imported from Africa, except camwood, which paid five per cent. In effect, the Company had lost the battle of the Lobbies,

(1) K. G. Davies: The Royal African Company , pp. 97-99

(2) T70/78 - Minutes of the Court of Assistants

(3) K.G.Davies: The Royal African Company, p.100

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which had been waged over camwood, after the clothing industry had claimed that under conditions of monopoly the price of camwood was increased from £20 per ton to as much as £70 or £90.(1)

On the coast, the Royal African Company had to devise practical measures to meet the threat posed by the interlopers or the ten per cent men, as the case may have been, because the enactments of Parliament never eliminated the competitors of the Royal African Company - they simply defined that competition to be legal or illegal, or placed greater or lesser revenue duties on competitors.

One of the constant objectives of the Royal African Company was to outmanoeuvre their rivals where the purchasing of camwood in Sierra Leone was concerned. For instance, in October 1694, there was a surfeit of camwood on the London market, and the order went out to Sierra Leone to cut back on production. Nevertheless, it was equally important that this should not have provided an opening for the interlopers. The instructions to their factors covered both these points. "The quantity of wood makes us not desirous of any further supply... Yet, our desires are that you exercise such foresight and diligence as to prevent interlopers procuring any, by buying up such quantities as may be necessary... We recommend to you a thing highly necessary for our interest, and meriting your greatest care, and to prevent interlopers breaking in upon your parts, wherein we perceive nothing will be a greater discouragement than a disappointment in that commodity."(2)

(1) J.M. Gray: A History of the Gambia, p.121

(2) P.R.O., T70/50 - To Corker, 16 Oct 1694, fl.156.

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By August of the next year, camwood was once more in demand, and the market continued to improve steadily after that. The importance of the camwood operations resulted in the growth of the Sherbro factory. By 1698, there was on York Island a storehouse and a dwelling house, surrounded by a fortified wall. There were four projections on this wall, enclosing three further storehouses and a kitchen. Two new 'forts' were said to have been built since the time of agent Gibson (1687-1692), along with a substantial granary.(1) From Barbot's description, this refers to two large round flankers with five guns each. All the buildings were of stone and lime; and defended by about twenty-five white men and between fifty and sixty grumetes.(2) Apart from defence, the consideration which had always to be borne in mind in the construction of the forts was storage space. Storage was an essential part of the Company's plans to combat competition. In 1698, the London headquarters had repeated its earlier instructions urging their agent at Sherbro to try and corner the camwood trade by buying up all supplies, "it being our interest as well as our desire to have what camwood can be procured to prevent the interlopers from getting it".(3) Presumably as a result of this directive, they authorised the building of a shed on York Island to store four or five hundred tons of camwood.(4)

John Barbot, writing in the early eighteenth century, gave the clearest account of the organisation of the camwood trade. Apart from

(1) P.R.O., T70/590 - Bence Island Accounts

(2) John Barbot: Description of North and South Guinea, p.99

(3) P.R.O., T70/51 - To Thomas Corker, 5 April 1698, fl.1

(4) P.R.O., T70/51 - To Robert Loadman, 6 July 1699, fl.28

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the fact

/ that much of the information which he used was acquired at an earlier date, his description holds good because it reveals the conduct of the trade as being tied closely to the topography and the climactic conditions. The main waterway into camwood country was the river now known as the Bum or Sewa, which was then called the Sherbro. It was navigable for sixty miles up to the town or Baga, as far as the average coastal vessels were concerned, while sloops of seven and half feet draught could proceed upstream for over two hundred miles. It was difficult to sail on the upper reaches of the river when journeying inland, because the trip had to be made between April and May, at the very end of the dry season. At that time, there was scarcely nine or ten feet of water in some places. However, for the return journey in September or later, after the rains had fallen, the water level rose six or seven feet, overflowing the banks. A few small vessels also made their way up the other main Sherbro river, the Jung, though this was shallow and choked with small islands and shoals. (1)

Apart from the Sherbro, it was the rivers of the Sierra Leone estuary where most timber was felled. In May 1721, when the Bence Island agent wrote indicating that the camwood supplies on the river had been exhausted, he was asked to go further upstream in search of more. (2) A much later account, that of Major Laing in 1821, suggests that the heart of the camwood forests lay in the area where the Bum and the Rokelle (leading to the Sherbro and Sierra Leone channels respectively) came quite close to each other, permitting a choice of which river

(1) John Barbot: Description of North and South Guinea.p.107

(2) P.R.O. T70/60 - To Plunkett, 16 May 1721,fl.6

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would be used to transport this bulky and heavy product. Near the coast, the Bulloms and Temnes were the tribes involved in the camwood trade, especially the Bulloms, but, further inland, the search for camwood led into Koranko territory. Indeed, by the end of the eighteenth century, the staple article of trade in Koranko country was camwood. Seemera was the general place of barter; it was carried from there to Ma Bung, and floated down the Rokelle to Rokon, where it was exchanged for a variety of articles, among which salt featured prominently. The camwood which was cut further to the south was sent down the Bum (1).

On all the rivers, the pattern of camwood operations must have been the same. It would have been impossible to sail upstream after the rains had fallen and there was a constant downstream current, so that the procedure was to travel up at the end of the dry season or at the very beginning of the rains, and to return several months later (2) When Edmund Pierce of Sherbro wrote his London officials in August 1678, he assured them that trade would improve at the end of that month (3) Another agent in November 1681 reported that he had just shipped seventeen tons, two hundredweights of camwood. Besides, he had brought down a further eighty tons of camwood to York Island, and hoped to make it one hundred and thirty tons before the season ended in December (when the level of water would have begun to diminish rapidly) As it turned out, he was able to ship downstream one hundred and ninety five tons of camwood because of the particularly heavy rainfall that year. (4)

(1) A.G.Laing: Travels, p.78

(2) William Smith: A New Voyage to Guinea, p.92

(3) P.R.O. T70/10 - Edmund Pierce, 5 Aug 1678, fl.4.

(4) P.R.O., T70/16 - Joshua Platt, 24 Nov 1681, fl.24; and 8 Feb.1682, fl.47

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From the organisation of the camwood trade, it is obvious that 'interlopers' or "ten per cent men" had to find someone in a coastal harbour with stocks of wood, since they could not possibly seek it at its source in the bush. Barbot left the information that a ship could arrive at the Sherbro to load a cargo of 500 hundredweights, and be back in England within two months of setting out. (1) This quick turn-round was what the Company expected not only in the case of camwood, but with respect to all other cargoes; and that is precisely why they incurred the overheads of forts and factories. At the same time, the Company hoped that no one would provide similar services for its rivals, and above all, it did not expect that its own servants would despatch the 'interlopers' and "ten per cent men". Yet, this was common practice.

To defend their men and trade goods the chartered companies not only had to meet the expense of constructing and maintaining forts, but frequent attacks from several quarters multiplied their problems. In the first place, those chartered companies were identified with the national interest and image. Anglo-Dutch wars in the third quarter of the seventeenth century caused losses and disruptions stemming from attacks on sea and on sea and on the factories in Sierra Leone. (2) After Anglo-Dutch amity was sealed on the accession of William of Orange to the English throne in 1688, France became England's main rival on a global scale, and once more the Upper Guinea Coast was a minor theatre. (3)

(1) John Barbot: Description of North and South Guinea.p.107

(2) ~~See above, Ch.V.,p~~

(3) Bence Island was attacked by the French in 1695 and 1704, while York Island was pillaged in 1705.

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Attacks by Europeans (including pirates) constituted a menace to the factories from^{the} seaward wide, and this was only one facet of the issue. When the Royal African Company gave their approval in 1686 for York Island to be considerably strengthened, the main intention was to secure it from "the insolence of the natives". (1) Apart from more modern evocations, this phrase recalls the posture of the Portuguese in Cacheu and Bissau. Like the Portuguese before them, the English, (both local factors and London officials) were quite clear that the primary purpose of their strongholds was to make themselves capable of resisting the Africans.

After the Dutch took Tarso island in 1664, the English shifted their headquarters to another island in the Sierra Leone channel, subsequently called Bence Island because Squire Bence was the principal shareholder in the Gambia Adventurers. Before that date, attacks from the Africans had similarly caused the English to flee from one place to another.

According to Lemos Coelho, the English on Tarso Island, who were subject to the Bullom king of Carecole on the right hand of the river, had to leave the island after a dispute with that king. They moved to Tumba on the Sierra Leone peninsula, and it was several years before they returned to Tarso (2) It would seem from the account of André de Faro that the return of the English to Tarso Island was also precipitated by violence. This occurred in 1659 when the factory at Tumba was attacked

(1) P.R.O., T70/50 - To Joshua Platt, 24 Aug 1686, fl.22

(2) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, p.74

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by a force of four hundred Africans, who robbed them of their goods, and set fire to the buildings. In 1663, the same fate overtook the Dutch factory; and, with these experiences in mind, the English had resolved to rebuild in lime and stone and to mount sufficient artillery. (1)

A fairly substantial fort was built on Bence Island by the Gambia Adventurers, and strengthened by the Royal African Company. It was described by Barbot as being of lime and stone; the walls low; and having a round flanker with five guns, a curtain with embrazures for large guns, and a platform before it with six guns - all of them well-mounted.

(2) Such a fort, well-manned and with its walls and cannon kept in good repair, could hold the Africans at bay in a crisis, but the optimum conditions were seldom met, and the forts of Bence and York usually proved nearly as ineffective against the arms of the Africans as they were against the ordnance of attacking ships. Bence Island fell in 1705 without a struggle when the French attacked, and it fell in the same way in 1729, when assaulted by the Africans led by certain Afro-Portuguese elements. In the relations between the English and the African ruling class in the Sherbro, the first crisis of any magnitude during the era of the Royal African Company occurred around 1678-81. Disturbances, which called a halt to camwood felling, were reported by agent Zachary Rogers in September 1679. (3) Rogers' own personal involvement in the local structure complicated matters (4) but most of the points of dis-

(1) André de Faro: Peregrinação, p.86

(2) John Barbot: Description of North and South Guinea, p.106

(3) P.R.O., T70/10 - Zachary Rogers, 29 Sept 1679, fl.53

(4) E.R.O., T70/1 - Joshua Platt, 3 March 1681, fl.91

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pute involved the commercial policy of the Company as opposed to that of the Sherbro-Bullom ruling class. In 1681, agent Platt left Bence Island and went to Kiddyam in the Sherbro to hold a 'palaver' to allow a resumption of the camwood trade. The agenda for discussion included the king's customs duties, the supply of brandy, and the price of goods- the last item being the most important. The king of Sherbro insisted that the prices of goods should be reduced to what they were in Mr. Wood's time, placing special emphasis on brass utensils. Platt promised to consult his superiors on the matter, and trade was resumed. (1)

Continuing attempts were made to discuss problems peaceably. In August 1682, there was a debit entry of 14 'bars' 4 shillings in the Sherbro accounts, representing the value of brandy, old hats, rice and a goat, which were made available to the king and a his fidalgos when they went to the factory to talk about trade. (2) But, sporadic clashes between the Sherbro ruling class and the servants of the Royal African Company continued to disrupt the camwood and ivory trade. On August 24th. 1686, the London office wrote agent Platt acknowledging efforts which he had just made to secure peace at Kiddyam and to re-settle the factory there, (3) so that the discussions of 1681 and 1682 did not yield any lasting result.

(1) P.R.O., T70/16 - Joshua Platt, 24 Nov. 1681

(2) P.R.O., T70/587 - York Island Accounts

(3) P.R.O., T70/50 - To Joshua Platt, 24 Aug. 1686, fl.22

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One of the most persistent and explosive issues was that of the payment of the king's customs or cole, as it was called. The Sherbro account book for the years 1681-86 indicates that the king of Sherbro was given goods amounting to 49 'bars' and 2 shillings, as customs due to him at the time of Rogers' death. The same source shows that rulers in the Sherbro, in the Gallinas and at Cape Mount were being paid cole. (1) That this was not always promptly paid is hinted at in a remark made by the York Island factor in 1714: namely, that he gave the king of Sangra his cole to prevent him joining with the Bulloms of Shebar to stop commerce on the Sherbro rivers. (2)

Non-payment of customs to the bulloms of the Sherbro, like non-payment of rent to the Papel rulers of Nata, Mompataz and Bissau, was almost certain to lead to violence if the situation persisted for any length of time. In July 1723, the London officials wrote their factors in Sierra Leone: "We are sorry to find there are misunderstandings between you and the Africans. We find it arose from the not paying them the small rent due to them. We must recommend to you to take care not to give such occasions of quarrel". (3) William Smith, a special envoy of the Royal African Company to West Africa in 1726, reported that there had been a recent clash between the king of Sherbro and the agent Holditch, over the refusal of the latter to pay cole. The king of Sherbro seized a quantity of Company goods, as a

(1) P.R.O., T70/587 - York Island Accounts

(2) P.R.O., T70/591 - York Island Accounts

(3) P.R.O., T70/60 - To Archibald and Scott, 10 July 1723

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consequence, but in the ensuing skirmish the English gained the upper hand. Inevitably, one feature of this episode was the reminder given by the king of Sherbro that the country was his. (1)

The king had threatened at one point during the dispute of 1679-81 to drive out the English and allow the Dutch to take over; and, in fact, though the fort of the Royal African Company remained, both before and after that period Dutch traders as well as English rivals to the Company were able to trade freely. The Royal African Company constantly attempted to persuade the Sherbro rulers against this open-door policy, and sometimes obtained verbal agreements, but, in practice, monopoly stood no chance. In 1699, the Company bestowed upon the king of Sherbro a present of a gown and a cap. In the covering letter to their agent, the London officials stated that the gifts were to induce the king to 'palaver' with the Company to put an end to the encouragement given the interlopers. (2) How successful the bribe proved can be seen from another London letter three years later. The complaint then was that the king of Sherbro had not kept the promises made in a letter he sent to the directors. The latter said to their York Island factor: "Pray put him in mind that it is below his kingly dignity to act contrary to the palavras he makes with us, and that it is also to his disadvantage; that he cannot expect we should continue to give him presents and do him all acts of friendship, when he has so little regard to perform his good offices to our factors and servants". (3)

(1) Williams Smith: A New Voyage to Guinea, pp.59,60

(2) P.R.O., T70/51 - To Robert Loadman, 6 July 1699, fl.30

(3) P.R.O., T70/51 - To Charles Baker, 21 July 1702, fl.239

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It may have been beneath ~~his~~ ^{but} kingly dignity, / it was pointless for the Royal African Company to suggest to the king of Sherbro that it was not to his advantage to have free trade, when the Company's rivals were adding to the quantity of European goods made available to the people of the area, as well as bringing those goods at cheaper prices.

In so far as the question of monopoly was concerned, the products of the forest quite clearly provided the same basis for the Afro-European relationship as did slaves. However, there was another dimension to the commerce in flora and fauna, which placed it in a different category altogether from the Atlantic slave trade. This difference is to be observed by measuring the effects of the trade in each commodity on the societies of the Upper Guinea Coast.

To greater or lesser extent, each forest product which was sold to the Europeans, required a new scale of organisation on the part of the Africans, depending upon the role played by the given item within African society on the Upper Guinea Coast prior to the advent of the European. Several European observers had cause to comment that the elephant in Africa was not domesticated and put to labour, as in India. (1) Yet, its value as game was enough to make the elephant important; and the overall significance of this animal is hinted at in the Susu tradition, which states that members of the tribe moved west in pursuit of the herds of elephants. (2)

(1) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.82

(2) M. Saint-Père: "Petit historique des Sossos du Rio Pongas"
Bulletin du Comité des Etudes historiques et Scientifiques
 * 1930, Tome XIII

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The Africans of the Upper Guinea Coast hunted the elephants partly as a source of food, (1) and partly because their tusks could be used as ornaments. The skill of the Sapes in ivory work in the sixteenth century attests to long familiarity with this material, while the use of ivory trumpets was also probably of considerable antiquity. Up until recent times, there was a demand among the Africans for the best tusks, which were used for making carved trumpets, used by the paramount chiefs, and regarded as valuable heirlooms. (2)

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Sapes used poisoned harpoons, which the hunter plunged into the elephant from above, after having secured a perch in a tree near a likely feeding place. The wounded animal usually fled several miles before it died. (3) As far north as the Casangas, the method was the same, with the exception of the Nalus, who attacked the elephant at close quarters, stabbing it from below. (4) In the Gambia, the Mandingas were said to use poisoned spears, which they threw either from a standing position or occasionally from horseback. (5)

(1) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.82

(2) W&B. Stanley: "Game Preservation in Sierra Leone", Sierra Leone Studies, (Old Series) No. XI, March 1928

(3) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.96

(4) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.340

(5) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.50
 Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.p. 305,306

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It was only at the end of the eighteenth century that European guns were used in elephant hunting. The weapon preferred by the Bijagos and the Beafadas was the long Dane gun, which was loaded not with shot but with a small iron rod. (1) In Sierra Leone too, the long Dane gun came to be the standard weapon of the elephant hunter in the nineteenth century; (2) but for most of the period of pre-colonial trade, though the demand for ivory within the indigenous context was obviously insignificant in comparison with the demand created by the European advent, the traditional methods of elephant hunting did not change. This is not surprising, because while it is true that the traditional methods do not appear to be particularly effective for large scale hunting, the firearms first exported by the Europeans to Africa were very flimsy. (3)

Lieutenant Beaver's explanation for the disparity between the amount of ivory produced for sale and the limitations of the methods of hunting was that many of the tusks were not procured by hunting at all, but were found on the ground. (4) Nearly two centuries earlier, Jobson had suggested the same thing; pointing out that those which were found lying around were often broken or cracked. (5)

(1) Philip Beaver: African Memorandum, p.p 318,319

(2) W.B.Stanley: (Op.cit.)

(3) See below Ch.VII., p.386.

(4) Philip Beaver: African Memorandum, p.227

(5) R.Jobson: The Golden Trade, p.193

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Another obvious (but seldom noted) point is that ivory can be obtained from animals other than the elephant, notably the hippopotamus. The hippopotamus was one of the most common sights in the rivers of the Upper Guinea Coast. It was a source of food, (1) and a pest to be killed because it came ashore and destroyed the rice fields. (2) Its teeth were called escravelhas by the Portuguese lancados, and were often marketed under the name scrivelios by European traders on the coast. These scrivelios weighed between four to fifteen pounds each, they averaged about sixteen inches in length, and they were very white and brittle. In 1721, the English trader, John Atkins, noted that the scrivelios were offered for sale in much greater numbers than the heavier elephant tusks. (3) This was probably the case from the very inception of the ivory trade. There was a reference in 1666 to 100 tusks weighing 900 lbs.; (4) in 1678, the Bence Island factory of the Royal African Company shipped 80 tusks weighing 1,717 lbs., and thus averaging about 22 lbs. each; (5)

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- (1) Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de situ Orbis, p.66 and André Dornelas: "Relação sobre a Serra Leoa"
- (2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.283
- (3) John Atkins: A Voyage to Guinea, p.181 (In commercial circles, every tusk or tooth below 7 lbs. came to be regarded as a 'scrivello'. See A. Maskell: "Ivory in Commerce and the Arts", Cantor Lecture, 1906, in Cantor Lectures, 1898-1930.)
- (4) Nicholas de Villault: Relation des Costes d'Afrique
- (5) P.R.O., T70/360 - Bence Island accounts

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while the shipment of 1681 comprised 287 tusks weighing 32 hundred-weights, which gives an average of about 12 lbs. per tusk.(1) It was only in 1722 that the scrivelios are mentioned by that name in the records of the Sierra Leone factories of the Royal African Company, but the low average weight per tusk clearly indicates that the total included only a small number of the first-rate ivory tusks, which weighed between 80 to 100 lbs., and which were reputedly the best on the West African coast.(2)

In spite of the hippopotamus teeth and discarded elephant tusks, it is clear that there must have been a great intensification of elephant hunting. De Almada witnessed a Mandinga chief in the Gambia bag twelve elephants in one month;(3) while André de Faro claimed that not a day passed without an elephant being slain on the Munez.(4) No doubt, this required an increase in the number of professional hunters licensed by the king, whose most potent weapons (in their own estimation)

(1) P.R.O., T70/16 - Joshua Platt, 24 Nov 1681, fl.24

(2) John Barbot: Description of North and South Guinea, p.102.

(However, more knowledgeable authorities consider the ivory of the Cameroons and the Congo to be superior to that from Sierra Leone and the Gambia. See A. Maskell: "Ivory in Commerce and the Arts" (Op. cit.)

(3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guinéa", p.306.

(4) André de Faro: Peregrinação, p.46

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were the amulets or 'greegrees' of their priests, rather than their spears or harpoons.(1) The organised nature of this activity can be seen from Mungo Park's evidence that there were groups of Bambara hunters, who lived for several months in the bush in the pursuit of elephants;(2) and from the fact that in the nineteenth century the Fula kings had villages of ivory hunters who operated in the Geba area.(3)

Whenever and however the ivory was obtained by the Africans, it remains clear that they had organised to meet European demands, which were far greater than local requirements. Ivory was one of several products where this was the case. Sometimes, the effort involved was small, such as the collection of ambergris from the sea-shore, after the inhabitants of the islands and the coast came to realise that the Europeans placed some value on this commodity.(4) More often, however, the arrangements were quite comprehensive. An example of this is provided by the trade in beeswax.

Valentim Fernandes reported that bees thrived in the Gambia, and that the Mandingas there practised a form of apiculture, constructing hives of wattle and clay, and hanging large numbers of them in the trees.(5) Considerable quantities of honey were

(1) André de Faro: Peregrinação, p.46

(2) Mungo Park: Travels.. in the Years 1795,1796 and 1797, pp.78-80

(3) J. Machat: Les Rivières du Sud et le Fouta-Diallon, p.196

(4) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.318

(5) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.54

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consumed by the Africans in the form of fermented drinks, which were on sale at the market places, (1) but there is no evidence that the wax was locally utilised. The lançados would have been able to appreciate that there was great potential for the trade in wax, bearing in mind the European demand for candles. The legislation directed against the Sierra Leone lançados in 1517 specified that wax was one of the commodities which they handled. (2)

During the course of the sixteenth century, wax came to assume a relatively prominent place in the exports of the Upper Guinea Coast, being invariably bracketed alongside slaves and ivory by the latter part of the century. (3) Certainly, beeswax was one of the items, apart from slaves, which the Africans of the Upper Guinea Coast for the first time made available for sale, in response to European demand. De Almada described seeing six hundred hives hung in a single tree in Casanga territory. (4) This was the sort of effort on the part of the Africans which lay behind the export figures. Besides, the hives of the wild bees were also raided. This was so on the Gambia in the sixteenth century, (5) and among the Djolas of the Casamance today, honey is still obtained partly through apiculture and partly from the wild bees. (6)

(1) See above, Ch.1, pp.68,69.

(2) A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, 2nd series, vol.II - N^o.43, instructions to the Accountant of Santiago, 16 Dec 1517

(3) A. Brasio: Vol.III - N^o.42, Francisco de Andrade, 26 Jan 1582

(4) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.297

(5) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique

(6) L.V. Thomas: Les Diola, vol.1, p.82

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The activity involved in exporting the products of the forest had to be integrated into the pattern of existence of the peoples who were affected. The camwood operations, for example, fitted neatly into the agricultural cycle of African life. If the first sloop-loads of timber were ferried downstream late in August, this meant that the Africans of the area were relatively free to help, because their crops were planted some months previously and would not be reaped for at least another month. It would appear that much of the actual felling of timber was performed by the Africans during the dry season; they broke off to attend to their cultivation at the end of the dry season when the fields had to be burnt; and then they returned to the labour of cutting camwood. This, at any rate, is what occurred in 1726, when the facts emerged. Early in May of that year, the king of Baga (on the Nokelle) brought a limited quantity of camwood to the agent of the RAC, explaining that his people were busy in their lugars and that until all the rice had been planted it was not possible for them to do any other business. He intended to have his people go upriver and cut camwood as soon as the rice was sown.(1)

Probably more so than ivory and wax, camwood was the basis not only of trade but of industry. The directors of the Royal

(1) P.R.O., T70/1465 - Diary of Walter Charles, 1728

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African Company were not impressed by the way that the camwood was 'barked' or cleaned, and suggested more than once that if the Bullom king of Sherbro could not get his people to do it any better, he should be prevailed upon to let the slaves and hired hands of the factory do the job.(1) But, the fact remained that spurred by the lure of European goods, the Africans had undertaken the regular and strenuous task of cutting down certain trees, rough-hewing the logs and helping to transport them to the ships. Major Laing made a useful comment on the camwood trade as it was pursued on the Rokelle. "It is well known," he wrote, "that during the time the timber trade was in activity, several native towns were formed on the banks of the river, and many natives came from a distance in the country to engage in it".(2)

In terms of effects on the local societies, therefore, the commerce in the natural products of the forest stood in sharp contrast to the Atlantic slave trade. Absolute destruction in the latter instance is to be set against the potential for constructive innovation which the society showed as it was brought within the folds of a global system of production. Of course, no matter how willing the

(1) P.R.O., T70/51 - To Corker, 8 Nov 1698, fl.15; T70/52 - To John Freeman, 7 Nov 1704 fl.71 and T70/60 - to Plunkett, 19 Feb 1721, fl.4

(2) A.G. Laing: Travels, p78

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Africans may have been to make available local forest produce, the extent to which trade was conducted in alternatives to slaves depended almost entirely on European choice. The period 1623 to 1728 in Sierra Leone is rather exceptional, when one bears in mind that by the latter seventeenth century, the Atlantic slave trade was in full cry; and that Companies like the Gambia Adventurers and the Royal African Company, as well as the rival private traders were dedicated to the slave trade elsewhere in West Africa. (1) Indeed, to draw a parallel from the West Indian slave plantations, this period was essentially a "Dead Season" - the time when slaves were least in demand. This was the context in which other alternatives were seriously considered and put into practice.

When the Royal African Company was lobbying to influence the Act which was to regulate the trade to Africa, (1698) they sought to have Sierra Leone and the Gambia placed in a special category on the grounds that those areas were not producing great quantities of slaves, and were thus of little concern to the American and West Indian planters who were among the chief opponents of the Company's monopoly. Indeed, the Royal African Company argued that the Negroes from their "North Parts" were not only few in number but "the worst in esteem".(2) This seems odd in the light of the reputation of the

(1) K.G. Davies: The Royal African Company, p41 points out that when the Royal Adventurers received a new charter in 1663, the slave trade was mentioned for the first time as one of the principal objects of the Company.

(2) J.M. Gray: A History of the Gambia, p.120

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escravos de ley but, several years earlier the directors did advise their Sierra Leone and Gambia agents not to send slaves to Barbados, because the planters there did not favour that brand.(1) To have been disliked by the Barbadian planters could scarcely have been to the discredit of the inhabitants of Sierra Leone, and since Sierra Leone was a popular area for slaves during the era of the Mane invasions, and since it entered another flourishing phase of slaving after the middle of the eighteenth century, neither its potential for producing captives nor the acceptability of those captives should be doubted.

What happened in Sierra Leone was that, after the easy pickings of the period of active warfare and exploitation of the Sapes, the supply of slaves readily available dropped off; while simultaneously, the English and the Dutch established themselves in the area - and the English in particular were at that date relatively unconcerned with the slave trade, even as carriers for the Spanish. Thus, when these nations breached the Portuguese monopoly in Sierra Leone in the first half of the seventeenth century, they did so to conduct commerce in ivory, wax and camwood. There followed a sort of commercial inertia, with no effort being made to change the nature of the exports, which had proven profitable. There was scarcely a break of any kind as one English Company followed another, handing over stock, employees and trading procedures.

(1) P.R.O., T70/50 - To John Case, 24 Aug 1686, fl.24

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Non-indulgence in the slave trade in turn caused a further falling away in the supply and a break in the chain of events by which the Africans would otherwise have reached the holds of the European ships. In June 1680, chief factor Edmund Pierce informed the directors that he had had to turn away slaves for lack of food.(1) Shortly afterwards, he made them to understand that "your long discontinuance in sending for slaves is the reason that we cannot procure them".(2)

The flow of slaves from Sierra Leone never dried up completely, but it was certainly reduced to a trickle. When Edmund Pierce considered the prospects in August 1679, he estimated that it would take him until the following July to round up 120 slaves between the rivers Sierra Leone and Nunez, and indeed, success would only be assured if he could go to the Geba or the Bijagos; that is to say, into the flourishing zone of the Cacheu-Bissau network.(3) John Case was able to send 118 captives across the Atlantic in 1682, but he stressed that they had been procured at great difficulty for want of trade goods.(4) Since he had enough goods to buy ivory and camwood, this again reflects the Company's lack of interest in slaves and their failure to provide the necessary goods for their purchase. This casual attitude to

(1) P.R.O., T70/10 - Edmund Pierce, 14 June 1680, fl.55

(2) P.R.O., T70/1 - Edmund Pierce, 29 Jan 1681, fl.97

(3) P.R.O., T70/1 - Edmund Pierce, 4 Aug 1679, fl.33

(4) P.R.O., T70/10 - John Case, 5 Feb 1683, fl.61

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the Atlantic slave trade is again in evidence in 1700 when a directive that 120 or 130 captives should be assembled in six months was qualified by the addition of two alternatives. If the slave cargo was not ready when the ship arrived, then no harm would be done as rice and country cloth would be sent to Cape Coast Castle, or else the usual products could be returned directly to England.(1)

The almost complete divorce of Sierra Leone from the Atlantic slave trade can be seen at a glance when one is presented with the charts of the Royal African Company illustrating how their chartered vessels were deployed. Under the heading "Where to Discharge" ships bound for Sierra Leone almost invariably had 'London' filled in; and it follows that under the heading "Number of Negroes" there was usually a blank space opposite the ships which went to Sierra Leone - in clear contrast to those which were sent to other points on the West African coast, and which discharged in the West Indies. (2) These two patterns of trade were not compatible. When in 1694 the Royal African Company advised that a ship should load slaves, ivory and camwood at Sierra Leone; unload the slaves in the West Indies; and return with the ivory and camwood to England they themselves implied it was a most unusual procedure.(3) If they wanted products for the English market, they obviously had to disregard slaves. Conversely, the slave ships were not normally

(1) P.R.O., T70/51 - To Robert Loadman, 16 April 1700, fl.116

(2) P.R.O., T70/62 - Ships in the service of the Royal African Company in 1701

(3) P.R.O., T70/50 - To Thomas Corker, 4 Dec 1694, fl.160

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prepared to devote cargo space to other items. Thus, in 1692, the directors of the Royal African Company advised the Sierra Leone establishments to take over the trade on the malaguetta Coast in earnest, so as to send cargoes of Malaguetta pepper to England, because the slave ships which passed along that section of the coast could not be bothered with the pepper.(1)

There was a device by which the Royal African Company tried to capitalise on the small numbers of Sierra Leone slaves which were readily available without attempting to increase the volume of slave exports. When a ship was seeking a large cargo of slaves on the coast of West Africa, it was arranged that Sierra Leone should add its mite to the collection. At first Sierra Leone was asked to make up the complement of vessels which went to the Gambia, and perhaps failed to reach their target.(2) Later, it became customary for ships proceeding to Cape Coast Castle to make a landfall at Sierra Leone, where they obtained provisions for the projected cargo of slaves which were to be taken up on the Gold Coast, and if Sierra Leone had any slaves to spare then they too were grist for the sugar-mill. Salt, palm-oil, country cloth and rice were supplied to the passing vessels, together with slaves in lots as small as 24 or 65.(3) Even this process,

(1) P.R.O., T70/50 - To Henry Gibson, 9 Feb 1692 fl.133

(2) P.R.O., T70/50 - To Thomas Corker, 16 Oct 1694 fl.157

(3) P.R.O., T70/14 - To Greenaway, 4 June 1704; T70/18 - John Clark, Nov 1710; and T70/3 - John Clark, 10 July 1713

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however, was not profitable, and was to be avoided if possible, because calling at Sherbro or Bence Island meant an increase in the total length of the trading voyage, and the Royal African Company, which chartered most of its ships, had to pay high charges for demurrage.(1)

The Royal African Company eventually accepted the logic of the situation, and decided to discourage the slave trade in Sierra Leone, so as to be better able to conduct commerce in articles that had proven extremely profitable. Their instructions on this point in 1721 were explicit. They wrote: "Being sensible that a very great profit will arise to the Company by returns to England of gold, elephants teeth, redwood and beeswax, we do give it to you as standing instruction that you promote the trade for these commodities or any other proper to send for England, and by every opportunity make us as large returns in such goods as possibly you can...If you should have one of the Company's own ships with you to slave, and at the same time have an opportunity of disposing of slaves for gold, teeth, etc at advanced prices, we direct you to do it".(2) Their agent at the time, Plunkett, insisted that he could provide 200 to 300 slaves, but the Company made it clear that this was not worth their while, and indicated that what they required of the

(1) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, p85

(2) P.R.O., T70/60 - To Robert Plunkett, 6 May 1721, fl.6

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Sierra Leone factories was a regular cargo (every six weeks to two months) of camwood, pepper, ivory, gold, indigo and cotton.(1) Two years later, the London office dismissed the river Pongo as being an unimportant trading zone, because it yielded "only negroes and a few teeth, the former of which you will perceive we would have you deal in as little as possible".(2)

Not only did the Royal African Company discourage slaves so as to concentrate on forest products, but they initiated as early as 1691 a substantial experiment in the cultivation and manufacture of indigo. The Company sought the permission of the king of Sherbro for the purpose, since the cultivation was to take place in the latter's domains; and at the same time they made a plea that no other Europeans should share in the benefits of the Company's endeavour.(3) A shipload of machinery for indigo manufacture was sent out to York Island in 1691, indicating the seriousness of the Company's commitment; but, while expressing the hope that indigo from Sierra Leone would prove more profitable than that from the West Indies, the Company officials naively expected that the Jamaican planters would release specimens and skilled men to start the industry in Sierra Leone.(4) When this expectation was not realised, they turned to the planters of

(1) P.R.O., T70/60 - To Robert Plunkett, 6 May 1721, fl.6

(2) P.R.O., T76/60 - To Archibald and Scott, 10 July 1723, fl.3

(3) P.R.O., T70/50 - To Henry Gibson, 22 Sept 1691, fl.127

(4) P.R.O., T70/50 - To Henry Gibson, 28 Oct 1691, fl.129 (In fact, the Jamaican planters lobbied against the plans of the Company.)

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Mountserratt, with a bribe of a few slaves, and were rewarded with four slave-hands, whom the planters on that island had been unable to tame, and who were later leaders of an escape plot of "factory slaves" at Bence Island.(1)

Meanwhile, the indigo cultivation was being superintended by Richard Bridgeman. This individual had spent some time in Jamaica, and was a self-proclaimed indigo expert, about whom the Company harboured some doubts, but who appeared to have been the only candidate for the post of overseer, and he was sent to York Island in 1691.(2) As early as April 1692, having failed to produce results, he was consoling the Company with the offer that if they sent him the necessary equipment he would manufacture rum and sugar.(3) Within a few years, Bridgeman had joined the ranks of the private traders, and it was left to the chief factor to see to the cultivation of indigo among his other duties. Some indigo continued to be grown at Warso Island up until the last years of the Royal African Company's stay in Sierra Leone,(4) but both the agricultural and manufacturing ventures proved failures.

In 1700, the suggestion of purchasing indigo from the Africans was put forward.(5) But it was only in 1723 that the Royal

(1) P.R.O., T70/1465 - Diary of Walter Charles, 1728

(2) P.R.O., T70/50 - To Henry Gibson, 28 Oct 1691, fl.129

(3) P.R.O., T70/11

(4) William Smith: A New Voyage to Guinea, p.44

(5) P.R.O., T70/51 - To William Lewis, 2 Jan 1700, fl.76

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African Company hit upon the idea of making the best of the local African processes for manufacturing dye - a rather tardy development, since the Portuguese had been stimulating the production of and commerce in local indigo since the sixteenth century.(1) Besides, this idea was not followed up by the agents, who at no time displayed the same enthusiasm for the scheme as did the directors. Yet neither the shortsightedness of the directors, nor the lethargy of the agents, nor the eventual failure of the indigo experiment should detract from the significance of the attempts. Here, in the midst of the slave trading era on the West African coast, one found a policy advocating settled industry and other commercial alternatives to the slave trade. That the indigo scheme was part of a conscious policy can be verified by citing the Company's instructions in relation to a number of other possibilities along the same lines as the indigo venture. This was what they wrote in 1723: "You are in the garden of the Island of Bence or at the Island of Torsus as a nursery to sett sow and plant all things that may be found out in those parts that they may be improvable for trade, as cotton, indigo, ginger, sugar canes, pepper, spice, gumm trees, druggs, etc. You are to put a stock of cattle on the Island of Torsus, clear the island of wood trees and make plantacions thereon... and to carry on the indigo and pottash works".(2)

(1) See below, Ch.VIII,

(2) P.R.O., T70/60 - To Archebald and Scott, 10 July 1723, f1.36 and to Archebald, 27 Nov 1723, f1.45

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For West Africa as a whole, the question of substitutes for slaves was seldom posed before the debate on the Atlantic slave trade and the nineteenth century attempts to refashion the Afro-European connection. In Sierra Leone, this issue had been taken up in the seventeenth century - not for reasons of humanity, of course - but because the directors of the Royal African Company, for commercial reasons, saw the desirability of transforming Sierra Leone into a zone where the slave trade was not conducted. With the demise of the Royal African Company in Sierra Leone, the situation did not change dramatically, but it did mean the end of an articulated policy in this direction. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Atlantic slave trade had once more risen to dominance. "Dead Season" is, after all, followed by "Crop Time", the busiest period of the plantation routine.

A HISTORY OF THE UPPER GUINEA COAST, 1545-1800

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE NATURE OF AFRO-EUROPEAN COMMERCE

THE NATURE OF AFRO-EUROPEAN COMMERCEPART I - IMPORTS AND PRICES.

The list of imports from Europe into West Africa was an extremely lengthy one, which tended to grow as the era of pre-colonial trade wore on. Bosman, at the end of the seventeenth century, tabulated 150 items imported into the Gold Coast; (1) and they were merchantable along most of the West African littoral. In any complete list, many oddities would make their appearance. Some of them are of interest only to the antiquarian, but a few rather unusual imports were considered as valuable both by the Europeans and the Africans. Horses and cattle, for instance, would not normally feature in the literature of the early European trade in West Africa, but for a limited period they were both important in the trade of the Upper Guinea Coast and the Senegambia. The peoples of the Senegambia, who were already familiar with horses, showed a particularly great interest in acquiring them from the Portuguese; but horses were also saleable as far south as Cape Mount. Among the Sapes in the fifteenth century, one Portuguese horse initially fetched 14 slaves, but the rate of exchange dropped to between 6 to 8 slaves per horse by the beginning of the sixteenth century. (2) In the Senegambia, there was a similar reduction in price, and perhaps it was this declining value which caused horses to disappear from the inventories of Portuguese imports into

(1) W. Bosman: A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea, p.79.

(2) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, pp.36,74,76; and Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, p.72

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the Upper Guinea Coast.

Cattle were of much less significance than horses. The Portuguese carried two-year old steers from the Cape Verde islands in the sixteenth century to the Bijagos islands. The reason given for the continuous demand for cattle in the Bijagos islands was the custom of sacrificing large numbers of animals at funeral 'cries' and other ceremonies. (1) This custom was common to all the societies on the Upper Guinea Coast north of Sierra Leone, but most of them, like the Djolas and the Balantas, reared their own herds specifically for 'cries' (2), so that the Bijagos seemed to have been the only customers whom the Portuguese found.

Something of a curiosity is presented by the demand for lead which existed among the Nalus in the sixteenth century, (3) and a few lead bars were still being carried to the Upper Guinea Coast up until the end of the eighteenth century. (4) though the European traders did not reveal to what use this metal was put. Even more unusual was a significant import of Spanish and other silver coins by the peoples of the Gambia, Cacheu and Geba, especially the Mandingas. These coins were not regarded as currency, but simply as material for making ornaments such as bracelets. Lemos Coelho wrote that in one trading season 8,000 patacas were exchanged at Farim, mainly for cloth, which would increase its value when bartered elsewhere for

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.318

(2) A. Texeira da Mota: Guiné Portuguesa, Vol. I, pp.247,286,288

(3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.340

(4) B.M., Add.Ms.12131 - Papers relating to Sierra Leone, 1792-96.

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slaves, ivory and camwood. (1) It was also the custom of the Royal African Company to import coins into the Gambia, said to have been approximately equal in value to one Dutch rix-dollar, (2) while the French Senegal Company sent "pieces of eight" to Bissau. (3) How relevant these were to the local market it is difficult to say, but it is quite possible that they were mainly used by the Europeans when they conducted trade among themselves on the coast, as often happened.

The staple goods which were brought by the Portuguese and other Europeans to the Upper Guinea Coast, and which were of lasting importance during the centuries under discussion, can be conveniently divided into five categories, though the edges of the divisions are sometimes blurred. The first includes metal; the second cloth; the third alcoholic beverages; the fourth weapons; and the fifth comprises a miscellany of baubles, bangles and beads. These will be dealt with in reverse order.

For both the Europeans and the Africans, the numerous items of trumpery were placed at the bottom of the scale of values. William Finch, after trading in Sierra Leone in 1607, listed a number of articles of trade, including beads, bells, garlick, French bottles and "other trifles"; but

(1) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, p.159

(2) These coins were known as 'zealots' or "Pieces of eight". See P.R.O. T70/50 - To Alexander Cleeve, 31 Aug 1686, fl.18, and T70/14 - Thomas Weaver; 10 June 1704

See also J.M. Gray: A History of the Gambia, pp.140,141

(3) John Barbot: Description of North and South Guinea, p.87

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admitted that by themselves these 'toyes' were capable of purchasing nothing but foodstuffs. (1) This continued to be the case for the next two centuries. A hen could be purchased on the Upper Guinea Coast for three strings of little beads, and the same applied to one gallon of palm wine, causing Ogilby to remark that "they do not set a high rate upon the best of their commodities". (2) According to Beaver, the herds of the Mandingas were utilised for the making of "small trade" with the Europeans; through which the men procured tobacco, powder, knives, etc, and the women obtained articles such as beads and small looking glasses. (3) But it is also true that trinkets formed a proportion of almost every payment made to the Africans, and they were useful as gifts. Besides, the low and restricted purchasing power of these items did not mean that they could be excluded from the cargoes or quantitatively reduced.

Of the several trinkets, beads featured most prominently. These were usually of glass, and the Portuguese in particular laid down specifications about the colour and size of the beads which were popular among the Africans on the Upper Guinea Coast. Yellow and green glass beads were said to have been favoured by the Sapes in the early sixteenth century, and at that time red cornelian beads were also in demand on the whole of the Upper Guinea Coast. Indian beads, so well-known in the commerce of East Africa, also

(1) S. Purchas: Purchas his Pilgrimes, Vol.III, Ch.IIIII, p.9.

(2) John Ogilby: Africa, p.364

(3) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, pp.42,76 and Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, pp.64,72,76,84.

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found their way to West Africa through the agency of the Portuguese. (1)

Alongside of beads are to be enumerated goods such as glass buttons, crystal, amber, combs, small items of haberdashery, imitation pearls, and medals, bracelets and armllets of copper, tin and pewter. Individually, each one of these counted very little, and there were some goods of this sort which were carried to the Upper Guinea Coast and found to have no purchasing power whatever. This was partly attributable to the regional differences along the West African littoral, but occasionally blunders were obviously made because of the assumption that every bit of trumpery was vendible in Africa. For instance, in 1697, the second Company of Cacheu sent considerable stocks of threads, bells, combs, buttons, children's socks and small shoes - much to the chagrin of the local representatives on the Upper Guinea Coast and in the Cape Verde Islands. (2) The Royal African Company found that even beads were a slow-selling line in Sierra Leone. Consequently, the string rotted, and it cost half their value to have the beads restrung. (3)

Weapons stood at the other extreme from the trinkets, being viewed by the Portuguese authorities as articles that should not pass into African hands or even be acquired by private Portuguese traders if this made them independent of the protection of the Portuguese crown. The greatest

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.276,277,347

(2) A.H.U. Cabo Verde, caixa VI - Antonio Salgado, 15 May 1698

(3) P.R.O. T70/50 - To Thomas Corker, 24 Oct 1693, fl.47; and
T70/2 - John Clark, 24 Oct 1709, fl.12.

(4) A.H.U. Guiné, caixa I - No. 27, Jorge Castilho, 1 July 1642

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fear arose over the ownership of cannon, but most private traders managed to acquire cannon, swivel guns and other ship's ordnance. This was basically for defence against the Africans, and such armament was to be found in centres where the lançados were no longer amenable to the authority of the African rulers. (1) and wherever white or mulatto traders had their towns and slave baracoons. (2) Yet, heavy weapons were occasionally obtained by the African rulers through the agency of the private traders, who to all appearances did not draw as strict a line between profit and security as did the established companies and administrations. (3)

Not surprisingly, the idea of banning the export of European firearms to Africa was mooted in several quarters. Labat, in 1728, listed ordinary guns, buccaneers, gun-flints and powder among the imports sold by the Europeans on the Upper Guinea Coast; and he advocated that "this trade should be discouraged by stiff penalties because of the terrible consequences of teaching these barbarous people the use of firearms". (4) Not only firearms, but swords and other similar weapons of iron were deemed "prohibited goods" by the Portuguese crown, along with iron, from which the Africans themselves

(1) See above, Ch. III, p. 178

(2) See below, Ch. VIII, p. 484

(3) P.R.O. T70/51 - To Corker or Bowman, 13 Sept 1698, fl.10. (Here the London officials wrote that "We believe interlopers care not what commotions they make to carry on their own designs".)

(4) J. Labat: Nouvelle Relation, Vol. V, p.181

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manufactured weapons. (1) In the sixteenth century, such manufactures did not constitute any significant portion of the goods imported into the Upper Guinea Coast by the Portuguese, but this was probably due more to Portugal's inability to supply these goods than to the efficacy of legislative edict.

Among the major Portuguese commentators on the Upper Guinea Coast Lemos Coelho was the first to mention, swords, muskets, powders and shot as goods sold by the Portuguese and the Afro-Portuguese. (2) His remarks were meant for the eyes of the Portuguese authorities, and his frank inclusion of this category of goods could be interpreted as advice to the Portuguese administration to dismiss their fears and scruples on this subject. Nevertheless, the ban against weapons remained in force. In August 1679, the bishop of Cape Verde wrote the Conselho warning them that the residents of Cacheu sold swords, muskets and other weapons to the Africans. (3)

The loophole which permitted the Portuguese traders to import arms with equanimity was provided by the pretext that they were to be used for the defence of the official praças on the coast. Furthermore, because of this justification, such goods were duty-free. In 1752, the captain-major of Cacheu pointed out that this was a ridiculous situation from the point of view of the treasury, because when the Cape Verde cloths were taken into account, the greater part of the trade in the area was conducted in items

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- (1) A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 26, Legislation on the commerce of Guinea, 24 March 1514, p.72.
- (2) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, p.12
- (3) A.H.U., Guiné, maço III - Francisco Roque Sottomayor, 12 March 1752.

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which paid no duty. However, his only remedy was to reiterate for the benefit of the local traders and the soldiers of Cacheu that it was illegal to allow such articles as firearms and gunpowder to pass into the hands of the Africans, and the penalty for so doing was confiscation of goods and three years exile to São Thome. The Conselho was at the same time urged to send alternative goods such as beads and iron, without which the soldiers of the praça of Cacheu could not even obtain food from the Papels. (1)

At no point did the Portuguese rescind their sanctions against weapons, but by the end of the eighteenth century, weapons were named by the servants of the Portuguese crown on the Upper Guinea Coast as imports which were being handled by them, and this situation obviously had the tacit approval of the authorities in Portugal. (2) Understandably, it was the trade in swords rather than firearms, which was first tolerated by the Conselho Ultramarino; and by the latter part of the seventeenth century, the import of this commodity was openly advocated by responsible individuals on the Upper Guinea Coast. Advice in 1697 pertained to the despatch of broad well-riveted swords, each three feet in length. (3) The English companies found it equally useful to introduce some of these weapons. When the stock of the Gambia Adventurers in Sierra Leone was inventoried on the liquidation of the Company, it included a number of swords. These, along with cutlasses,

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, maço III - Francisco Roque Sottomayor, 12 March 1752

(2) See, for example, A.H.U., Guiné, maço XI - The table of the regular prices of goods submitted by the captain-major in 1801 included several types of European weapons.

(3) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa VI - Antonio Salgado, 15 May 1698

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continued to feature in the invoices of the Royal African Company in the Gambia and Sierra Leone. An entry in the Sherbro Accounts of 1698 indicated that 550 swords and large cutlasses were then in stock. (1) Much earlier, in 1683, swords to the value of 1,113 'bars' were received at the Bence factory. (2) (1 sword being valued at 1 'bar') and at that time, the Gambia agent was advising that trade southwards to the Cacheu was not possible without iron and "good swords". (3)

Perhaps the demand for swords on the Upper Guinea Coast was in part induced by the presence of the Portuguese lançados and their descendants, because these traders attempted to live like Portuguese gentlemen, and a sword was thus an essential accoutrement. (4) However, the swords on the Upper Guinea Coast did not originate in metropolitan Portugal. From the fourteenth century, the Portuguese had obtained their swords from Germany, and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the commerce of Arguin had allowed a supply of blades to pass into the hands of the Taureg, who provided their own hafts. (5) At the end of the eighteenth century, Beaver noticed that the cutlasses and swords of the Bijagos warriors carried the mark of Solingen, the

(1) P.R.O., T70/590 - York Island Accounts

(2) P.R.O., T70/648 - Bence Island Accounts

(3) P.R.O., T70/16 - John Castle, 20 Feb 1683, fl. 46

(4) See below, Ch. VIII, p. 446.

(5) L.C. Briggs: "European Blades in Taureg Swords and Daggers", in The Journal of the Arms and Armour Society, Vol.V, No. 2, June 1965, pp.36-65

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famous German sword-manufacturing town. (1) The Portuguese authorities themselves confirmed that up to that time most of the weapons which they carried to Africa were re-exports from Germany - muskets, blunderbusses, pistols, cutlasses and flints being specifically listed. (2) The Portuguese could not afford to re-export these manufactures on any considerable scale, so that when firearms became important on the Upper Guinea Coast in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they were introduced directly by the Dutch, English and French for the most part. English traders were at first dependent on Dutch industry for firearms, as for so many other goods for the African trade, but a process of substitution was carried to completion by the early eighteenth century, permitting the Royal African Company to depend exclusively on English firearms during the later phases of their commerce with West Africa. (3) The early records of the Royal African Company in Sierra Leone mention "Spanish locks" as distinct from "English locks", the former being the more expensive. Pistols, muskets and fowling pieces were also named. (4) Between 1703 and 1717, the Committee of Goods of the Royal African Company requisitioned a large variety of firearms for the African trade - buccaneers, carabines, brass blunderbusses, 'fusees', fowling guns, muskets and round locks (5) All of course were muzzle loading, and often the differences in

(1) Philip Beaver: African Memoranda, p.335

(2) Report of the Lords of the Committee of Council, 1789 - Part VI, 'Portugal'

(3) K.G. Davies: The Royal African Company, p.177

(4) P.R.O., T70/360 - Bence Island Accounts

(5) P.R.O., T70/128 - Memoranda of the Committee of Goods.

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models was slight.

In sending out a ship from London in December 1721, the official of the Royal African Company at Africa House advised the Sierra Leone agents that "in this cargo you will find some trading and some buccaneer guns with beech stocks, hollowed in the butt, which are of a new pattern. We desire you will send us word how they take with the residents, and if they are liked better than those we used to send". (1) There is no record of a reply, but the implication that the Africans of the Upper Guinea Coast were calling for improved firearms was borne out by John Atkins who was on the coast of Sierra Leone at that time, and found that the marked required "a better sort of firearms". (2)

With guns ranging in prices from 20s to 10s.6d., it is not surprising that they were of shoddy manufacture, being likely to explode at the first discharge. Various recommendations were made towards remedying the situation. In 1728, for instance, the chief factor of the Royal African Company in Sierra Leone urged that two armourers should be sent out to repair screws and locks on the guns since these were constantly defective. At the end of the eighteenth century, traders on the Windward Coast (as the Malaguetta Coast was then called) were advised to supply "decent sham Dane guns", which had long barrels and ramrods of wood, and short French guns with iron ramrods. These two makes were to be the leaven of quality among the cheap "Bonny guns". It was piously hoped that the locks would strike well and the

(1) P.R.O., T70/60 - To Robert Plunkett, 21 Dec 1721, fl.20

(2) John Atkins, A Voyage to Guinea, p.162

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barrels be free from flaws, while it was remarked that strong or weak powder, good or bad guns, the Africans rammed the same charge down the barrels, so the European trader would do no harm to sell cheap cannon powder instead of gunpowder. (1) The Bijagos, being dedicated warriors, had their own solution. Well into the nineteenth century, they carefully tempered and tested each European firearm which they bought. The breach and muzzle were pegged with wood, the barrel filled with palm oil and then placed in fire. If no explosion occurred, the operation was considered successful. (2)

However, the advantages of these new weapons clearly outweighed their disadvantages, and the Africans of the Upper Guinea Coast became more and more avid in pursuit of guns and powder during the latter part of the eighteenth century. In fact, some coastal communities were substantially re-armed with these European weapons at an early date. For example, the Mandingas and Bahunis of Hereges (south of the Gambia), who had conducted flourishing trade with the Europeans from the fifteenth century, not only owned guns, but were adept at using them by the end of the seventeenth century. (3) The Papels acquired muskets, swords and cutlasses as a result of the Portuguese resident traders and the commerce which was attracted to Cacheu and Bissau, while the Bijagos islanders obtained their arms via the Bissau factories. The European arms reportedly in their possession at the end of

(1) B.M., Add. Ms. 12131, Papers relating to Sierra Leone, 1792-96

(2) Edward Stallibrass: "The Bijouga or Bissagos Islands, West Africa",
Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, 1889.

(3) P. Cultru: Premier Voyage de Sieur de la Courbe, p.207.

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the eighteenth century must have been in circulation among these tribes for a long time. In Sierra Leone, too, firearms were by then widely distributed and expertly used; (1) and when there was any dispute among the Africans of Sierra Leone, the European traders offered both parties ammunition, and prepared to welcome the captives. (2)

Firearms were slow in penetrating into the hinterland of the Upper Guinea Coast. The great Jihad or Holy War of the Futa Djallon was evidently begun in the early eighteenth century with weapons of local manufacture. (3) The first clear-cut instance of European arms being sought in a determined manner by the tribes of the interior occurred in 1757, when a Mandinga chief allied to the Fulas cut his way to the coast at the Scarcies estuary, selling all who came into his hands for powder and guns. (4) From that point onwards the Mande and the Fulas of the interior evinced a constant interest in obtaining arms from the coast. Reports of civil disturbances in the near hinterland of the Upper Guinea Coast in the 1780's and 1790's suggested that European firearms were utilised. (5) Yet the paucity of firearms in the interior is brought out by comparisons with the littoral. John Matthews

(1) Evidence at the end of the eighteenth century was provided by Philip Beaver and Joshua Montefiore, writing on the attempts at colonisation on Bulama and in Sierra Leone. See Philip Beaver: African Memoranda, pp.40,327,335.

(2) C.B. Wadstrom: An Essay on Colonisation, Part 2, p.77

(3) See below, Ch. IX, ■.

(4) Nicholas Owen: Journal of a Slave Dealer, p.96, and see below, Ch. IX. p5

(5) T. Winterbottom: An Account of the Native Africans of Sierra Leone, p.154

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related that "the inhabitants of the sea coast have almost totally laid aside their national weapons for the sabre and the gun; but the natives of the inland countries still use the spear, dart and poisoned arrow". (1) Winterbottom also confirmed that on the coast and for some distance inland the blacks were very dextrous in the use of firearms, and it was rare to meet one at any distance from home without his musket, but that the Fulas often used poisoned arrows.

(2)

Careful consideration is required so as to place the import of firearms into its true perspective. It would be attractive to set this category of goods apart as the main stimulus to the slave trade, because guns were used to capture slaves to buy more guns to capture more slaves. If they added a new dimension to military techniques, then they would also have been decisive in relations among the Africans themselves. But in reality, their importance was narrowly circumscribed in the period under discussion.

European firearms made their presence felt at a very late date. The first period of Hispano-Portuguese slave trading, for instance, had little or nothing to do with the import of firearms. Furthermore, while it is true that the coastal residents had by the end of the eighteenth century re-armed themselves with European weapons, the same did not apply to the inhabitants of the interior; and yet it was the Mande and Fulas from the hinterland who extended their dominion over the coastal tribes, (3) demonstrating clearly that

(1) J. Matthews: A Visit to the River Sierra Leone, p.88

(2) T. Winterbottom: Op.Cit., p.155

(3) See below, Ch. IX. ■

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European firearms did not automatically influence the tribal balance of power.

It is equally imperative to be circumspect in evaluating the influence of alcohol upon the Africans, and its role in the Atlantic slave trade. This question has been posed in terms of the volume of alcohol imported into Africa, and the possibility of its exerting a degenerative effect on the Africans; and within such a context it has been pointed out that it was not until after the slave trade had ended that alcohol was brought to Africa in great quantities. (1) Certainly, it was only in modern times that the import of alcohol into Africa assumed dangerous proportions, with the purchase of 31,000 hectolitres of pure alcohol by French West Africa in 1951, representing an increase of fifteen times the volume in 1938. (2) As with so many other commodities brought to Africa in the pre-colonial period, it is extremely difficult to estimate the quantities involved, but a number of factors suggest that the amount of alcohol was indeed small in relation to a later period, and probably had little effect on the Africans; but for reasons quite unconnected with the total volume this import was nevertheless a decisive factor in Afro-European commercial relations.

Reviewing the centuries of slave trading, remarks on the indispensability of liquor as an import are very common. De Almada asserted that the residents of the Gambia would die without the wine brought by the Portuguese and Spanish ships; (3) while the servants of the Royal African

(1) The Transatlantic Slave Trade from West Africa (Centre of African Studies, Edinburgh, 1965) pp.92,91

(2) René Dumont: Afrique Noire est Mal Partie (Paris 1962) p.34

(3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.276

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Company found that their own peace was endangered if the thirst of the Sherbro rulers was not assuaged. (1) In the latter part of the eighteenth century, such comments became more frequent. John Newton, for example, reported in 1750 that he lost the option to purchase ten slaves in the Sherbro for lack of "the commanding articles of beer and cider". Shortly afterwards, he bartered with a French ship on the coast to obtain four anchors of brandy. (2) Several years later, recalling his experiences of slave trading in Sierra Leone, Newton stressed that "strong liquor" was so much in demand that without it scarcely a single slave could be purchased; (3) and this was a view shared by other experienced Europeans at the end of the eighteenth century. (4)

The wine mentioned by De Almada, along with the beer and cider mentioned by Newton, should be considered separately from the "strong liquor" to which Newton also referred. Local fermented beverages of low alcoholic content, such as wine and beer, were extremely popular on the Upper Guinea Coast. (5) The Portuguese and the Spanish catered to this taste by intro-

(1) P.R.O., T70/1 - Joshua Platt, 7 Aug 1681, fl.120

(2) John Newton: Journal of a Slave Trader, p.16

(3) Ibid: p.20 (1 anchor = 10 old wine gallons or $8\frac{1}{3}$ imperial gallons)

(4) Joshua Montefiore: An Authentic Account of the late Expedition to Bulam

(5) See above, Ch. I, p.68 (For the alcoholic content of African fermented drinks, see René Dumont: Afrique Noire est Mal Partie, p.34. Palm wine has 4% alcohol, beer from millet or maize contains 3.5% on an average, while most fermented fruit juices scarcely had more than 1%)

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ducing grape wines. This was one of the principal constituents of the cargoes of the Spanish registered ships; and it was brought not only from Spain but also from the Canary Islands. There was in fact an enduring connection between the Upper Guinea Coast and the Canary islands which began in the years when Spanish ships were considered as 'interlopers' on the West African coast, (1) matured during the era of joint monarchy, when Teneriffe was an office for issuing registros, (2) and persisted during the later seventeenth century and the eighteenth century. (3) With the Canary islands, one can also bracket Madeira. They both sought slaves from the Upper Guinea Coast, (4) and in return they offered alcoholic beverages, - primarily wine, but also brandy and rum.

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- (1) A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 146, Letter from the ambassador of Spain to the Regent of Portugal, 22 Jan 1559 p.473
- (2) For references to wines from the Canaries during this epoch, see A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa I - Treslado of 11 July 1619 that ships from Seville and the Canaries should trade with the Upper Guinea Coast only via Santiago. See also Guiné, caixa I - No. 27, João Pereira Corte-Real, 23 Dec 1641
- (3) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa III - Governor of Cabo Verde, 8 June 1657; and caixa IV - Antonio Galvão, 15 April 1665.
- (4) For slaves to Madeira in the sixteenth century, see A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 149,150. Declarations to the sugar planters of Madeira, 16 Oct and 30 Oct 1562; and for the eighteenth century, see Ch. X, p. 545

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Aguardente, a word referring to both brandy and rum, only began to oust wine from the Portuguese inventories of sale goods in the late seventeenth century, (1) so that irrespective of volume, the spirits imported up to that point could not have constituted a great departure from the indigenous pattern. Indeed, for several decades of the eighteenth century, beer and cider were the fermented beverages brought by the English traders, especially ships from Bristol. (2) However, supplies of cheap West Indian rum had become popular by the end of the seventeenth century, and could be ferried directly from the West Indies to Africa. In 1700, the London officials of the Royal African Company wrote to their agents in the Gambia and Sierra Leone advising them that a small ship was bringing rum from Barbados, and if the venture was successful that would be the standard practice in the future. (3) Between 1703 and 1709, thirty-one ships were despatched from the West Indies to West Africa by the Company. (4) Private traders apparently continued to import rum in this manner after the demise of the Royal African Company in Sierra Leone, for Newton made passing reference to "rum sloops" on that section of the coast. (5)

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- (1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Inventory of the goods of the first Company of Cacheu, on 6 April 1686; and advice to the second Company of Cacheu by Antonio Salgado, 15 May 1698.
- (2) Charles Johnston: A General History of the Pirates (Ed. Arthur Hayward, London 1926) p.198
- (3) P.R.O., T70/51 - To George Coates, 9 July 1700, fl.127; to Robert Lewis, 9 July 1700, fl.131; and to Thomas Corker, 3 Oct 1699, fl.50.
- (4) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, p.70
- (5) John Newton: Journal of a Slave Trader.

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A second and even more vital distinction can be drawn between the alcohol brought to the Upper Guinea Coast as a vendible product and those supplies which were considered as revenue payments to the local rulers or were regarded as "entertainment allowances". The annual rent paid by the Portuguese of Cacheu to the Papel king of Mata and the chief of Mompataz was dominated by wine. (1) Throughout the era of the Atlantic slave trade, alcohol of one sort or another played a principal role as a constituent of the fixed revenues of the African rulers. As one captain-major of Cacheu put it, the rents were paid to the African rulers in "goods most appropriate to their appetities". (2) The Royal African Company in Sierra Leone reckoned the most appropriate goods to be brandy, old clothes and swords; (3) and the English private traders continued to offer alcohol in this context. When the anti-slavery party launched the Sierra Leone Company in 1787, they found that six or seven chiefs in the vicinity applied to them for quantities of alcohol which they had until then received from the slave traders, apparently on a regular and agreed basis. (4) There is in fact one surviving example of a signed treaty between the Europeans and an African ruler in which liquor was specifically mentioned. This was a contract between the Portuguese and a Beafada fidalgo on the Geba, in which it was stated that whenever the fidalgo

(1) See above, Ch. V, p. 268

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, maço IV - Antonio Bezerra (Jnr), 10 June 1721

(3) P.R.O., T70/360 - Bence Island Accounts, and T70/587 - Sherbro Accounts, 1681-86

(4) C.B. Wadstrom: An Essay on Colonisation, Part 2, p.81

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returned a slave who escaped from the Portuguese he would be paid one bar of iron and one bottle of aguardente; while he and his successors were to be treated with 'gifts' of liquor from time to time. (1)

Apart from the fixed payments, there were a large number of occasions on which the Europeans had to give 'presents' or remuneration to the African rulers with whom they dealt. Writing to the holder of the Cape Verde-Guinea contract in 1617, the local Portuguese trade factor in Cacheu argued against attempting to use force in dealing with the Africans, because he felt that wine effectively smoothed the way. He had just despatched a ship to the Canaries for supplies, for it was his policy to keep 7 pipes of wine in the factory solely for treating African guests, and this was quite distinct from the amounts expended when there were disputes. (2) It is no accident that along the whole of the West African coast, the word 'dash' though used initially to refer to a gift of any kind, came to mean a small quantity of liquor offered as a preliminary to trade, for, as John Atkins realised, the African trader 'never cares to treat with dry lips'. (3) This was the substance which the traders found best fitted to lubricate the wheels of Afro-European commerce.

It is not difficult to imagine how the imports of alcohol were consumed. The social life of the peoples of the Upper Guinea Coast was studded with events such as funeral 'cries', initiation ceremonies, harvest

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, maço V - Copy of agreement 30 June 1751

(2) A.H.U. Cabo Verde, caixa I - No. 99, Baltezar Castel Branco to the contract holder, 15 April 1617.

(3) John Atkins: A Voyage to Guinea, p.171

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celebrations, etc., where the emphasis was on the maximum consumption of food and drink. (1) In the midst of the hostilities with the Portuguese in 1753, the king of Bissau called a truce to obtain supplies of liquor, because a relative of his had been killed, and they had to begin the 'cry'. (2) The mulatto chiefs of the late eighteenth century also observed this "country practice", and where the 'cry' of chief James Cleveland was solemnised in 1793, 20 puncheons of alcohol were consumed. (3) For that matter, the resident European officials and traders were themselves obliged to hold similar wakes when one of their number died, and this meant that intoxicants should flow freely. When De la Courbe visited the Portuguese trading centre of Geba in 1686, a 'cry' was in process for the recently deceased Afro-Portuguese sergeant, who represented the authority of the Portuguese crown in this remote area. (4) Several years later, when the chief factor of the Royal African Company in Sierra Leone died at this job, his colleagues failed to invite the king of Sherbro to the 'cry', which was a serious breach of protocol, endangering the relations between the Company and the ruler in question. (5)

When alcohol was made out to be the most important item of trade

(1) See above, Ch. II, p. 114

(2) Antonio da Costa Araújo: Relação da Viagem da Fragata "Nossa Senhora da Estrella a Bissau em 1753 (Ed. Damião Peres, Lisboa 1942), p.22.

(3) T. Winterbottom: An Account of the Native Africans of Sierra Leone, p.250

(4) P. Cultru: Premier Voyage de Sieur de la Courbe, p.248

(5) P.R.O., T70/3 - Richard Smith, 29 June 1715

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by contemporary observers, it is almost certain that they had in mind its strategic value. Placed in this narrow and specific context, the alcohol transported to the Upper Guinea Coast was of undeniable importance not because of absolute volume nor any inducement to alcoholism on the part of substantial numbers of people, but because it was one of the most decisive factors affecting the Afro-European partnership.

Cloth, the next category of imports, was not as dashing as alcohol, but was probably of greater general appeal. The story must begin with the crafts of spinning, weaving and dyeing which were practised on the Upper Guinea Coast. Cotton manufacturing in the Senegambia and on parts of the Upper Guinea Coast drew the attention of most visitors to the area from the time of Valentim Fernandes to that of Mungo Park. The cotton was woven on a very narrow frame, requiring at least six strips to be sewn together to produce one "country cloth" or pano; but the neat craftsmanship made the stitching virtually indiscernible. (1) The quality of the blue dyes (Indigofera and Lonchocarpus cyanescens) also drew European admiration. (2) According to Ogilby, the best cloths on the Gambia were panos sakes, which were two and a half ells long and one and a half broad, bleached white and having eight strips sewn together; barafulas, which were great blue cloths; and, bontans, which were two ells long and one and a half broad, comprising six strips of

(1) T. Winterbottom: An Account of the Native Africans of Sierra Leone, p.96

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.248; and Mungo Park: Travels ... in the Years 1795, 1796 and 1797, p.181, and The Journal of a Mission ... in the Year 1805, p.10

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blue and white. (1) The Portuguese performed three distinct services in relation to the "country cloth" of the Senegambia and the Upper Guinea Coast, they distributed it locally, they exported it, and they manufactured it on the Upper Guinea Coast and in the Cape Verde islands.

Being extremely knowledgeable about the local requirements, the lancados and the Afro-Portuguese were aware of precisely what areas needed cloth and what kind of cloth sold best in the given districts. Generally speaking the movement was from north to south, because the Wolofs, Mandingas, Fulas, Banhuns, Casangas and Beafadas were the manufacturing tribes. Thus, of the Nunez, Coelho remarked that to trade there one needed cloth and more cloth, most of which was "country cloth", while on the Scarcies, cloth from Farim was particularly fancied. (2) On the other hand, the manufacturing peoples needed further supplies of dye, and indigo could be obtained from the Nunez in large quantities. Consequently, there was established a regular coastal trade between the Nunez and the Cacheu, transporting processed indigo in the form of dried sticks called tintas by the Portuguese. (3)

To a limited extent, the Afro-Portuguese on the mainland also tried to enter into the production of "country cloth". At Hereges, De la Courbe found a mulatto mistress who superintended the production of cloth, (4) while the Afro-Portuguese at Farim and Bissau were also manufacturing their own cloth

(1) John Ogilby: Africa, p.356

(2) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, pp.60,227

(3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.342

(4) P. Cultru: Premier Voyage de Sieur de la Courbe, p.292

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in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. (1) However, it was in the Cape Verde islands that the Portuguese settlers, African slaves and their common descendants came to specialise in the manufacture of "country cloth". From the fifteenth century, cotton was the commodity which bound the Cape Verde islands most closely to the mainland. The dry conditions on the island made them suitable for cotton cultivation; and some of the raw cotton found a market on the Gambia, Geba, Cacheu and Casamance among the Banhuns, Casangas, Beafada and Mandingas, in exchange for cloths which were already woven and dyed. (2) By the end of the sixteenth century, however, the islands had ceased to export raw cotton, and had become instead manufacturers, using basically the same African techniques. Apart from cotton, the Cape Verde islanders utilised blends of European fabrics such as silk, worsted and wool, and they were capable of producing attractive quilts and counterpanes, the best of which were exported to Brazil. (3) The Cape Verde cloths held a commanding position on the mainland, especially among the Papels, Djolas and Bulloms, while some went as far south as the Gold Coast.

"Country cloths" not only held their own against European manufactures in this era, but the English, Dutch and French were forced to purchase these cloths from the Cape Verde islands or from those sections of the coast where they were available (those being the Senegambia, the Upper

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, Maço 1 - Paulo de Lima, 30 June 1707

(2) See p. 437

(3) A.W. Lawrence (ed.): A Series of Uncommon Events which befell Captain George Roberts (London 1930) pp.218-220

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Guinea Coast as far south as the Nunez, and the Malaguetta Coast around Cape Mesurado) in order to conduct their trade in areas where the cloth was in demand. This was the article which allowed the Cape Verdeans to continue to play a role in the slave trade on the Upper Guinea Coast until the end of the eighteenth century, because they could either purchase slaves directly on the mainland with their cloths, or obtain them from other Europeans by paying in "country cloth". From the viewpoint of the Portuguese crown, this selling of cloth to the ships of other European nations was prejudicial to the national interest, because it facilitated the commerce of Portugal's rivals. But when the Conselho Ultramarino tried to clamp down on the practice, the Cape Verde settlers raised strong protests, and in fact disregarded the prohibitive legislation. (1)

In reality, cloth was not only one of their most valuable exchange commodities, but was the basis of their currency. The effort to maintain a truly monetary economy in the Cape Verde islands based largely on Spanish coin was beyond the Cape Verdeans, and instead they utilised the strips of cloth as a conventional medium, following the practice in vogue on the African mainland. It was, to be precise, the barafula which was used as the basis for most Cape Verde accounts, as well as those of the lançados on the

(1) For the banning of the sale of Cape Verde cloths by the Lisbon administration in 1688, see Sena Barcelos: Subsidios para a Historia de Cabo Verde e Guiné, Vol. I, Ch. VII, pp.86,87.

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mainland. (1)

Meanwhile, traders of other nationalities were exploiting the local trade in "country cloths". In September 1679, the London office of the Royal African Company was informed that £100 worth of Santiago (Cape Verde) cloths would be of the greatest value in Sierra Leone, especially the barafula and another type known as golozens. (2) Two years later, the chief factor at Sherbro gratefully acknowledged receipt of 1,413 cloths from the Gambia. (3) Of course, the interlopers too were aware of the profitable interchange of "country cloths" for commodities which they wished to carry to Europe or the Americas. Because the Sierra Leone factories of the Royal African Company were ill-equipped with boats in 1682, the interlopers had the market at Cape Mesurado to themselves, buying cloth and shirts, which they transferred to the Sherbro to barter for ivory. (4) To meet competition of this sort, the Royal African Company ceased to rely exclusively on their factories in the Gambia and Bence island for supplies of "country cloth" for the Sherbro and the Gold

(1) Sena Barcelos and Joāo Barreto take 200 reis to be the value of the barafu but this value fluctuated. For instance, in 1673, it was said that because of the competition from other Europeans and the decline of Portuguese trade even Cape Verde cloths had fallen off in price, and the barafula was then worth 200 reis instead of a previous figure of 300 reis. See A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 133, Antonio Bezerra, Aug 1673.

- (2) P.R.O., T70/1 - Edmund Pierce, 4 Aug 1679, fl.34
- (3) P.R.O., T70/16 - Joshua Platt, 7 Aug 1681, fl.10
- (4) P.R.O., T70/16 - Joshua Platt, 6 Feb 1682, fl.27.

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Coast. Instead, they sought to have imitations manufactured in England. The Committee of Goods had two specimens made up in 1702, and they chose the more convincing copy to be produced in greater quantities. (1)

Imitation and substitution was a process which the English manufacturers followed with great skill and success, and this was nowhere more marked than in the case of textiles. In the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, Indian and Dutch cloths were frequently mentioned as being the most useful of the imported types, and the Portuguese were in the fortunate position in the sixteenth century of being able to supply Indian cottons. (2) Indeed, the Conselho Ultramarino remained conscious of the possibility of the profitable interchange of goods from one sector of the Portuguese empire to another, and with the Spanish Indies. The global strategy for re-opening the slave trade from the Upper Guinea Coast to the Spanish Indies in 1647 involved the sale of slaves to the New World for gold and silver, and the use of the latter in India to procure cloths, especially black cloths which were in demand in Angola and the Upper Guinea Coast. (3) The English went a step further, and produced the Indian cottons and Dutch linens. (4) Two of the most frequently encountered cloths on the Upper Guinea Coast and on the West

(1) P.R.O., T70/51 - to Charles Barker, 21 July 1702, fl.242;

and T70/130 - Memoranda of the Committee of Goods.

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.276,374 (Mentioned both black and white cloth from India.)

(3) See above, Ch. V, p.

(4) K.G. Davies: The Royal African Company, p.175

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African coast were niccanees and annabasses. The former was originally Indian and the latter Dutch, but they were produced more cheaply in England.

There was obviously a constantly expanding market for cloth on the Upper Guinea Coast during the era of pre-colonial trade. Nothing else could account for the absorption not only of local supplies and of the Cape Verde manufactures, but also the amount of cloth imported from outside. Recalling that at the moment when the Portuguese made their appearance on the Upper Guinea Coast, the littoral peoples were adopting cotton clothing under the influence of the Senegambia and the Western Sudan, (1) one realises that there was ample scope for such expansion. (2) In addition to cotton, the Europeans supplied silks, linens, woollens, baizes and serges, the last two being particularly popular because they were both cheap and durable. By mid-eighteenth century, when Nicholas Owen reflected on what changes had occurred among the Africans on the coast of Sierra Leone owing to contact with the Europeans, he thought the most significant was the alteration in their appearance brought about by European clothes and swords. (3)

Cloth, metals and metal utensils accounted for most of the trade carried on by the Portuguese in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. One of the earliest reports on Portuguese commerce in Sierra Leone, that of the French 'interloper', Eustache de la Fosse in 1479, mentioned tin basins as one of the

(1) See above, Ch. II, p. 121 and ~~Ch. II, p.~~

(2) Cloths were not only used for clothing but were also stored up as burial wealth.

(3) Nicholas Owen: Journal of a Slave Dealer, p.70.

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main articles of the commerce. (1) A large wide basin known as a barber's basin was invariably enumerated among the imports of the Upper Guinea Coast in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; (2) and to these must be added a wide collection of pots, plates, pans, kettles and cauldrons, made of brass, copper, tin and pewter. The agents of the Royal African Company in Sierra Leone found it necessary to remind the officials in London that such utensils were indispensable for the trade of their factories. (3) In 1703, the Committee of Goods in London ordered 380 pewter basins of assorted sizes for the Sherbro factory, while 440 were requisitioned for Bence island. (4) "Dutch knives" were also in great demand in Sierra Leone, and the large wooden-hafted Birmingham knives which were despatched instead did not seem to satisfy the residents of the area. When pressed to supply "Dutch knives" to Sierra Leone in 1721, the Committee of Goods at first declared that it was inconvenient to place a small order in Holland to supply Sierra Leone but they later conceded, and obtained the knives required. (5)

Most of the above articles were for use in the household, but the salt-making industry on the Upper Guinea Coast occasioned the import of a

(1) "Voyage a la Côte Occidentale d'Afrique", Revue Hispanique II, pp.175-201

(2) Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, pp.76,84; and

Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.318

(3) See, e.g., P.R.O., T70/10 - Zachary Rogers, 5 Aug 1678, fl.4

(4) P.R.O., T70/130 - Memoranda of the Committee of Goods

(5) P.R.O., T70/60 - To Plunkett, 31 Oct 1721, fl.18; and

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wide brass pan called a 'neptune', in which the salt was evaporated to dryness

(1) This was a rare instance of a European import that could be put to productive use by the Africans, and indirectly the import of iron also fell into this category, since it was utilised by the Africans not only for the forging of weapons, but also for agricultural implements. (2)

Before the arrival of the Portuguese caravels and for some time after, the littoral peoples of the Senegambia and the Upper Guinea Coast obtained their supplies of iron from the Futa Djalon and the hinterland of the Senegambia. (3) Probably the first step taken by the Portuguese with regard to this important mineral was to enter the local trade. The lançados purchased iron in the Senegambia and resold it in the coastal regions to the south. This conformed to a standard pattern by which the lançados and later their Afro-Portuguese descendants transferred African goods from one locality to another, enhancing their profit at each stage, and ultimately securing slaves and other forest products for export to Europe and the Americas. (4) In this instance, the Portuguese lançados took slaves from the Upper Guinea Coast and exchanged them for iron among the Wolofs. The latter handed on most of their slaves to the Moors, while the Portuguese took the iron and

(1) See above, Ch. I, p. 44

(2) André de Faro: Peregrinação, p.86, and P.R.O., T70/1465 - Diary of Walter Charles.

(3) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, pp.48,76; Pacheco Pereira: Esmeraldo de Situ Orbis, p.84; and Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.354.

(4) See below, Ch. VIII.

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disposed of it for further captives on the Upper Guinea Coast, making a surplus which was designed for the Spanish Americas. (1)

However, some imports of iron must have reached the Upper Guinea Coast from Europe at an early date, evoking a prohibitive edict from the Portuguese crown. (2) Yet, when associated with the Spanish, who had supplies of iron ore, the Portuguese administration partially negated this law by conceding to the lessee of the Cape Verde-Guinea contract the right to ship iron to the Upper Guinea Coast, provided he paid an additional sum equivalent to 1/4 of the contract. (3) Bids entered for the Cape Verde-Guinea 'trades' up to 1640 all showed that the privilege of transporting iron to the Upper Guinea Coast was sold separately from the overall lease, though to the same merchant. (4)

Portugal's inability to supply iron to the Upper Guinea Coast was demonstrated by the sharp change which came about after the 'Restoration' of 1640. By August 1642, the Conselho Ultramarino was advising the new Portuguese monarch to place a complete ban on the exports of iron to Guinea

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.301

(2) A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 26, Manueline legislation on trade, 24 March 1514, pp,72,73

(3) A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, 2nd series, Vol. III - No. 42 Relação of Francisco de Andrade, 26 Jan 1582, p.105

(4) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa I - No. 57, bids for the contract considered by the Conselho, 23 Jan 1616, and copy of contract awarded to Gaspar da Costa, Jan 1638.

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because Portugal itself was badly in need of this metal for its own defence.

(1) Of course, the trade of the Upper Guinea Coast was never the complete monopoly of the Portuguese and the Spanish, and during the latter portion of the sixteenth century, the English and Dutch had been welcomed by the resident traders when they arrived with cargoes of iron. This was pointed out by an English ship's captain calling at the Gambia in 1591, and two or three decades later, the amount of iron brought by these 'strangers' had increased a great deal - so much so that the governor of Cape Verde expressed fear that the market would be saturated to the detriment of slave exports. His reasoning was that iron was the article which the Africans of the Upper Guinea Coast most desired, and that if this demand was satisfied by the Spaniards and the Portuguese lançados, the numbers of slaves supplied would then fall. (2) Subsequent events showed that the demand for iron on the Upper Guinea Coast and in the Cacheu-Gambia area in particular, never slackened and may well have increased as the seventeenth century progressed.

Time and time again, the Conselho was informed of the fact that the English, Dutch and French were bringing iron as one of the key goods for successful trade on the Upper Guinea Coast, and this information was usually complemented by pleas for more iron to be brought by the Portuguese merchants. ⁽³⁾

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- (1) A.H.U., Consultas of the Conselho, Cod.30 - Minute of 14 Aug 1642, fls.219-223.
- (2) A.H.U. Cabo Verde, caixa I - No.54, Memorandum on the trade of Cape Verde, Dec 1615.
- (3) See, e.g., A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 51, João D'Almeida, 5 Feb 1647, p.229, and Manuel Cordeira Santos, 1694.

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Similarly, the agents of the Royal African Company in the Gambia found it necessary to remind the officials in London that to trade in the Cacheu area, they had to pay half the purchase price in iron. (1)

Of the thirty-five ships despatched by the Royal African Company to West Africa during the year 1685, all but six carried cargoes of iron, much of which was destined for the "North Parts". (2) 90 tons of iron were sent to the Gambia factory the following year, (3) a quantity which still fell short of the 122 tons (10,000 bars) which agent Castle had estimated in 1683 as the annual capacity of the Cacheu market. (4) In December 1687, the London officials seemed to have made a special effort to increase the tonnage of iron sent to the Gambia, for they decided that the ships which usually carried supplies to this factory were too small, and that iron should be discharged at the Gambia by a ship bound for the Gold Coast. (5) A few years later, they also sent an extra ten tons to the Sherbro factory to enable it to handle the trade in malaguetta pepper on the adjacent coasts beyond Cape Mount. (6)

The quantity of iron brought by the Europeans to the Upper Guinea Coast must have levelled off by the early eighteenth century. As the activity

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- (1) P.R.O., T70/16 - James Castle, 20 Feb 1683, fl.46
 (2) K.G. Davies, The Royal African Company, p.171
 (3) P.R.O., T70/50 - To Alexander Cleeve, 4 June 1686, fl.10
 (4) P.R.O., T70/16 - James Castle, 20 Feb 1683, fl.46
 (5) P.R.O., - To Alexander Cleeve, 20 Dec 1687, fl.54
 (6) P.R.O., T70/50 - To Henry Gibson, 9 Feb 1691, fl.133

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required to supply the European ships was pushed further and further inland, (1) the demand for iron lessened. On the middle Gambia, there had never been any overwhelming desire for European iron, because the residents there could obtain the mineral in the vicinity. (2) When Mungo Park proceeded up this river, he found that at a certain point the movement of iron was still towards the estuary, indicating quite clearly that European imports of this metal had captured only the coastal market. (3) On the upper reaches of the river, the inhabitants were so interested in the European article only in so far as it was brought in the form of useful items, for in the Futa Djalou, the mining, smelting and forging of iron continued to the end of the eighteenth century; (4) and this local iron was said to have been preferred by the people of Sierra Leone for its malleability, and considered second to the European product (which was usually Swedish) only for the making of edge tools. (5)

Enough iron was brought from Europe to this region during the centuries under discussion to warrant this mineral along with other metallic products being placed first in order of value among the imports of the Upper Guinea Coast; followed by cloth, and then by alcohol and weapons. In the final analysis, however, what mattered was not one article as opposed to another, but the combination in which the several categories were presented to the African merchants.

(1) See below, Ch. IX, p. 560

(2) Richard Jobson: The Golden Trade, p.165

(3) Mungo Park: Travels...in the Years 1795, 1796 and 1797, p.26

(4) C.B. Wadstrom: An Essay on Colonisation, Part I, p.41

(5) John Matthews: A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone, p.52

PURCHASE OF A SLAVE IN THE GEBÁ SERTAO				
Trade Goods		Prices in Portuguese reis		
		In Lisbon	In Bissau	In Geba
1	Ordinary gun	1:200	4:000	8:000
2	Ordinary swords	1:000	3:000	8:000
2	Iron bars	2:400	4:000	8:000
1	Case of aguardente containing 12 five-pint flasks	3:600	12:000	24:000
1	Barrel of gunpowder with 2 arrobas or 64 lbs.	5:760	15:000	30:000
2	Boxes of beads	400	2:000	4:000
100	Flints	300	1:000	1:500
100	Balls (lead shot)	300	1:000	1:500
2	Agulha Cape Verde cloths	3:000	4:000	8:000
1	Ordinary hat	200	2:000	4:000
1	Carafe of aguardente	220	500	1:000
Total		18:380	48:500	96:000 (sic)

PURCHASE OF A QUINTAL OF WAX IN GEBÁ				
Trade Goods		Prices in Portuguese reis		
		In Lisbon	In Bissau	In Geba
3	Five-pint flasks of aguardente	1:500	3:000	6:000
14	Ordinary Dutch knives	560	1:400	2:800
1	Exercise book	20	500	1:000
5	Flints	25	500	1:000
1	Box of beads	200	2:000	4:000
6	Spans of bar iron (4.5')	360	1:200	2:400
2000	Large beads	20	200	400
	Small bells (1/2 box)	150	1:000	2:000
1	Box of imitation coral	200	1:000	4:000
1	Glass (1 pint)	100	1:000	2:000
1	Ordinary hat	300	1:000	2:000
1	Linen handkerchief	150	1:000	2:000
Total		3:535 (sic)	14:800 (sic)	29:600

PURCHASE IN GEBÁ OF AN IVORY TUSK WEIGHING MORE THAN A QUINTAL				
Trade Goods		Prices in Portuguese reis		
		In Lisbon	In Bissau	In Geba
1	Ordinary gun	1:200	4:000	8:000
3	Flasks of aguardente	1:200	3:000	6:000
1	Agulha Cape Verde cloth	1:500	3:000	4:000
1	Flask of gunpowder	500	2:000	4:000
6	Knives	240	600	1:200
Total		4:640	12:600	23:200

The above tables are taken from Bernardino de Andrade: Planta da Praça de Bissau (Ed. Damiao Peres) pp.65-67. Towards the end of the 18th century, when they were drawn up, 48,000 reis were equivalent to 27 shillings.

PURCHASE OF A SLAVE IN THE GEBÁ SERTAO

Trade Goods		Prices in Portuguese reis		
		In Lisbon	In Bissau	In Geba
1	Ordinary gun	1:200	4:000	8:000
2	Ordinary swords	1:000	3:000	8:000
2	Iron bars	2:400	4:000	8:000
1	Case of aguardente containing 12 five-pint flasks	3:600	12:000	24:000
1	Barrel of gunpowder with 2 arrobas or 64 lbs.	5:760	15:000	30:000
2	Boxes of beads	400	2:000	4:000
100	Flints	300	1:000	1:500
100	Balls (lead shot)	300	1:000	1:500
2	Agulha Cape Verde cloths	3:000	4:000	8:000
1	Ordinary hat	200	2:000	4:000
1	Carafe of aguardente	220	500	1:000
Total		18:380	48:500	96:000 (sic)

PURCHASE OF A QUINTAL OF WAX IN GEBÁ

Trade Goods		Prices in Portuguese reis		
		In Lisbon	In Bissau	In Geba
3	Five-pint flasks of aguardente	1:500	3:000	6:000
14	Ordinary Dutch knives	560	1:400	2:800
1	Exercise book	20	500	1:000
5	Flints	25	500	1:000
1	Box of beads	200	2:000	4:000
6	Spans of bar iron (4.5')	360	1:200	2:400
2000	Large beads	20	200	400
	Small bells (1/2 box)	150	1:000	2:000
1	Box of imitation coral	200	1:000	4:000
1	Glass (1 pint)	100	1:000	2:000
1	Ordinary hat	300	1:000	2:000
1	Linen handkerchief	150	1:000	2:000
Total		3:535 ^(sic)	14:800 ^(sic)	29:600

PURCHASE IN GEBÁ OF AN IVORY TUSK WEIGHING MORE THAN A QUINTAL

Trade Goods		Prices in Portuguese reis		
		In Lisbon	In Bissau	In Geba
1	Ordinary gun	1:200	4:000	8:000
3	Flasks of aguardente	1:200	3:000	6:000
1	Agulha Cape Verde cloth	1:500	3:000	4:000
1	Flask of gunpowder	500	2:000	4:000
6	Knives	240	600	1:200
Total		4:640	12:600	23:200

The above tables are taken from Bernardino de Andrade: Planta da Praça de Bissau (Ed. Damiao Peres) pp.65-67. Towards the end of the 18th century, when they were drawn up, 48;000 reis were equivalent to 27 shillings.

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For every slave, every quintal of wax, every ton of camwood, the Africans expected a variety of goods which could range from pins to firearms, and which were often demanded in a fixed combination. The accompanying tables represent the assortments which could be tendered to Africans in the Geba-Corubal area in the latter part of the eighteenth century. They were drawn up by Bernardino de Andrade, who had many years of experience in the region, Considering for the moment the left hand columns only, it is clear that all five categories of goods were involved: namely, trinkets, weapons, alcohol, cloth and metal. In a sense, each category counted equally, because its absence from the stock of the trader wishing to make the purchase would make him 'all-assorted', and incapable of concluding a deal, if there were competitors who had all of the goods demanded. This explains why no concept so pre-occupied the European traders on the coast as that of the "proper assortment" of trade goods.

The price of each European article in the assortment was calculated in a straightforward manner. The basic factor was its cost in Europe, and the Committee of Goods of the Royal African Company, for instance, which had buyers in England and several European countries, purchased its goods for the West African trade at the lowest possible prices. (1) It is to be noticed that De Andrade cited each product as having one price in Lisbon, a second and higher price in Bissau where the goods were unloaded, and in the Geba hinterland a third price which was higher still. With an average 100% mark-up at each stage, this obviously represented not only the costs of

(1) P.R.O., T70/128 - Memoranda of the Committee of Goods, and T70/130, 1703-1719.

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distribution and services, but included a built-in profit margin. Equally obviously the price of African goods to the European buyer was wrapped up in each bundle of trade goods, though the computation of the cost of slaves and other African produce was more devious than it appears at first glance.

Resident European traders approached the business of buying and selling on the Upper Guinea Coast by ascertaining the model assortments. Each item in those assortments was given a valuation in European currency, and one arrived at the price of the African article. At Geba in the latter eighteenth century, according to De Andrade's arithmetic, one slave cost 18:380 reis, or 48:500 reis or 96:000 reis, depending on whether one used the price list of Lisbon, Bissau or the sertão respectively. 4:800 reis was then equivalent to 27 shillings, (1) so that the slave was supposedly obtained for an assortment of trade goods bought in Portugal for £5.6s. or thereabouts. That assortment was valued at £13.10s on the island of Bissau, and it doubled in value when carried into the bush. The prices of the assortments advanced for the purchase of 1 quintal of wax and one quintal of prime ivory also underwent similar mutations. However, the results obtained from these calculations were sometimes /meant to be taken as the ceiling prices, but they were certainly not averages. Such an understanding would considerably deflate the price of slaves and other products on the African coast.

There was a certain elasticity in every prescribed assortment, allowing both the African seller and the European buyer to suggest that one or the other of the items on the list should be replaced by another - a process

(1) C.B. Wadstrom: An Essay on Colonisation, Part I, p.141

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known as 'rooming'. It was the job of the European trader as he saw it to practice such 'rooming' as would reduce his payments; that is to say, by replacing the more expensive items by the cheaper. Often this was not difficult because the Africans themselves were neither knowledgeable about the price of each European product nor concerned about that factor. At any given time, the African seller may simply have preferred two more carafes of aguardente instead of two swords, as indicated in De Andrade's table of the cost of a slave. Our informant makes this explicit: "very often a slave turns out to be much cheaper, because those who sell them ask for certain goods, which are less expensive, and the purchase is made at virtually half of the exemplar cited". (1)

Of course, the European trader was also alive ^{to} the possibility of prevailing upon the African to accept a substitution, even if this was not the original intention of the African seller. Around Cape Mount at the end of the eighteenth century, the European traders were always anxious to replace guns and 'neptunes' with cheaper articles. If ivory was bought in quantities requiring the payment of ten guns among the assorted goods, then the European buyer might persuade the African seller to accept six guns, and 'room' the other four. Gunpowder, however, was one item that could not be 'roomed'. Understandably enough, there was no substitute for gunpowder, and the trade in this product grew so great that keg-making became a subsidiary industry in Sierra Leone, supervised apparently by the white and mulatto residents.

(1) Bernardino de Andrade: Planta da Praça de Bissau, p.65

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The kegs they produced were considered as good as those from England, and they were cheaper. (1)

Newton's Journal gave a typical picture of the intricacies of the trade system based on the assortment. In 1750, he was assembling his slave cargo by making several purchases at various points on the coast of Sierra Leone; and among his competitors following the same procedure was one Captain Ellis, who had come down from the Gold Coast with an excellent assortment. Newton wrote on the 29th October, "But believe shall be forced to go from Captain Ellis whenever we meet, his large gold-coast cargoe enabling him to bear away all the trade here from a vessel that has only a common assortment". An entry for the 14th December showed that Newton was bargaining astutely, forcing the local traders to take "a more equal assortment than they have hitherto done". Newton was still on the coast the following May; by which time his trade goods were depleted and ill-balanced. The net price at which he procured his slaves increased, "because I have many things on board which will not sell any where and in generall poorly assorted". In particular he was short of both beads and kettles so that when he obtained six slaves on the 4th May, he gave only seven kettles and 21 lb of beads, which were not only below the usual amount offered, but such a low proportion was disadvantageous to Newton himself, since these were relatively cheaper items. (2)

Because of the process of adjusting the assortment, the price of any African good was a variable which could fluctuate between wide limits.

(1) B.M., Add.Ms.12131, Papers relating to Sierra Leone, 1794-96

(2) John Newton: Journal of a Slave Trader, pp.13,24,50.

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Canot evaluated a group of forty slaves purchased from the Fulas in the "Rivers of the South" in the early nineteenth century at 1,600 dollars, that is at 40 dollars each. Yet when large amounts of tobacco (an important nineteenth century import) were put into the assortment, the price was as low as 18 dollars, while the cost of a slave calculated in gunpowder was only 20 dollars (1) - half of the original quotation, as De Andrade had suggested. Furthermore, the prices cited by the Europeans were invariably related to prime products, and in the case of slaves this made a very great difference indeed.

Slaves were appraised after the manner of livestock. Age and height were the elementary considerations, the two being in any case physiologically related. The dividing line between a man and a boy was round about 4'. When Newton arrived in Sierra Leone on his second slaving voyage in 1752, his instructions were to secure a cargo of slaves who were all above the height of 4'2". (2) In giving evidence later to the Lords' Committee on the Slave Trade, the vital statistics of Sierra Leone slaves, with which he supplied them, were height 4'6" and age 16-30 years. (3) Yet Newton himself had several entries in his diary where both age and height were considerably less than this norm.

Both the records of the Royal African Company and the Report of the Lords' Committee yield further evidence on this point. The English

(1) Captain Canot: Adventures of an African Slaver, p.90

(2) John Newton: Journal of a Slave Trader, p.72

(3) Report of the Lords of the Committee, 1789 - Part I, 'Slaves'

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trading Company usually suggested a range of about 25 to 35 or 40 years. (1) Similarly, John Matthews indicated that no old people or children below the height of 3'9" were purchased if it could be avoided, and that the bulk of the cargo ranged between 15-40 years of age. But James Penny, who served in a Sierra Leone slave factory in 1768 gave a lower estimate of 9-30 years; (2) and it is clear that while the slavers would have preferred older youths and young adults, they very often fell back upon children, especially since old people were definitely taboo. Besides, there are occasional references to traders who arrived specifically to obtain a very young cargo. (3) As far as the intrinsic importance of age selection is concerned, it appears that a much larger number of children and very young persons were taken into the holds of the slave ships, and this had a definite bearing on prices.

The Royal African Company was prepared to pay £6 for its adult slaves and £4 for children between 8 and 16 years, according to a memorandum of 1700. (4) Matthews informed the Lords' Committee that the price paid for children of 3'9" was about half that for the adults. (5) Then sex was added as a rider to age and height. Canot explained that "if the woman offered in

- (1) P.R.O., T70/51 - To Thomas Corker, 3 Oct 1699, fl.50, and to Pinder, 7 March 1700, fl.110.
- (2) Report of the Lords of the Committee, 1789, - Part I, 'Slaves'
- (3) P.R.O., T70/1465 - Diary of Walter Charles, 1728, and Captain Canot: Adventures of an African Slaver, p.
- (4) P.R.O., T70/51 - To Pinder, 7 March 1700
- (5) Report of the Lords of the Committee, 1789 - Part I, 'Slaves'.

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the market exceeded 25 years of age, we made a deduction of 20%, ^u b^ut if they were stanchly built, and gave promising tokens for the future, we took them up at the price of an able-bodied man". (1) Much earlier, reports from Barbados suggested that women from 15 to 22 fetched £8 or £10 more per head than those in the age group 26-32, so that obviously the slave traders made an attempt to procure only girls and young women. (2) The proportion of females taken by slavers visiting Sierra Leone seemed to have been fairly constant at 1/3rd of the cargoes. (3)

Having made allowances for the main physical characteristics of the slaves, deductions to the price were forthcoming if any blemishes were discovered. Some were obvious - like 'fallen-breasted' women, from whom the traders shied away if possible. But for smaller defects, the detailed examination of skin and orifices was necessary. As one slave trader put it: "they are sold in open market on shore, and examined by us in like manner as our Brother Trade do beasts in Smithfield". (4) And then they set their final price. "If the slave does not measure 3', or if it has any defect, however slight it may be, (and whether hereditary or acquired)

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- (1) Captain Canot: Adventures of an African Slaver, p.91
 - (2) P.R.O., T70/51 - To John Brown (Gold Coast) 29, July 1703, fl.360.
 - (3) This was the proportion the Royal African Company expected. See P.R.O., T70/51 - To Thomas Corker, 3 Oct 1699, fl.50. According to Matthews and Norris, this was the propo~~rtion~~tion realised in the eighteenth century. See Report of the Lords of the Committee, 1789 - Part I, 'Slaves'
 - (4) John Atkins: A Voyage to Guinea, p.178

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we do not pay more than 20:000 reis as the price in the sertão." (1) This 20:000 reis represented the down-scaling of the original 96:000 reis; that is to say, from about £27 for a prime adult male slave in the bush when the most expensive goods were placed in the notional assortment to less than £5 for the actual purchase of a child or slave with defects. It also represented the down-scaling of humanity - white and black.

(1) Bernardino de Andrade: Planta da Praça de Bissau, p.66.

AFRO EUROPEAN COMMERCEPART II - "THE CLASH OF CULTURES"

In bargaining over each individual purchase, the Africans and the Europeans were seeking some common ground between their two contrasting conceptions of the economic process. It has been recognised that the two economies did differ fundamentally, and that over the centuries of trade there was some approximation of the one to the other, K.G. Davies, for example, made the general observation that "when one civilisation trades with another, their values become roughly assimilated"; and he added that as far as the West African trade was concerned, the impression left by the records of the Royal African Company was that the pattern of trade was dominated by the needs and methods of the Africans. (1) This theme was subsequently taken up by Karl Polanyi, using the Gold Coast as his model. He refers to the African trading system as one of "gainless barter", where the principle of the exchange of equivalents was fundamental; while the Europeans wished to conduct "market trading", aimed at making a monetary profit on price differentials. In Polanyi's opinion also, it was the European system which adjusted to the African. (2) Evidence taken from the Upper Guinea Coast helps to substantiate as well as to modify this interpretation.

(1) K.G. Davies: The Royal African Company, p.235.

(2) K. Polanyi: "Sortings and 'ounce trade' in the West African Slave Trade" in The Journal of African History, Vol. V, No. 3, 1964, pp.381-393.

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When the Fulas exchanged their salt for rice from the people of Port Loko, the operation went very smoothly, because they bartered equal amounts of the one for the other. (1) " It has been discerned that the Djolas not only refrain from the exploitation of exchanges for profit, but they regard this as ignoble. contending that an honest man ought to live on the proceeds of his labour. What the Djolas regard as just is the exchange of measure for measure - a basket of rice for a basket of groundnuts, a pot of wine for a pot of oil." (2) This was, of course, typical pre-capitalist ethics, and it was the fundamental principle of the barter economy, though one in exchange for one could become two in exchange for one, or any other simple fixed equivalent. L.V. Thomas, who made the above observations on Djola economic behaviour, also noted that among the Djolas of Fogny, a cloth was measured against a number of hens, and a number of cloths against a cow; and he suspected that this was a relatively recent innovation. (3) The use of cloth as a fixed measure represents the "incipient monetisation" that is usually found in a barter economy, allowing one convenient item to serve as a common denominator in exchanges. Its introduction among the Djolas of Fogny is probably to be attributed to the great influence of the Mandingas in the region, for even when the Djolas of the Casamance became involved in the trade generated by the Europeans by the end of the eighteenth century, the Mandingas acted as intermediaries. (4)

(1) T. Winterbottom: An Account of the Native Africans of Sierra Leone.

(2) L.V. Thomas: Les Diola, Vol. 1, p.283

(3) Ibid: loc.cit.,

(4) Mungo Park: Travels .. in the Years 1795,1796 and 1797.

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The grasp of the commercial process which the Mandingas displayed on the Gambia, and which they utilised to make a profit from the Djolas was no doubt partly acquired in their centuries of trade with the Europeans, but to some extent it must have preceded the European advent. Certainly, the economic activity in the Western Sudan was not "gainless barter", and the Mandé on the Upper Guinea Coast brought with them the commercial spirit of their homeland. The differences among tribes even on this relatively small section of the coast go towards indicating that one should tread extremely delicately when generalising about 'African' economic behaviour. Nevertheless, it is tolerably accurate to circumscribe the littoral non-Mandé peoples of this region within Polanyi's terminology, bearing in mind that the features displayed by the Djolas until modern times provide a useful indication of the nature of the economies of the other tribes of the Upper Guinea Coast in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, since the Djolas retain much of what is 'traditional' and 'indigenous'.

The extent that the commercial world of the Africans of the Upper Guinea Coast differed from that of the Europeans was mirrored primarily in the lack of sophisticated measurement among the former, since all that mattered was a simple unit which could serve as the standard of barter; and it is by no means surprising that the Africans should have utilised their own measures on first meeting the Europeans, and those measures carried with them a conception of the process of exchange. A striking example is provided by the trade in malaguetta peppers along the coast of what is now Liberia. The toponym 'Cess', which makes its appearance in more than one place on that coast, is a

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distortion of the Portuguese word cesto, meaning a 'pannier' or "large basket"; for that was the manner in which the malaguetta peppers were brought for sale. (1) They were not only containers but also units valued equally irrespective of contents. As L.V. Thomas realised in the case of the Djolas, the insistence on the exchange of a basket of rice for a basket of groundnuts was really lop-sided if judged by the European understanding of price, (2) and this serves to emphasise the wide gulf between the two systems.

On the Upper Guinea Coast, the employment of the basket in the kola trade provided a counterpart to the malaguetta of Liberia. It was De Almada who first referred to the long baskets in which the Africans measured and sold the kola nuts as colguas. (3) As described by Lemos Coelho, they were long narrow wicker containers, holding several thousand nuts, while there was a smaller basket called a molla, which was also in use and which had a capacity of about 500 kola nuts. (4)

Both ivory and camwood were heavy products, which were usually mentioned only in quintals or hundredweights. In reality, they were not purchased by weight. Ivory was measured by placing a stick in the hollow of the tusk. The distance between the tip of the tusk and the furthest point of the hollow was then spanned. In effect, therefore, each tusk was assessed on the length of solid ivory. Whether this was a prior African practice, or whether the lançados made this arrangement with the Africans is not clear, but

(1) A. Teixeira da Mota: Topónimos de Origem Portuguesa na Costa Ocidental de Africa (Bissau 1950) pp.233-238

(2) L.V. Thomas: Les Diola, Vol. 1, p.283

(3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.284

(4) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, p.62

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the length of tusk so estimated appeared to have had a fairly constant relationship to the weight, facilitating the eventual transfer to European measures. According to Lemos Coelho, the tusks selected varied in weight between 32 lb. and 192 lb. with the maximum weight corresponding to a length of 5 spans or 45".

The measurement of camwood was even more rough and ready. A small rectangular stockade was erected and camwood logs deposited within it until it was filled. It was then emptied, the wood handed over to the European buyer, and the stockade refilled. In this instance, the specifications were European, the space being intended to hold one quintal of camwood. (1) The camwood was cut into sections of four to five feet in length, (2) so that the number of logs would also have provided a rough guide to weight. Having measured the camwood and ivory, it was customary for the resident Portuguese traders to quote its price in "country cloths" or sometimes in salt since the Portuguese themselves carried salt inland from the coast. (3) For every 9" of solid tusk, for instance, the residents on the middle Gambia would accept two cloths or the equivalent in salt, which was about two bushels. (4)

Undoubtedly, however, the most outstanding measure used on the Upper Guinea Coast was the iron bar. That this resulted from the African cultural bias towards the use of this metal has been recognised, but the iron

(1) Ibid: For ivory, see p.24 and camwood p.65.

(2) J. Labat: Voyages du Chevalier des Marchais en Guinée, p.106

(3) See above, Ch. I, p.44 (*It was the local salt which the Portuguese distributed*)

(4) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, p.24

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bar itself has been wrongly considered as a European introduction. (1) When the Portuguese lançados entered the local trade in iron in the Senegambia and the Upper Guinea Coast, they found that the Africans forged the metal in a very distinctive shape. It was a narrow bar about 9" long, two fingers thick at one end and three fingers at the other. (2) This was the original "country bar" which must have been not simply raw material for weapons and implements, but a very convenient circulating standard in exchanges, not only among the Mandingas and the Susus who manufactured it, but also among the Wolofs and those tribes of the Upper Guinea Coast who were in closest contact with the Mande. It is significant that even cloths were ultimately evaluated on the basis of the iron bar. Panos sakes sold at one iron bar each, three bontans were exchanged for two bars, and barafulas for three bars. (3) It must have been the local practice which provided the Europeans with the idea of using the iron bar as a unit of currency in coastal profit-and-loss accounts.

Iron was shipped to the Upper Guinea Coast in narrow flattened bars, each ton comprising between 80 to 84 such pieces, so that each weighed between 26 and 28 lb. This at any rate was the practice of the Royal African Company, (4) and it appears to have been followed by all other traders on the coast. Thus, the Portuguese reckoned 38 bars to ten quintals or 1,000 lb.,

(1) K. Polanyi: *Op.cit.*,

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.281

(3) John Ogilby: Africa, p.356

(4) P.R.O., T70/78 - Minutes of the Court of Assistants, 1678-81 and

T70/130 - Memoranda of the Committee of Goods, 1703-1719.

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giving 26.3 lb. per "ship's bar". (1) According to a Portuguese source, the length was 18 palmos or 13.5', (2) though Barbot estimated it at 16 to 18', (3) This was then cut up into several sections on the coast by African blacksmiths. Jobson specified that the length of each was 12" at the Gambia estuary, but that further upriver the African traders accepted 8". (4) At the end of the eighteenth century, Labarthe also gave two estimates of the length of the small bar - one of 8-9" and the other of 12". He claimed that it weighed 27-28 lb. (5) but here he was obviously referring to the longer "ship's bar". These discrepancies can be ironed out to yield a single figure for the weight of the small bar. In the case of the Portuguese, the "ship's bar" would have produced 18 sections, each 9" long; while the English and French would have had 18 sections, each 12" long; but the sections would in both cases weigh approximately 1.5 lb. This was the nearest approximation to the article already familiar to the Africans of the Senegambia and the Upper Guinea Coast, the only difference being that the European product was mass-produced, and so had to be symmetrical as distinct from the iron rods forged individually by African blacksmiths. Thus, when the small iron bar was described as a "country bar", this is to be taken in the same sense as "country cloth" or "country law"; namely, as something which originated in Africa.

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, maço X - Table of the regular prices of goods in Bissau 1799

(2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa VI - Antonio Salgado, 15 May 1698.

(3) John Barbot: Description of North and South Guinea, 15 May 1698.

(4) Richard Jobson: The Golden Trade, p.165

(5) P. Labarthe: Voyage au Sénégal, p.236

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All the points raised so far authenticate the claim that Afro-European commerce in West Africa involved a considerable adaptation on the part of the Europeans; but there was more to it than that. In the first place, one must examine the tensions which preceded assimilation, and which in many instances remained unresolved. In the second place, to assert that the process of adjustment was entirely one-sided is to overstate the case and distort the true situation.

Since the Afro-European connection represented a meeting of two societies at two completely different stages of production, this incorporated certain fundamental tensions into the partnership which was formed between the Europeans and the African rulers. The attitudes and expectations of the one were alien to those of the other. As contended earlier, the initial response of the African 'hosts' was in terms of hospitality; (1) but the European trader in search of profit could not reciprocate in the same spirit. At the end of the eighteenth century, Smeathman, an official of the Sierra Leone Company, wrote a stringent criticism of customary hospitality as he found it in that area. "The law of hospitality is obstructive of industry. If there is provision in the country, a man who wants it has only to find out who has got any, and he must have his share. If he enters any man's house during his repast, and gives him the usual salutation, the man must invite him to partake. Thus, whatever abundance a man may get by assiduity, will be shared by the lazy; and thus they seldom calculate for more than necessities. But the laws of hospitality are not restrained to diet. A common man cannot

(1) See above, Ch. III, p. 164

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quietly enjoy a spare shirt or a pair of trousers. Those who are too lazy to plant or hunt are also too lazy to trade, and begging is not disgraceful, so that if an industrious man gets a spare shirt or utensils he will be teased to death for it, and he must not refuse or he must talk the palaver."(1)

The above is a beautiful set-piece of the moral terminology of capitalist accumulation - the 'assiduous' and the 'industrious' will inherit the earth, while those who do not share grace are the ones who were too lazy to plant or trade. Its value here is that it supports the hypothesis that from the outset certain tensions would have been inherent in the lançado-chief relationship. For one thing, the European traders took great exception to the constant demands for trifling items. Taken as a whole, they could represent a frittering away of profits; but even where they had minimal financial significance, the very haphazard nature of the requests frustrated the Europeans who had to make profit-and-loss accounts and foresee their commitments. (2) Like Smeathman, most Europeans who visited or were familiar with the Upper Guinea Coast invariably felt constrained to mention that the Africans "seldom calculate for more than necessities": namely, the material needs of the present and the immediate future. (3) This was clearly one of

(1) C.B. Wadstrom: An Essay on Colonisation, p.202 (Letters from Dr. Smeathman to Dr. Knowles 1783)

(2) This is what frustrated Nicholas Owen, especially since he had other expenses. See, The Journal of a Slave Dealer, p.46.

(3) See, E.g., John Atkins: A Voyage to Guinea, p.50; Nicholas Owen: Journal of a Slave Dealer, pp.31,32 and T. Winterbottom: An Account of the Native Africans of Sierra Leone, p.45.

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the issues on which the two cultures were at odds. Linked with this was the fact that they had two differing conceptions of time. The European traders were most impatient of the 'palavers' which could arise for an infinite variety of reasons, apart from the one given by Smeathman. It must have been difficult indeed to reconcile the leisurely and exhaustive 'palavers' with the frenzied regard for the clock, which is the hall-mark of capitalist discipline. (1)

To say that the fundamental contradictions between the two cultures resolved themselves into European compliance with African ways and needs is to select only certain mechanical features of the trade. The African subsistence and barter economy was different from the European capitalist economy not simply in its mechanics, but in ethos and concept. Calculated activity oriented towards the accumulation of profits on price differentials - this the Europeans on the West African coast quite obviously never relinquished for "gainless barter" à la Africana^{ain}. If at times they appeared to bend before the opposed African value system it was only so as to pick up their profits.

The very example of the iron bar can be pursued further to demonstrate that, having selected this article because of its use value, and its conventional utility among the Africans of the Upper Guinea Coast, the European traders transformed it into a tool of their own commercial system. As far as the records of the Royal African Company indicate, one ton of iron.

(1) Evidence of irritation with the leisurely pace at which the Africans conducted commerce comes from John Newton: Journal of a Slave Trader, p.37 and T. Winterbottom: An Account of the Native Africans of Sierra Leone.

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fluctuated in price around £13 to £15. (1) When divided into 80 or more "ship's bars" each section thus cost between 3s and 3s 9d. This was then cut up into 18-20 "country bars", but at no time was the latter the basis for European profit-and-loss accounts, being too small in value. It was the "ship's bar" which was marked-up automatically on the coast.

Polanyi cited the example of Captain Thomas Phillips, who bought his iron bars in London at 3s. 6d., and sold them on the Gold Coast at 7s.6d. (2) According to De Andrade, the 27' bar of iron was worth 6s.3d. in Lisbon, and it was quoted at 11s.3d. in Bissau, and 22s.6d. in the bush. (3) Though the Royal African Company imported its iron from Sweden, its prices were rather more conservative. Davies pointed to an example in the Gambia ledger of a consignment of 2,000 bars of iron rated in the invoices as £398.4s., and rendered as 1,327 bars of account. (4) Each bar of iron was thus marked-up to about 6s., and considered a "bar of account". This was in effect the transition from iron bar as object to 'bar' as an accounting unit. Because iron predominated in the ships' cargoes in the seventeenth century, it was feasible to give the whole value of the cargo in nominal 'bars', derived from the marked-up price of the iron bars. Consequently, the accounts of the factories of the Royal African Company in Sierra Leone and the Gambia were

(1) P.R.O., T70/78 - Minutes of the Court of Assistants, 1678-81, and T70/128, T70/130 - Memoranda of the Committee of Goods.

(2) K. Polanyi: *Op.cit.*

(3) See Accompanying tables.

(4) K.G. Davies: The Royal African Company, p.238

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kept in 'bars', shillings and pence. (1)

The 'bar' as a unit in profit-and-loss accounts was variable. It was inherited by the Royal African Company from the Gambia Adventurers at 5s.6d., (2) but rose to 6s. shortly afterwards. (3) In 1714, an entry of "22 bars 5s.4d." disclosed that the 'bar' was greater than 5s.4d. (4) Eight years later, however, the 'bar' was down to 5s. (5) These fluctuations were partly induced from the European side by the rise and fall of prices in Europe, especially the price of iron; but another factor leading to inconstancy was the African evaluation of European products. One string of white beads may have been accepted by the Bijagos as the equivalent of a "country bar" of iron; (6) but in reality those beads cost the Europeans less than the iron, and the same kind of comparison could be made for all the objects of the assortment. In drawing up his accounts, Nicholas Owen stuck to the system of entering the value of the 'bar' for each separate manufacture. This baffled the editor of his Journal, who thought it inconsistent that the 'bar' counted in beads should be 3s.4d., while in relation to knives it was 4s.6d. (7) For Owen and other

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- (1) There was some discrepancy caused by the accounts being kept in both Sterling and 'bars'. The accountants in London had to insist on the uniform practice of using 'bars' only. See, e.g., P.R.O., T70/50 - To Joshua Platt, 3 Oct 1688, fl.85
- (2) P.R.O., T70/360 - Bence Island Accounts
- (3) P.R.O., T70/108 - Inside front cover, dated around 1683.
- (4) P.R.O., T70/590 - York Island Accounts.
- (5) P.R.O., T70/60 - To Archibald and Scott, 25 July 1722, fl.30
- (6) P. Labarthe: Voyage au Sénégal, p.236
- (7) Nicholas Owen: Journal of a Slave Dealer, p.46 and editor's note.

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European traders, what mattered was not the intelligibility of accounts to an outside party, but the knowledge that it was cheaper to pay 'bars' of beads rather than 'bars' of knives. This what lay behind a statement such as "the bars came excessive dear", which was Newton's comment when he was asked to make up his assortment with trade goods which were relatively highly priced.

(1)

For the sake of accuracy, it seems to have been necessary that the bar of account, which was initially quoted in European currency on the basis of the cost of iron, should be modified to constitute a more realistic representation of the African market situation on the Upper Guinea Coast. The directors of the Royal African Company required of their resident agents in Sierra Leone that "they must put a value (the current price of the country) on every thing they either buy or sell". (2) At the same time, the London accountants of the Royal African Company and the agents on the Upper Guinea Coast engaged in debate over the fixing of the "bar rate". The former wrote in July 1722 that "as to the rate of bars, we desire they may be continued at 5s. and for the Accounts being sent home regularly we must insist upon it, since otherwise we shall never be able to know in what posture our affairs are". (3) That they should never be able to know the posture of their affairs was the fervent hope of most of the employees in Africa, who tried their best to confuse the London accountants. In 1724, there was a directive to reduce the

(1) John Newton: Journal of a Slave Trader, p.13

(2) P.R.O., T70/51 - Accountants memorandum, Aug 1702, fl.251

(3) P.R.O., T70/60 - To Archebald and Scott, 25 July 1722, fl.30.

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value of the nominal bars from 5s. to 3s., but the Sierra Leone agents countered by arguing that this feat of conversion would require trained accountants. (1) The implication was that the higher the rate at which the 'bar' was fixed, the greater was the margin of profits which remained in the pockets of enterprising employees. Ultimately, the 'bar' was devalued, probably because of trade goods being manufactured much more cheaply in Europe. Wadstrom, who recognised the shifting nature of this fictitious currency, attributed to it a notional value of about 3s. in 1793; (2) while on the Gambia it was then currently valued at only 2s. (3)

As it finally emerged out of the invoices and profit-and-loss accounts of traders and trading companies on the Upper Guinea Coast, the 'bar' was an accounting tool, devised to overcome the limitations of the barter process. The need for such a device was a testimony both ^{to} the clash of cultures, as well as to the fact that European adjustment did not signify an acceptance of economic standards on the Upper Guinea Coast.

Rather surprisingly, Polanyi seems to have inferred that profits from the Afro-European trade awaited the coming of more sophisticated accounting devices. (4) In a complex industrial and commercial context, 'slick' accounting techniques can obscure taxable earnings, but they never create

(1) P.R.O., T70/4 - Archebald, 20 April 1724

(2) C.B. Wadstrom: An Essay on Colonisation, Part 2, p.56

(3) Mungo Park: Travels...in the Years 1795, 1796 and 1797, p.28

(4) K. Polanyi: "Sortings and 'ounce trade' in the West African Slave Trade", in Journal of African History, Vol. V, No. 3

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profits, and on the West African coast the most primitive of accounting techniques must not detract from the fact that profits were being realised on a scale which those who were engaged in the trade found highly satisfactory. From Valentim Fernandes and Pacheco Pereira, through De Almada, Villault and Coelho to Nicholas Owen, there were frank avowals of the profitability of the trade on the Upper Guinea Coast, with profits running at levels of 200% and more. Nicholas Owen made the boldest statement in this respect: "I have found no place in all these several countries of England, Ireland, America, Portugal, the Caribes, the Cape de Verd, the Azores and all the places I have been in, I say I have found no place where I can enlarge my fortune so soon as where I now live". (1)

As indicated in discussing the affairs of the Royal African Company in Sierra Leone in the seventeenth century, the commerce in products such as camwood and ivory was considered more remunerative than the slave trade under certain circumstances. (2) However, for the most part West Africa trade in this epoch was synonymous with the Atlantic slave trade; and by their choice of slaves above all other commodities, the European traders indicated quite clearly where the greatest profits lay. Newton, when questioned by the Parliamentary Committee on the Atlantic slave trade, replied that "it was generally considered as a sort of lottery in which every adventurer hoped to gain a prize". (3) To this one must add that there were a remarkable number

(1) Nicholas Owen: Journal of a Slave Dealer, pp.97,98

(2) See above, Ch. VI, p.366

(3) John Newton: Journal of a Slave Trader, p.81 (Note)

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of winning tickets. Besides, in estimating the profits made by the Europeans from the slave trade on the Upper Guinea Coast it is essential to bear in mind always that this area and the West African coast as a whole was not the sector in which the most profits were accumulated. As K.G. Davies remarked, "even at its height in the eighteenth century, the African trade derived its importance not from its absolute volume but from its connection with the commerce of the West Indies and America". (1)

In pursuit of the desired level of profits, the Europeans did not regard themselves as bound by such humdrum considerations as honesty and fair play, and the Africans reacted adversely to this attitude. De Almada admitted that familiarity with the Portuguese bred contempt on the part of the Africans (2) and subsequently other European observers confirmed this, with John Newton examining the process at some length. The Africans, he explained, were viewed as persons to be robbed with impunity. Every art was employed to deceive them and the European trader who ^{achieved most} ~~had most to boast of~~ in this respect had most to boast of. No article was delivered without tampering - the alcohol was adulterated with water, false heads were placed in the kegs that contained the gunpowder, and lengths were cut from the middle of the cloths where the missing portions were not readily noticed. "The natives are cheated, in the number, weight, measure, or quality of what they purchase, in every possible way; and by habit and emulation, a marvellous dexterity is acquired in these

(1) K.G. Davies: The Royal African Company, p.38

(2) See above, Ch. III, p.176

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practices. And thus the natives in their turn, in proportion to their commerce with the Europeans,... become jealous, insidious, and revengeful." To complete the vicious circle, the unpleasantness and dishonesty of the African rulers then goaded the European traders to commit further acts of chicanery. (1)

In no sphere, therefore, was the Afro-European commercial connection static, and the process of mutual adjustment on the Upper Guinea Coast can be illustrated in numerous instances. Yet a knowledge of the minutiae of trade on the Upper Guinea Coast and in West Africa as a whole is not enough to lay bare the essence of the Afro-European relationship. Historically, the initiative and the momentum came from Europe. It was the European commercial system which had been expanded to embrace the African barter economy, and to assign to it certain specific roles in global production. This meant the accumulation of capital from trading in Africa, and above all from the purchase of slaves and their employment in the New World. It is essential to stress that all changes on the coast occurred without prejudice to this overall conception. Indeed, as the following chapters will reveal, the most significant social changes on the Upper Guinea Coast demonstrated how African society became geared to serve the capitalist system.

(1) John Newton: Journal of a Slave Trader, "Thoughts upon the African Slave Trade", pp.106,107.

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Page 399, note 2.

Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, pp.42,58,68. (The editors' translation into French is inconsistent. Fernandes gave one list of exports from the Gambia in which he included finished cloth and another list of imports into the Gambia in which he included raw cotton. He described the commerce of the Casamance in similar terms: "Os moradores deste regno comumente todos som teçelães e fazẽ panos de muytas maneyras e de coores. E aqui vem os christãos a resgatar seu algodom por panos." This is translated "Les habitants de ce pays sont communément tous tisserands et font des pagnes de très nombreuses façons et couleurs. Et là les Chrétiens viennent échanger leur coton pour des tissus". That is to say, it was barter of cotton on the Portuguese side for finished cloths from the Africans. Later, Fernandes wrote of the Geba area, "Per aqui vem os navios das ilhas do Cabo Verde pera fazer ho regate do seu algodom pera panos assi como em Casa Mansa". This is rendered "Les bateaux des îles du Cap Vert viennent échanger ici du coton pour faire des pagnes", which means that the Portuguese were buying cotton to make cloth.

The first rather than the second interpretation finds support from other sources, which indicate that cotton was exported from the Cape Verde islands to Cacheu and Geba in the first half of the sixteenth century. The Cape Verde islands were probably manufacturing cloths of their own, but the object seemed to be to obtain as many as possible to send to Mina, where they were extremely valuable. See A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana, 2nd series, Vol. II - No. 89, Certificate from the Casa da Mina to Jorge Correia, the Comptroller of cottons of Fogo, 10 Sept 1535, p.275; and No. 143, Voyage from S_antiago to Guinea, 19 May 1558, p.446.)

A HISTORY OF THE UPPER GUINEA COAST, 1545-1800

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE RISE OF THE MULATTO TRADERS

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For a period of eighteen months over the years 1684 and 1685, the Portuguese captain-major was held captive by a private trader, Senhora Bibiana Vaz - An Afro-Portuguese; in 1728, the Royal African Company was sent packing by Senhor Lopez - another Afro-Portuguese; while by the end of the eighteenth century, the most powerful ruling families in Sierra Leone were the Caulkers, Clevelands and Rogers - all of mixed English and African blood. These were not isolated individuals. They were the most salient representatives of a powerful social formation, which was the product of the physical and commercial contact between Europe and the Upper Guinea Coast and which served the interests of European mercantilism.

The extent, composition, attitudes and functions of the Afro-Portuguese community at the end of the eighteenth century are all succinctly summed up in an observation by a French captain, Lajaille, who visited the Upper Guinea Coast in 1784: "fifteen thousand Portuguese half-castes, mulattoes and blacks are spread throughout this immense country, preserving amidst poverty their national pride. They have made no attempt to seek the benefits of agriculture; their greatest occupation is to serve as the middlemen of the commerce which the other European nations come to conduct in these countries where the Portuguese formerly held dominion". (1) Attention had been drawn to these individuals more than one hundred and sixty years previously, when Jobson wrote about the Gambia: "They call themselves Portingales, and some few of them seeme the same; others of them are

(1) P. Labarthe: Voyage au Sénégal, p.143

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Molatoes, between blacke and white, but the most part as blacke as the natural inhabitants: they are scattered some two or three dwellers in a place, and are all married, or rather keepe with them the countrey blackewomen, of whom they beget children". Those children "become in a manner naturalised, and as they grow up, apply themselves to buy and sell one thing for another as the whole country doth, still reserving carefully the use of the Portingall tongue, and with a kind of affectionate zeal, the name of Christians". (1)

Recalling the hospitality extended to the lançado on his arrival, and the arrangements which were made for him to co-habit with African women, (2) it is to be expected that children of mixed blood would have been born in considerable numbers in the areas where the lançados were 'guests'. Those children were commonly known as filhos da terra or brancos da terra ("children of the soil" or "local Portuguese") as distinct from brancos da Portugal. (3) By a slow process, these filhos da terra came to replace the metropolitan lançados as the dominant element in the coastal community, which comprised them both, along with the African grumetes and helpers.

Here, incidentally, a point of contemporary controversy is involved. It is made out in certain quarters that the relationships between

(1) R. Jobson: The Golden Trade, p.39

(2) See above, Ch. III, pp.164,165

(3) Fr. Francisco de Santiago: "Cronica da Provincia Franciscana de Nossa Senhora da Solédade" (Ms.) Extracts in A.J. Dias "Crenças e Costumes dos Indigenas da Ilha de Bissau no Seculo XVIII, Portugal em Africa, vol. 2, No. 9, 1945, pp.159-169.

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Portuguese males and African females have always been exceptionally good - part of a peculiar Iberian approach to tropical people. Gilberto Freyre, for instance, speaks in the highest terms of the Portuguese and Spanish, "who began to take tropical women as companions and even as wives: companions of their adventures of settlement and procreation in those same areas". (1) This passes from innocuous self-indulgence to dangerous cant when it is used to justify colonial oppression, by suggesting that this has always been one of the positive aspects of the Portuguese civilising mission. James Duffy briefly and effectively dismisses this line of argument. "It is true that the African women, in the absence of Portuguese ones, offered an outlet for sexual impulse. Miscegenation in Portuguese Africa, however, though often admirably free from the sense of shame which sometimes accompanied it elsewhere in Africa, must still be considered as erotic expediency; it has become colonial policy only in retrospect." (2)

It is indeed apposite to remark that in so far as any policy operated in these matters it was policy laid down by the Africans. On the Gold Coast, for example, the attitude of the society to Europeans cohabiting with their women was hostile. The Portuguese reported that women around their fortress of Mina who became pregnant by white men often resorted to

(1) Gilberto Freyre: Portuguese Integration in the Tropics (Lisboa 1961)

p.22

(2) J. Duffy: Portugal in Africa, p.71

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abortion or infanticide. (1) On the Upper Guinea Coast the welcome was complete, though relations between African women and the Portuguese lançados were surrounded by stringent rules. Lemos Coelho stressed that the Portuguese could not flirt with the women, that being the worst crime that a white could commit and would always cost loss of goods and often loss of life. He further singled out the Corubal as an area where it was advisable to keep at a very respectable distance from married women. (2) In effect, the Portuguese lançados had to marry African women, as illustrated earlier, and the Afro-Portuguese certainly considered themselves as married after they had gone through African rites, a fact which threw the Catholic missionaries into consternation. The Spanish Capuchins wrote in a letter to the king of Portugal in 1686 that "they (the Afro-Portuguese) celebrate their concubinage as though it were true marriage", while in their opinion it was "illicit commerce between Christians and heathen women". (3) So much for the peculiar enlightenment of the Iberians.

Numerically, the mulattoes came to outstrip their white fathers not only by natural increase, but because during the seventeenth century the flow of Portuguese to the mainland was not heavy. Voluntary immigrants seemed

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- (1) A. Brasio: Monumenta Missionaria Africana - Africa Occidental, vol. III, 1570-99 - "Informação da Mina"; quoted in C.R. Boxer: Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire, 1415-1825 (Oxford 1963)
- (2) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, pp.92,201
- (3) Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas en Africa, vol.II, pp. 277,278

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to have been few, and the white population could only be augmented by the sending out of degredados, convicted in the Portuguese courts. Barbot suggests that by this process forty or fifty Portuguese were exiled every year to Cacheu, (1) but this is not borne out by the Cacheu records, which indicate that the deportation was irregular, giving rise to complaints from several captains about the paucity of Portuguese-born citizens in Cacheu and other official centres on the Upper Guinea Coast. (2) Thus, the districts which were well-known lançado resorts in the sixteenth century were almost entirely taken over by their descendants by the middle of the following century.

Beafada women had a reputation for being the most beautiful on the Upper Guinea Coast; there were many whites resident there in Dornelas' time, (3) and even more filhos da terra living there in Coelho's time. On the rivers leading into the Sierra Leone estuary, there were two very important lançado towns, Port Loko and Tumba (Rotumba), which came under the dominance of the children of the Portuguese by mid-seventeenth century, if not before. (4)

From a purely genetic viewpoint, it is obvious that, even if there was a high degree of in-breeding among the mulatto population, they would eventually have been swallowed up by the preponderant Africans, given the small

(1) J. Barbot: Description of North and South Guinea, p.83

(2) See e.g., A.H.U., Guiné, maço I - Antonio Bezerra (Jnr) 30 Jan 1719; maço III - Francisco Sottomayor, 12 March 1752; and maço I - Manuel Pinto de Gouveia, 15 April 1800

(3) André Dornelas: "Relação sobre a Serra Leoa"

(4) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, p.74

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numbers of Portuguese who continued to arrive. In 1685, for instance, Sieur de la Courbe found that at Cacheu there were fewwhites, while most of the mulattoes were very dark. (1) A little later, another French commentator wrote that "nearly all the Portuguese in Africa are of mixed blood, that is, mulattoes; but they are so black that it requires a good knowledge of colours to distinguish them from negroes. (2) A knowledge of the facts would also make it clear that many of the blacks who were considered 'Portuguese' had no Portuguese blood whatsoever, so that as Jobson and Lajaille indicated, colour was by no means the only criterion which helped to set the successors to the Portuguese lançados apart from the mass of Africans.

It is very significant that the Africans extended the category brancos da terra to include all Africans who were closely associated with the Portuguese. (3) Thus, the grumetes were regarded as 'Portuguese' and 'white', and this applied to other Africans who became 'Portuguese' by adoption. When a Portuguese trader wished to take an African child with him on his travels around the coast and to the Cape Verde islands, he had to seek the permission of the father or paternal uncle. (4) By the mid-eighteenth century, if not before, it had become customary among the white and mulatto merchants to foster

(1) P. Cultru: Premier Voyage du Sieur de la Courbe, p.230

(2) J. Labat: Nouvelle Relation, Vol. V., pp.66,67

(3) A.Æ. Dias: "Crenças e Costumes dos Indígenas da Ilha de Bissau no Seculo XVIII"

A.H.U., Guiné, maço III - José da Costa Ribeira, May 1731

(4) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.326

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African babies. In such cases, after permission had been obtained, the child was baptised or at least given a Saint's name, though it could only be taken away from its mother after two to three years, this being the lengthy period during which it was suckled. (1) On passing into the home of its adopted parents, the child automatically became part of a 'Christian', 'white', 'Portuguese' trading community.

While the Afro-Portuguese community right until the end of the eighteenth century comprised a few whites and many blacks, the mulattoes gave leadership and character to the social grouping. Some lançados and their descendants completely adopted the customs of the Africans, down to the details of tribal tatoos; (2) but generally the racial admixture of the mulattoes was matched by cultural hybridisation and ambivalence. Language, dress and religion were the features to which the Afro-Portuguese clung, so as to outwardly identify themselves as a community with a different heritage and a different social purpose from the mass of the Africans; and, in every instance the basis for the distinction was that the Afro-Portuguese represented an extension of the European commercial system on African soil, serving to facilitate the exploitation of the Upper Guinea Coast along colonial lines.

The language was "Creole Portuguese", which was vital, not simply

(1) A.J. Dias: (Op.cit.)

For the lengthy period before weaning, see M.McCulloch: Peoples of Sierra Leone, p.44

(2) See above, Ch.III, p. 140

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as a link with the Portuguese patrimony, but because of its functional value in matters of trade. The Afro-Portuguese could thus act as interpreters, and carry out all the ~~tasks~~ required of middlemen in the coastal trade, from acting as pilots on the rivers to serving as commercial advisers to the local ruling class.

The Afro-Portuguese tried as far as possible to maintain themselves in European clothes, including shoes, hats, swords and muskets. The wealthiest merchants lived in large rectangular houses with white-washed walls and verandahs, where they relaxed. (1) However, few could afford to maintain their pretensions, and even the richer ones, in attempting to live up to the ideal of the Portuguese cavaleiro, merely achieved a sort of shabby gentility. As Lajaille's pen-picture suggested, the Afro-Portuguese were "preserving amidst poverty their national pride".

Metropolitan Portuguese and other Europeans did not consider the brancos da terra as true representatives of Portugal, and were in fact often disdainful in their attitude to the "so-called Portuguese". An official of the Company of Grao Para and Maranhao contemptuously referred to the Afro-Portuguese as 'monkeys'. (2) On the other hand, the Portuguese were quite willing to grant the mulattoes titles and to appoint them to lesser posts in the administration; placing them in charge of places like Zeguichor and Geba, or making them sergeants at Bissau and Cacheu. Labat was not quite sure of the

(1) P. Cultru: (Op.cit.) pp.192,193,196

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, maço VIII - Antonio Francisco Martinez, 27 July 1777.

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motivation of this brotherly treatment, Was it genuine or just politique?

(1) In part it must have been genuine brotherly appreciation between white and mulatto, because they were blood relations; but their employment in the administration was also motivated by the fact that the important filhos da terra were often related to the local ruling class, and thus their appointment had political value. (2)

For a deeper understanding of the mulattoes, one must turn to the accounts of Lemos _Coelho, himself born at Balola on the Ria Grande de Buba. As De Almada illumined the activities of the Afro-Portuguese. Coelho himself had adopted two Bijago boys, who remained with him for many years, serving as interpreters on the occasions when he returned to those islands. (3) The same writer gives information about the mulattoes of Recife in the Senegambia, who for some time followed the religion of their Jewish fathers, (4) but generally Christianity was part of the definition of the Afro-Portuguese community, the members of which Coelho very often calls filhos da terra cristãos. The other attributes of this social formation are seen in simple asides, such as the mention of "a negro on the island of Ponta who spoke Portuguese, was brought up with the whites, and was called Christovao"; (5) and the reference to a very

(1) J. Labat: Voyage du Chevalier de Marchais en Guinée fait en 1725, 1726 and 1727. (Amsterdam 1731)

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, maço I - Santos de Vidigal Castanho, 27 Oct 1704

(3) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, p.43.

(4) Ibid, p.7

(5) Ibid, p.181

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large house at Port Loko, which was owned by "a filho da terra of the Bullom nation, but a christian, who was treated as a white"; (1) and yet again to another Negro senhor, who had a Christian son, master of a very small boat. (2) An outstanding example of this type is provided by Captain Francisco Correia, whom Beaver met in 1792. He was a Mandinga of Geba, who had been to Lisbon, visisted Santiago several times, and for many years commanded a trading vessel on the coast. Correia spoke Portuguese very well, dressed as a European, had considerable property, was literate, and could ascertain latitude by the sun's altitude. (3) It is not surprising that the Africans should have called a black man like Correia a "white man" and a 'Portuguese'.

With few exceptions, the Afro-Portuguese made commerce a full-time occupation. All of the main centres where they conglomerated, such as Bissau, Cacheu and Farim, were dependent upon the Africans for their food supplies, a factor of considerable importance whenever any conflict broke out. They were castigated by de la Courbe for "having neither foresight nor courage to procure themselves vegetables in such a fertile country, industry to breed domestic animals, nor strength to hunt game". Some profered the excuse that they had their sights set on returning to Portugal, (4) but this applied only to the few metropolitan Portuguese. On the whole, it would seem that their removal from the land was not a matter of choice but of African policy. The

(1) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, pp. 75,234

(2) Ibid: p.182

(3) Philip Beaver: African Memoranda, p.275

(4) P. Cultru: Premier Voyage de Sieur de la Courbe, p.250

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African ruling class never granted the Portuguese more land than was absolutely necessary for houses and trading centres and occasionally a fort. (1) The fact that the Afro-Portuguese were divorced from the land set them apart from the traditional economic order of subsistence agriculture.

As a rule, trade on the Upper Guinea Coast was a seasonal and secondary endeavour. Even the relatively highly developed market system of some of the tribes of the area was not an economic institution which was generally associated with the professional trader, and the most important trade fairs were annual rather than weekly events. Trade achieved peak points when agricultural activities permitted; namely, during the dry season. For instance it was after the harvest in November that the Djolas of the Casamance made the relatively short trip to the Gambia to exchange their rice for fattle. (2) Conversely, the beginning of the rains meant a return to the farms. The Beafadas clearly establish the priority of agriculture in their maxim that at crop time those who are on journeys must return home. (3) This procedure by which trade was sandwiched between agricultural operations was extended to commerce with the Europeans.

Coincidentally, the best season of the year for sailing ships to voyage to the Upper Guinea Coast was between September and May. (4) In Sierra

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, maço I José das Neves Leão, 25 May 1800 (The Africans would not concede land even to grow fodder for cattle)

(2) L.V. Thomas: Les Diola, p.284

(3) Landerset Simões: Babel Negra

(4) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 267, André de Fonseca, captain of Bissau, 27 March 1699.

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Leone the rains began in May and lasted for three or four months. Wadstrom observed at the end of the eighteenth century that "in the beginning of the season, the earth being softened with rain, the Negroes till and plant their grounds; and after the return of dry weather, they gather in their crops; occupations which they seldom abandon, even though allured by the most advantageous commerce." (1) North of Sierra Leone, the rainy season set in progressively later, which accounts for Labat's assertion with respect to the Geba-Gambia area that "all commerce ceases with the Negroes during the months of August, September, October and November; they withdraw then to their villages and work in their fields". (2) Precisely because of the later rainy season and the accompanying wind conditions it was advisable for ships to avoid the latitudes around Cape Verde in September and October, (3) so that both parties were ready to trade in December. By a further coincidence, the dry season was also the best trading season for pastoral people like the Fulas who brought their cattle down to the Gambia river in December; (4) while the long-distance inland trade was also facilitated at this time of year by favourable travelling conditions. (5)

(1) C.B. Wadstrom: An Essay on Colonisation, p.25

(2) J. Labat: Nouvelle Relation, Vol. V, p.323

(3) C.B. Wadstrom: (Op.cit) p.325, citing Tilleman's Description of Guinea, 169

(4) R. Jobson: The Golden Trade, p.46

~~(5) See above, Ch. I, p.~~

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As the lineal descendants of the lançados, the Afro-Portuguese had as their principal function that of purveyors of goods to European ships. But the lançados had been quick to provide their services for the transfer from river to river of commodities which were of interest mainly to the Africans, and here too the Afro-Portuguese followed and probably went further than their predecessors. They handled salt, cloth, dyes, kola, palm oil and rice, with great profit to themselves and to the appreciation of the Africans. The Afro-Portuguese purchased their commodities by the system of barter, but they infused a new spirit into the operations, which was essentially European. For one thing, they traded on a scale which was clearly unprecedented in this area, and for another thing, they oriented all their activity ultimately towards the Atlantic. This is well-illustrated by taking the example of the kola trade.

The value of kola in West Africa can scarcely be overstressed. The kola nut is associated with religious rites, initiation ceremonies and property rights; it is used as a stimulant, as a yellow dye, for medicinal purposes, as a symbol of hospitality, and in diplomatic relations between tribes; and it was particularly highly regarded among Islamised peoples. The best known kola trade routes ran north and north-west from the forests of the Gulf of Guinea, where the kola trees grew in great numbers, to markets in the Western Sudan. Sierra Leone was on the periphery of the important kola route which stretched from the upper valley of the St. Paul river through Beyla to Kankan and Kissidougou. (1) It is almost certain that from early times some kola

(1) M. Le Long: "La Route du Kola", Revue de Géographie Humaine et d'Ethnologie

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would have been sent across the Niger from the area now held by the Koranko and Kono in the hinterland of Sierra Leone, since they both adjoin Kissidougou. Possibly, too, kola from the Sierra Leone littoral made its way inland, as was known to be the case at the end of the eighteenth century; (1) but the coastal kola was only fully exploited after the arrival of the Portuguese, who initiated a shipping link between Sierra Leone and the rivers north of the Geba.

The kola trees were found in greatest concentration between the Rokelle and the Scarcies; as far north as the Nunez they grew rather less profusely; while further north they became rare. (2) Attempts by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century to cultivate this species in the Geba-Gambia area were unsuccessful. (3) Consequently, the coastal trade in kola was based on the transport of that commodity from the coast south of the Pongo to the rivers Geba, Cacheu, Casamance and Gambia.

Like most other trading projects on the Upper Guinea Coast, the kola trade was organised on an annual basis, involving ships which traded exclusively in that product and embarked in a fleet. In the mid-seventeenth century, from Farim alone at least twelve ships went annually on the kola run, and Coelho attests that up to eighteen were despatched in some years. (4) Besides, Gêba and Bissau traded on their own account. At the producing end, the Bagas, Temnes and Bulloms were the tribes who sold kola, especially the Temnes and

(1) John Matthews: Voyage to the River Sierra Leone, p.59

(2) J. Machat: Les Rivières du Sud et le Fouta-Diallon, pp.181,182

(3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.284

(4) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, p.38

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the Bulloms between the Rokelle and the Great Scarries. On one occasion in the late seventeenth century, the Portuguese complained of reduced yields because of lack of attention to the trees. (1) Whether this was the exception or the rule was not stated, but the likelihood is that the Bulloms and Temnes simply interested themselves in the gathering of the fruit from the trees which grew in profusion without being planted or cared. They separated the nuts from the husks, and sold the former in a measure made of wicker which held 500 to 600 nuts which were deposited into a much larger hamper. These were checked for insects before being sealed with the broad leaves of the cabopa. On the voyage northwards, the hampers were opened on three occasions to check for the development of larvae, the infected nuts being thrown overboard, and it was a good year when more than one-third of the cargo did not have to be discarded. Yet the amount of vendible kola was great. Among themselves, the Portuguese and Afro-Portuguese measured the kola in barrels holding 3,000 nuts, and on an average over 100,000 barrels made up the annual haul. (2)

All exchanges in which the Afro-Portuguese had a hand ultimately facilitated trade with the Europeans, which too often meant the trade in slaves. Cloth, dyes and kola were part of a process of permutation designed to get cargoes for export to Europe. De Almada had put forward that without the lançados, the products of the Upper Guinea Coast would never have reached the holds of European ships in the quantities and in the manner desired, (3)

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa I - No. 131 - Sebastião Roiz, 24 April 1674

(2) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, p.38,62

(3) See above, Ch. III, p.160

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and the Afro-Portuguese were playing the same role as the lançados. Inevitably however, some European buyers on the coast came to believe that the profits of the middlemen should and could be cut out by alternative arrangements. This attitude was particularly evident on the part of the established companies, whether Portuguese, English or French.

The Gambia Adventurers traded on the river Gambia largely through the Afro-Portuguese intermediaries. (1) When the Royal African Company inherited this situation, their first chief factor at James Island, who had already been serving the Gambia Adventurers, reported unfavourably concerning the profits lost by employing the Afro-Portuguese. On the river Gambia itself the prices current in 1678, as paid to the Afro-Portuguese, were 30 'bars' per slave, 18 per hundredweight of ivory and 16 per hundredweight of wax. These were far higher than the prices paid if the goods were purchased directly from the Africans, and yet the bulk of the trade lay in the hands of the Afro-Portuguese. Thurlow considered that the trading zone south of the Gambia was more important than the Gambia itself, and the prices of goods originating there were steeper still. On wax and ivory, four to five 'bars' more per hundredweight were often demanded, while it was impossible to compete with the Spanish for slaves, since they were offering 70 to 80 'bars' in comparison with the 30 'bars' per captive which the Royal African Company expended in the Gambia. (2)

(1) P.R.O., T70/544 - Ledger of the Gambia Adventurers. (Portuguese names dominate. Small bills are paid out to them.)

(2) P.R.O., T70/10 - Thomas Thurlow, 15 March 1678, fl.1.

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Thurlow suggested that the Company should send a small vessel of 60 tons on trading voyages direct to the Nunez, Grande and Casamance, which would prove half as expensive as purchasing through the Afro-Portuguese, especially since at that time the first Company of Cacheu was also collecting a 10% duty on trade. He advocated that for the Gambia the policy should be to deal judiciously with the Afro-Portuguese, commissioning them with small quantities of Company goods in such a way that they would not accumulate capital of their own. Those who grew rich were too independent and encouraged trade with the interlopers.

(1)

In practice, there were two types of Afro-Portuguese - those with sufficient capital to trade with the Africans on their own account, and then sell to whatever European ship arrived; and those who had to be "grub-staked" by the visiting European ships or by officials of one European company or another. The latter type were in the vast majority, (2) though the rich traders naturally exercised far greater influence. When the English went to Cacheu, for example, they dealt with "the great traders" as Thurlow's successor John Castle, wrote in February 1683. Castle made a deal with these principal merchants at Cacheu to purchase a combined total of 20 tons of ivory and wax (apparently, ten tons of each). At that moment, the merchants were short of stock, which they did not expect to arrive before July of that year, so Castle loaned them trade goods to the value of ten tons of wax. (3) The fact that such

(1) P.R.O., T70/10 - Thomas Thurlow, 15 March 1678, fl.1.

(2) P. Cultru: Premier Voyage de Sieur de la Courbe, p.193

(3) P.R.O., T70/16 - John Castle, 20 Feb 1683, fl.46.

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arrangements were still necessary after Thurlow's advice is ample evidence that it was not at all easy to cut out the Afro-Portuguese middlemen.

In 1678, Thurlow had reported on an offer made him by the governor of Cacheu to conclude a long-term agreement, by which the English would be kept supplied with ivory and camwood at 24 'bars' and 20 'bars' respectively. (1) Thurlow balked at the high prices, especially since the Gambia Adventurers were about to go into liquidation, and he could not be sure of the policy of his new employers, the Royal African Company. However, John Castle did give his approval to a similar proposal, and he was apparently able to hold the prices down to 22 'bars' and 16 'bars' per hundredweight of ivory and wax respectively. (2) The value of this treaty was that it meant stability and regularity in every respect. There was constancy of price and supply and there was no need to haggle over individual purchases. Hence, the accounting would become less complicated, and the estimate of future commitments would be more reliable. Besides, the quantities were also important. Instead of ten tons of ivory and ten tons of wax being accumulated piece-meal, they would be supplied in bulk.

In Sierra Leone, a situation existed parallel to that in the Gambia and the chief factor in 1678, Edmund Pierce, was chafing at the Afro-Portuguese control over trade. His proposed solution was that forty to fifty blacks should be brought from the West Indies, where they had learnt to speak English, and they would be used to replace the Afro Portuguese. (3) No action

(1) P.R.O., T70/10 - Thomas Thurlow, 15 March 1678, fl.1

(2) P.R.O., T70/16 - Castle, 20 Feb 1683, fl.46

(3) P.R.O., T70/52 - To Freeman, Jan 1705, fl.79

followed this request, and it took a much longer time before attempts were made to regularise the situation in the same fashion as in the Gambia. The directors themselves specifically drew attention to the experience in the Gambia, when in 1705 they urged their factors in Sierra Leone to come to an arrangement with the middlemen of trade, for the Gambia pattern, in the opinion of the directors, had proven beneficial. (1)

If it was not possible for the European companies or administrations to come to a compromise with the Afro-Europeans, then the latter were likely to react violently. They had been called into existence by the European trade, and had no function in the society if deprived of their position as intermediaries. It was in Cacheu that the Afro-Portuguese launched their first major counter-attack on those who challenged their position.

The months immediately after the first Company of Cacheu had ceased operations witnessed one of those temporary aberrations caused by the efforts of a captain-major to stick to the letter of the law. He was captain-major José Gonçalves Doliveira. Doliveira arrived in Cacheu some time around June 1682, succeeding Manuel Quaresma. (2) For several months after his arrival Doliveira had been party to the customary encouragement given to the English and French; (3) and at least up to May 1683 John Castle was trading extensively with Cacheu. (4) But for some reason, Doliveira

(1) P.R.O., T70/52 - To Freeman, Jan 1705, fl.79

(2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Minute of the Conselho, 2 Sept. 1682

(3) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Lopes de Barros, 18 Aug 1691

(4) P.R.O., T70/16 - Castle, 20 Feb 1683, fl.46.

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decided to take a firm line, and absolutely refused permission for foreign ships to trade, even if they were prepared to pay duties. The merchants tried petitions, such as the one to the governor of Cape Verde in January 1684, (1) and when those brought no results, they sided with the Papels when the latter massed forces against the praça, and thus induced Doliveira to allow the English agent, John Booker, to do business. (2)

Apart from upholding the policy of monopoly, Doliveira had also been guilty of trying to curtail the freedom of movement of the principal traders of Cacheu, thus limiting their role as the middlemen of all the commerce on the Upper Guinea Coast. (3) Leading the opposition to Doliveira was a female mulatto trader, Bibiana Vaz. She had a number of relations on the coast who were all well-off. Her brother Ambrosio lived at Cacheu, and helped to run her business; her nephew, Francisco, was the most outstanding trader on the river Nunez; while the most powerful Afro-Portuguese on the Gambia in the 1730's was one Antonio Vaz, who must have been a relation, since they all bore the family name "Vaz de Franca". (4) When Moore was on the

(1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Barbosa, May 1684

(2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Lopes de Barros, 18 Aug 1691

(3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 212, Copy of a document signed by the traders on 20 March 1684

(4) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 230, for reference to Francisco Vaz de Franca; and Cabo Verde, maço III - Governor of Cape Verde, 7 Nov 1732 for mention of Antonio Vaz de Franca.

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Gambia in 1731 he reported that Antonio Vaz was worth £10,000. (1) But it was Bibiana herself who was the most outstanding member of the family. She had augmented her capital by marrying a former captain-major of Cacheu, Ambrosio Gomez, who was one of the richest men on the coast in his time - at the expense of the revenues of the Portuguese crown. (2) Bibiana herself was not over-scrupulous, since she took possession of all her husband's goods on his death in 1679, to the exclusion of a son of his, Lourenço. (3) Senhora Bibiana Vaz traded on every part of the Upper Guinea Coast. She was established at Cacheu among the Papels, she had a trading house at Quinquim among the Banhuns, another at Farim among the Mandingas; and the English at Bence Island were conducting business with her. (4) With her own two-masted vessel and her own rivercraft, she was able to exploit the coastal and riverain

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- (1) Francis Moore: "Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa" in Thomas Astley: A New and General Collection of Voyages, Vol. 2, p.212. Antonio Vaz had a son in Cacheu and traded there regularly. See P.R.O., T70/1451. It is most probable that the whole family were the direct descendants of Manoel Vaz de Franca, who lived at Bintang and in 1662 claimed to hold a commission from the king as commander of the river. See J.M. Gray: A History of the Gambia, pp.26,78.
- (2) Ambrosio Gomez was named as an accomplice of Captain-major Mendonça (See above Ch. V, p.287 and A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa IV - Manuel Pacheco, 26 May 1671)
- (3) A.H.U., caixa II - No. 157, Minute of 2 Sept 1682
- (4) P.R.O., T70/361 - Bence Island Accounts, 1678.

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trade to the full.

It was around Bibiana Vaz that the opposition to Doliveira centred. At a meeting at her house in Cacheu, several Afro-Portuguese traders as well as the factor of Cacheu (who was the second in command of the praça) decided that they should engineer Doliveira's death. The attempt was made in February 1684, but Doliveira was forewarned against the plot and managed to evade it. Early in March, the Spanish Capuchin, Fr. Antonio de Trozido, who was said to have borne personal animosity against Doliveira, advised that the captain should be imprisoned. It was this Capuchin who produced the written denunciation of Doliveira, (1) accusing him of fraud and malversation. These charges were recorded in the official books of the praça by the factor, Manuel de Sousa Mendonça, after having been signed by all the traders in the vicinity. Doliveira was seized and sent off the house of Bibiana Vaz in Farim, where he was kept for fourteen months before he managed to escape.

The revolt coincided with the attempted formation of a new Company of Cacheu, but the "Republic of Cacheu", set up by the Afro-Portuguese, was hostile to any external controls, and when two attorneys of the Company arrived, they were refused permission to land. The three fundamental decrees of the 'Republic' emphasised the Afro-Portuguese conception of independence. Firstly, they stated, they would not accept any captain-major from Cape Verde or Portugal until such time as they had communicated with the king of Portugal and had had his resolution on the matter; secondly, they would have nothing to do with the new company; and thirdly, it was stated that no Portuguese was to

(1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, Caixa V - Lopes de Barros, 18 Aug 1691.

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trade with the Africans except through the agency of the resident traders of Cacheu, on penalty of confiscation of goods. (1) Only the person of Antonio de Barros Bezerra was acceptable both as a captain-major and as the head of the new company. (2) Meanwhile, Cacheu was governed by a triumvirate elected by the traders, the three being Ambrosio Vaz, Santos de Vidigal Castanho and Manuel de Andrade.

A few months after Doliveira's deposition, the governor of Cape Verde sent a magistrate to Cacheu to conduct an enquiry. (3) On the basis of this, the Conselho urged that action be taken against the leaders, and Bezerra was entrusted with this task. He returned to Cacheu in May 1685 with two ships from Portugal and a smack and one hundred men from Cape Verde. He was not opposed on his arrival, and came to an understanding with the traders that their co-operation would make punishment lighter. (4) Bezerra sent Ambrosio Vaz and Manuel de Andrade to Santiago, along with the factor, Manuel de Sousa Mendonça. Left to Bezerra, Bibiana Vaz would have come off lightly, but the Conselho sent a commissioner to check on the measures taken by Bezerra, and it was specified that Bibiana Vaz should be arrested because her presence in the rivers of Guinea was most undesirable. Bibiana Vaz was therefore secured and sent to Santiago in 1687 to join her brother. (5)

(1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Lopes de Barros, 18 Aug, 1691

(2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Governor Barbosa, 20 July 1684

(3) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Magistrate Luiz Bello, 22 July 1684

(4) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Barbosa, 12 Sept 1685

(5) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Governor Verissimo de Carvalho, 17 July 1687

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During the next few years, the matter dragged on, with the Portuguese administration showing no clear purpose. By June 1688, Bibiana Vaz had been returned to the mainland, and was living at Quimquim in Banhun territory, having promised that she would build a fortress on the nearby Macanha river, as well as one at Bolor among the Djolas. (1) But Doliveira was clamouring for justice, and the Conselho thought it necessary to appoint two further commissioners. (2) The second of these two remained on the Upper Guinea Coast for nearly three years between 1691 and 1693. He advised that those traders who had played a minor role should be excused, but that stringent measures should be taken to ensure that the prominent personalities earned their pardons. Bibiana Vaz was supposed to look after the stockade of Bolor and that of Cacheu, while her nephew, Antonio, was fined 1,500 barafulas. Bibiana petitioned for her brother's release from prison in Cape Verde, on the promise that she would pay 9,500 barafulas, but the commissioners felt that Ambrosio's imprisonment would hasten Bibiana's payments. Santos de Vidigal Castanho, the only principal who does not appear to have been apprehended, was offered a pardon on the payment of 4,000 barafulas and the continued maintenance of two of the bastions of Cacheu. (3) Very shortly afterwards, Castanho was actually

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 201, Antonio Bezerra, 7 June 1608

(2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Minutes of Jan and Feb 1688

(3) The second commissioner was Manuel Lopes de Barros, who prepared a comprehensive report forwarded to the Conselho in Aug 1691 (Cabo Verde, caixa V). In a second report of Dec 1693, he repeated much the same material. (Cabo Verde, caixa VI).

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appointed captain-major of Cacheu.

The only historian to have taken note of the above episode, João Barreto, dismisses it within a few lines. "The Revolt of Bibiana Vaz", as he terms it, was simply the work of a few seditious individuals. (1) From time to time a number of petty local feuds broke out in Cacheu, but the banishment of captain-major Doliveira was not one of those. It was an event which had implications for the whole of the Upper Guinea Coast, and which serves to emphasise the unity of that region. When the triumvirate passed their decrees "in the name of the people", and when they created the post of "the people's purveyor", they were speaking on behalf of the vast majority of the Afro-Portuguese. The denunciation of Doliveira was widely circulated, and it was signed by all into whose hands it passed. It was suggested that some people signed under duress, but at the same time, it was conceded that so many traders had been behind the move that it was only feasible to punish about a dozen of the organisers. (2) Antonio Duarte, a delegate of the Afro-Portuguese on the Jame (a tributary of the Casamance) and Manuel de Andrade a representative of Farim, had both arrived in Cacheu to settle certain financial matters, and joined in the revolt. That De Andrade should have been elected to become one of the ruling junta points to the broad-based nature of the participation. In effect, therefore, the Portuguese administration had to deal with a whole new class, articulating a well-defined set of commercial interests. Some forty years later, when the chief factor of

(1) João Barreto: Historia da Guiné, p.111

(2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Lopes de Barros, 18 Aug 1691.

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the Royal African Company was to be summarily ejected from Sierra Leone by the Afro-Portuguese, the same class solidarity was demonstrated by the arrival of Afro-Portuguese support from Cacheu.

In keeping with the mixed heritage of the mulattoes, Bibiana Vaz also had powerful connections on the African side. Antonio Vaz was related to the Mandinga king of Fogny, so it was from this tribe that the Vazes must have derived much of their strength. In addition, Bibiana could count on the support of the Papel and Banhun rulers, and probably others among whom she dwelt and traded, because of the identity of interest on the question of free trade. This applied to the whole Afro-Portuguese group. For instance, the governor of Cape Verde was not prepared to shoulder the responsibility of arresting the leaders of the revolt because those individuals had the friendship and protection of the neighbouring Africans. (1) The special commissioners also found that large numbers of persons who were implicated could not be apprehended because they were under the protection of the African rulers. They explained that it was impossible to levy on the property of Senhora Vaz, because it was in the sertão within African dominions. Apparently, Bibiana Vaz was only arrested after she had been lured to Cacheu, (2) and it is significant that after she had been returned to her home from Cape Verde, Bezerra wrote that "the kings are now satisfied". (3)

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- (1) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Verissimo Carvalho, 17 July 1687, and Lopes de Barros, 18 Aug 1691
- (2) A.H.U., caixa V - Verissimo Carvalho, 17 July 1687.
- (3) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 201, Bezerra, 7 June 1688.

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Bibiana's counterpart in Sierra Leone was one Senhor Lopez, who played a dominant role throughout the first half of the eighteenth century. Lopez (José Lopez de Moura being his full name) was the grandson of a Mane emperor. As late as 1752, as an extremely old man, he considered it within his power to give Sierra Leone as a doação to the Portuguese crown (1) - and he was not presuming overmuch. The following item from Newton's Journal on Thursday 13th August 1752 speaks for itself: "In the morning King Peter of Whiteman's bay sent for his duty, but having heard yesterday that he had been very lately deposed, I put them off till the morrow, and at noon an embassy arrived from his new majesty Seignor Don Pedro de Case upon the same errand, with a written testimonial from Seignor Don de Lopez, the undoubted king-maker of Sierra Leon. Upon consideration I found reason to recognise his title preferably to the former, and paid his demand of 16 bars, which by the bye, is 4 more than was required by any of his predecessors." (2)

Literate, firmly given to counting the beads of his rosary, and equally devoted to his 'greegrees', Senhor Lopez was an outstanding example of the cultural phenomenon under discussion. In 1727, he was already an old man, a shadow of his former energetic self; and even with the help of lieutenants, he was afraid to embark on projects, which he himself would have managed single-handedly before. As it was, he had plenty of support, both from members of families established in Sierra Leone, such as Jerome, Tomaz and Matheus, as

(1) "Documentos acerca de Sierra Leone" in Arquivo das Colonias, Vol. I. pp. 97-114.

(2) John Newton: Journal of a Slave Trader, p.66

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well as from Afro-Portuguese drawn from the Scarcies, Pongo, Nunez, Geba and Cacheu. The clans had found it necessary to gather at that date because of a serious propaganda offensive launched against them by a Sassenach, Walter Charles, chief factor of the Royal African Company. (1)

Charles made his position very clear: "I will take effectual care while I stay in the country that no white black man shall make any figure here, above what the meanest natives do". To achieve his aim, Charles tried to impress upon the African ruling class that it was in their interest to dismiss the Afro-Portuguese. By the time that he had arrived in Sierra Leone, the latter had come to wield a great preponderance of power, treating the African masses 'tyranically', and even insulting the persons of their kings. The Afro-Portuguese achieved this position "by having it in their power, either to supply or not supply the black natives with such necessaries as they chiefly stood in need of, but at their own terms". Charles felt that if the Africans themselves monopolised the camwood trade and applied themselves to the cultivation of grain, Sierra Leone would become a 'rendezvous' for commerce, without there being any necessity for the "black white Portuguese", who would have to return to Cacheu and Geba; while the African leaders would secure "the blessing of liberty".

About twenty-five years before Charles wrote, an incident had occurred which showed that the Afro-Portuguese could possibly be by-passed

(1) P.R.O., T70/1465 - Diary of Walter Charles, 1728-29. (Except where noted to the contrary, all information on the events of these years are taken from this source.)

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if the Africans took the initiative. That was in 1703, when an important Susu king made a journey of some 300 miles to the coast to discuss trade with the chief factor of the Royal African Company. He brought with him a huge train of attendants, and offered 100 men to agent Freeman to conduct him to Susu territory on a return trip whenever the latter was able. Apparently, the king's main suggestion was that his own people, as apt as the Mandingas in matters of trade, should do business directly with the Company. This set the Afro-Portuguese community in a stir, and they approached the chief factor with a counter offer to stabilise the prices of slaves, ivory and wax, while guaranteeing certain quantities per year. The prices of those articles were then variable, though the Afro-Portuguese struggled to maintain a price of at least 24 'bars' per hundredweight of ivory and 24 'bars' per slave. The agents of the Royal African Company at the time were preoccupied with a proposal of their own, namely, that the directors should set a standard price and then allow the agents to retain the difference whenever they succeeded in making a purchase below the standard rate. (1) All these proposals seem to have come to nought; but Charles was in effect advocating the same policy as the Susu king, and on an even larger scale, so that the Afro-Portuguese could not help but take anxious notice. Lopez was singled out for attack, on the grounds that his services were indispensable to previous agents of the Royal African Company only because most of them were dishonest, and wanted the help of Lopez and his men to conduct private trade. In fact, the Company servants who had turned private traders were either lieutenants or allies of Lopez.

(1) P.R.O., T70/14 - Greenaway, 18 March 1703.

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The year 1727-28 was one of great confusion in Sierra Leone, with the Royal African Company in the centre of a maelstrom of combined forces. The most serious dispute was between the Company and the majority of the Bulloms of Sherbro, caused by the actions of previous agents. All Company employees had to be withdrawn from the Sherbro area, with the exception of one Simon Wild, who was stationed on the Jong. To maintain contact with him from Bence Island, it was necessary to take an inconvenient circuitious route to avoid entering the Sherbro estuary, and Simon Wild actually fell into the hands of hostile Africans at one stage. Other employees of the Royal African Company were being held by the private traders of the Banana Islands, and Charles had also laid hold of some of their men, so that armed conflict between these two forces was looming. But it was the Afro-Portuguese who took the lead against the Royal African Company, driven (on their own admission) by the need to preserve themselves since Charles was going to great lengths to drive a wedge between them and the Africans.

Without the assistance of the trading community, and in the face of hostility from a large section of the Africans, Charles was reduced to what he called "trade for the belly"- scrounging around for rice to maintain himself and other loyal Company servants, though he had trade goods rotting in his stores. At the same time, since the Royal African Company handled a high proportion of the volume of goods in the area under normal circumstances, trade was generally slow, especially on the Rokelle and Port Loko Creek, so that the Africans themselves were worried; and they were by no means all in agreement with Lopez and other white and mulatto traders that the Royal African Company should be

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made to leave. Lopez' own sister, Maria, was a staunch ally of the Company, holding the view that Company trade was far more dependable than that of the interlopers. Another important personage on Charles' side was Suphulo, the Bullom king of Baga on the Rokelle. For some years, his personal relations with Lopez had been poor, and in the general malaise that had overcome commerce in Sierra Leone, he and his people saw Lopez as the prime mover. They claimed that Charles had placed a 'fetish' on the river because of Lopez, and thus no goods were reaching them. They grumbled, and they were contemplating making common cause with the Bulloms below Tagrin Point to engage in a struggle against Lopez and the Bulloms further south, the latter camp being reinforced by the private traders of the Banana Islands. (1)

Charles' tactical decisions were not of the same standard as his incisive analysis of the situation in Sierra Leone and his strategy of dividing the Afro-Portuguese from the Africans. A 'palaver' was held in the Sherbro around April 1727, where the Yongree (Yoni) Bulloms were opposed to those of the Sherbro estuary on questions concerning the Royal African Company. The king of the Sherbro estuary, Sangrafare, was hostile to the Company at the outset, but later even he was ready to seek conciliation. Charles, though repeatedly invited, did not attend any of these vital discussions among the Bullom ruling class, giving the lame excuse that he had no boat to carry him from Bence to Sherbro. In spite of his brave words, Charles appeared to have

(1) King Lewis, ruler of the Bulloms below Tagrin Point, was said to have been poisoned at the instigation of King Sangrafare of the Sherbro.

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been personally timid; (1) concentrating on strengthening the defences of Bence fort, and introducing a half-hourly watch. These were of no avail when Lopez struck in November 1728.

An obituary notice appeared on a tree at the watering place of the Sierra Leone estuary. Written by Lopez on a large sheet of paper, it was addressed to all captains and commanders, indicating "that the ships of all nations, English, French, Dutch, etc. shall have free liberty of trade in the river and the utmost safety, except those belonging to the Royal African Company of England".

Having dealt with the Royal African Company, Lopez turned his attention on the Company's principal ally, the king of Baga, forcing the latter, with savage contempt, to eat food placed at the feet of D. José Lopez de Moura. This symbolic act highlighted the fact that the Afro-Portuguese social formation was not simply a "middle class", but that some of its members had achieved clear dominance over the African ruling class. This must have been a development in Lopez' time, because as late as 1654, the Afro-Portuguese in their principal township of Port Loko were suppliants before the Mane emperor, who was given to making arbitrary levies on their goods. Fortunately visiting Capuchins converted the emperor, Bolofare, who became D. Felipe, the second king in Sierra Leone to bear that name. He was persuaded to respect the rights of the Afro-Portuguese of Port Loko who seemed to have had

(1) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, p.107 (The author expresses the same view.)

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a settlement of their own. (1) As late as 1821, one of the villages on Port Loko was ruled over by Pa Antonio, described as "having a brazen crucifix suspended from his neck", and claiming descent from the Portuguese. (2) Geographically, Pa Antonio's power was narrowly circumscribed, but he was a chief in his own right. It was Lopez, "the king-maker", who foreshadowed the development by which a number of Afro-Portuguese took over the reins of power in various places on the Upper Guinea Coast.

The developments over the Upper Guinea Coast were not even. In the Gambia during the earlier part of the eighteenth century, there were prominent mulattoes like Antonio Vaz and Tomba Mendez, a son of the king of Barra by a 'Portuguese' woman; (3) but later generations lost wealth and prestige. Their children either emigrated to the banks of the Geba or threw in their lot with the neighbouring tribes, ceasing to make any pretensions to European nationality. (4) Indeed, in the whole Geba-Gambia area, the Afro-Portuguese in spite of their numbers did not achieve social prominence and political power, they have survived to the present day as elements owing loyalty to no particular tribe. Invariably, French commentators like Lajaille, who were taking stock of the area south of the Gambia in the late eighteenth

(1) A.P.F., Letters Antichi, Vol. 248, Declaration of king Farma, Emperor of the Sapes, 15 Sept 1654

(2) Christopher Fyfe: Sierra Leone Inheritance, p.169

(3) Francis Moore: "Travels into the inland parts of Africa" in T. Astley, Vol. 2, p.217

(4) J.A. Gray: A History of the Gambia, p.15

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century referred to the impoverished state of the Afro-Portuguese. (1)

However, in the vicinity of the Pongo there was a noticeable rise to power of mestizo elements. Lieutenant Matthews found that "the principal people call themselves Portuguese, claiming their descent from the colonists of that nation who were formerly settled here, though they do not retain the slightest trace of European extraction. (2) It is interesting to note that the tribe within which these Afro-Portuguese held power was not the Bagas, who had been on the Pongo when the Portuguese arrived, but the Susus, who had displaced them during the course of the eighteenth century. (3) Susu tradition not only records incidents relating to the white and black 'Portuguese', but they recall the name of Sittel Fernando as the first Portuguese to settle among them; (4) an event which is probably dateable to the middle of the eighteenth century when the Portuguese were taking a renewed interest in this area on account of the extension of the slave trade. This Fernando was married to the daughter of the king of Bramayah or Konkouré, and his son became ruler of the country. The name of the first king of Koba,

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- (1) J. Machat: Documents sur les Etablissements Français de l'Afrique Occidentale au XVIII^e Siècle (Paris 1906) p.106 - Description of the Casamance by Le Brasseur in 1778. (Governor of Gorée)
- (2) J. Matthews: Voyage to the River Sierra Leone, p.13
- (3) See below, Ch. IX, p.501
- (4) M. Saint Père: "Petit Historique des Sosoe du Rio Pongas", Bulletin du Comité des Etudes Historiques et Scientifiques, tome XIII, pp.26-47, 1930

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Manque Souza (Suarez) also suggests a mixture of Portuguese and Susu blood.

(1)

The Afro-Portuguese were not present on the Sherbro at all (2) - for the simple reason that the lançados did not settle in that area, although they traded there. Thus, when a number of mulatto children of English fathers were born in that area during the seventeenth century, they quickly came to play exactly the same role there as the Afro-Portuguese played elsewhere. With a growing white community of English traders and pirates, all subject to "erotic expediency", the Afro-English half-castes increased rapidly, and they too were augmented by black grumetes sharing their values. There is no need to elaborate on the activities of the mass of these mulattoes, since they so closely followed the pattern set by the Afro-Portuguese and in fact merged with the latter. Of the 12,000 of them said to have been in Sierra Leone at the end of the eighteenth century, (3) it is useful to follow the careers of only a few outstanding individuals who rose to power within the African polities.

It was of course the Bulloms, lying along the coast between the Gallinas and the Ribbi, who were the most involved with the English traders - or, more precisely, it was their integrated Mane ruling class; while Vai

(1) André Arcin: Histoire de la Guinée Française, pp.141,207

(2) J. Labat: Voyages du Chevalier des Marchais, p.80 (He claims that there were Portuguese mulattoes on the Sherbro, but he must have been mistaken.)

(3) J. Machat: Documents sur les Etablissements Français, p.129.

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elements were also to be considered at Cape Mount and in the Gallinas. Local traditions in those areas take special notice of three mulatto families, those of the Tuckers, Rogers and Caulkers. According to one version, recorded in 1929, there arrived, about 150 to 200 years before, three cousins who came from England: namely, Cleveland Caulker, who stopped at Shaingay (Shenge), Abraham Tucker, who stopped at Bar Hall (Shebar), and Charles Rogers, who went to Sulima (Gallinas). (1) As Peter Kup points out, these three were not the real founders of their respective families, the confusion in the traditions being due to the fact that several of these individuals went to Europe for education and travel before returning to Africa. (2) Nor were the three related. This was the liberal interpretation of their common English ancestry.

Two of the above mulatto families were cradled by the Gambia Adventurers and the third by the Royal African Company. Both Zachary Rogers and John Tucker were in the service of the former company in 1665, (3) while Thomas Corker (from whom the name Caulker was derived) was sent out to Sierra Leone by the Royal African Company in 1684. Like the Portuguese lançados and all other resident traders, the employees of the Royal African Company on the Upper Guinea Coast took African wives. Very often, these wives seemed to have been carried within the factory, and their maintenance placed on the

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- (1) J. Roques and M. Luseni: "The Origins of the Kpakas or Rogers", Sierra Leone Studies, No. XV, Dec 1929
- (2) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, p.149
- (3) P.R.O., T70/544 - Gambia Ledger.

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Company's expense account - a feature about which the directors were not very happy. The accountants in London were even more perturbed by the fact that the local agents overloaded the payroll by employing all their children. An order was sent out in 1692 that "the children of Mr. Rogers and all others that doe the Company noe service be discharged". (1) However, the local agents were prepared to stand up for their kith and kin. Agent Corker, who in 1697 had two sons in the Company's employ, stressed the need for mulatto labour, and the London officials temporarily deferred to his judgement; (2) though within another three years they returned to the subject, submitting a list of 'molattoes', who were receiving wages while performing no specific function. Peter and Joseph Tucker and Zachary and Larne Rogers featured on this black-list. (3)

In reality, there was a genuine need for personnel in the forts and factories of the Royal African Company on the Upper Guinea Coast, which were chronically understaffed as far as attracting white men from Europe was concerned. (4) The mulattoes joined the free Africans and "factory slaves" who worked for the Company, filling jobs like that of storekeepers, carpenters, blacksmiths and hunters. Peter Tucker, for example, was employed as an interpreter at Kiddam in 1684, while Simon Rogers was named as a sailor in 1688. (5)

(1) P.R.O., T70/163 - The Book of Advices, 1685-94

(2) P.R.O., T70/50 - To Corker, 28 Jan 1697, fl.172

(3) P.R.O., T70/51 - To William Lewis, 31 Oct 1700, fl.142.

(4) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, pp.71-73

(5) P.R.O., T70/1441 - Lists of the Living and the Dead.

As far as the more important positions were concerned, the view put forward by agent Greenaway in 1703 was that even the factories in outlying districts should be superintended by white men, irrespective of qualifications other than colour

(1) This contrasted with the Portuguese belief that a mulatto related to the African rulers of the area would be their best representative. Once more, however, expediency provided a common denominator; and, for instance, the Royal African Company consigned goods directly to Samuel and Zachary Rogers at Cape Mount, indicating that these mulattoes were in charge of that area. (2)

Around Sierra Leone, the mulattoes ultimately distinguished themselves not as hired servants of the Royal African Company but as free agents, sometimes for but more often against the Company. This was true of all three of the principal families under consideration, though Corker's children had least to do with the Royal African Company. By the middle of the 1690's the Tuckers were a power in the Sherbro area. They were commended in 1697 for the help which they gave the Company; (3) though not long afterwards, the directors noted with annoyance that the "mollotoe Tucker to whom we pay a salary" was among those who sided with the interlopers not only in matters of trade but also in helping them to bring the Company's name into disrepute. This prompted the London officials to suggest that all their mulatto workers should also sign bonds, just as those whites who were recruited in England. (4)

(2) P.R.O., T70/52 - To John Clarke, 11 Nov 1714, fl.427

(1) P.R.O., T70/14 - Greenaway, 18 March 1703

(3) P.R.O., T70/50 - To Corker, 21 Dec.1697, fl.176

(4) P.R.O., T70/51 - To William Lewis, 2 Jan 1700, fl.80

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There were several Tucker brothers who achieved no distinction, but in the middle of the eighteenth century, the name of Henry Tucker was a password in Sierra Leone. John Newton mentions Henry Tucker regularly in his well-known Journal and in the Letters to his wife; and commends him as "the man with whom I had the largest connection in business and by whom I was never deceived". (1) Nicholas Owen was also impressed by Henry Tucker, and provides a vivid pensketch of this individual. "He has been in England, Spain and Portugall and is master of the English tongue; he has 6 or 7 wives and a numerous off-spring of sons and daughters; his strength consists of his own slaves and their children, who has built a town about him and serves as his gremetos upon all occasions. This man bears the charectar of a fair trader among the Europeans, but to the contrary among the blacks. His riches set him above the kings and his numerous people above being surprised by war; almost all the blacks owes him money, which bring a dread of being stopt upon that account, so that he is esteemed and feared by all who has the misfortune to be in his power. He's a fat man and fair spoken, and lives after the manner of the English, haveing his house well furnish'd with English goods and his table tolarably well furnish'd with the country produce. He dresses gayle and commonly makes use of silver at his table, haveing a good side board of plate." (2) This genial king Hal presided over the expatriation and sale into slavery of thousands of his younger half-brothers, the blacks.

(1) John Newton: Letters to a Wife (Cited in Journal of a Slave Trader, p.15)
 (2) Nicholas Owen: Journal of a Slave Dealer, p.76

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In essentials, the above description fitted all the mulatto slave trading chiefs in Sierra Leone in the second half of the eighteenth century. They are, for instance, wholly applicable to James Cleveland, who reigned supreme for nearly thirty years until his death in 1791. Many people walked in dread of "being stopt" by this mulatto - that is to say, in fear of being seized and sold to the slave ships because of debts they owed him. Debts were by then among the most commonly used pretexts for ensnaring victims for the Atlantic slave trade. It was the manner of the trade that most of the petty chiefs who were involved sought advances of European goods from the slave traders. Cleveland lent goods to every chief who requested them, and if any chief was slow in repaying, Cleveland would arm 200 or 300 of his grumetes, sending them under white officers to tattack the debtor's town. In this way he depopulated all the country between Cape Sierra Leone and the Sherbro. (1)

Cleveland's depredations inevitably intensified violence, chaos and fear in Sierra Leone. One chief gave evidence that his town was attacked by Cleveland, some other chiefs and an American vessel then waiting for slaves. His town was taken and destroyed, but he escaped with most of his people, and later carried out reprisals against Cleveland. (2) This sort of incident was typical, with a long train of hostilities springing from every act of violence. Besides, a vendetta had broken out between the Caulkers and Clevelands, after James Cleveland organised an attack on the Plantain Islands in 1785, killing chief Caulker, and usurping the position of that branch of the family. This

(1) C.B. Wadstrom: An Essay on Colonisation, Part I, p.75

(2) Ibid: p.76.

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family feud was pursued for several decades. (1)

Chronic fear was reflected in the arrangements by which whole villagers were shifted from exposed positions to ward off slaving attacks. Servants of the Sierra Leone Company reported as follows: "We saw a number of creeks along the river, too narrow to admit above a canoe at once. At the head of most of these creeks are towns which were placed there in the time of this mulatto chief, because such situations favoured an escape before an attack could be made. A subordinate chief, at whose town we landed, confessed that such had been his motive for choosing so difficult a spot." (2)

From time to time, there were attempts at a more active form of resistance to the mulatto traders. One of the most powerful and feared slave traders on the coast in the latter part of the eighteenth century was John Ormond, an Englishman, who owned barracoons on the Kónkouré. About the year 1780, he went to the Idolos for the sake of his health, leaving his mulatto son in charge of his factory. The Bagas descended upon his settlement, and with the help of Ormond's slaves they destroyed or carried away everything, after killing young Ormond and his adherents. (3) But to the south, where the Caulkers, Tuckers and Rogers operated, the balance of forces was on the side of the slave trading chiefs, who went so far as to take control of the Poro, the citadel of power within the local society. James Cleveland was in a position to call out the Poro, (4) while a member of the Tucker family as late as 1826

(1) Christopher Fyfe: A History of Sierra Leone, (See Index, "Caulker")

(2) C.B. Wadstrom: An Essay on Colonisation, Part I, p.76

(3) Ibid: p.87

(4) Ibid: p.76.

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invoked the Poro to ensure the continuation of the slave trade. (1)

How did individuals like Henry Tucker and James Cleveland come to wield such power within African society so as ultimately to have been in a position to make the Poro (the 'Law God' society, as it has been termed) ⁽²⁾ into an instrument of their own policies? That they had some kinship relationship with the hereditary ruling class is well-known, and this could in some cases lead to the inheritance of land, prestige and authority.

The origins of the Rogers one is the best documented in this respect. Agent Zachary Rogers married a relation of the king of Sherbro (possibly his sister), who obviously had some authority in her own right, being referred to as "the great woman" by agent Platt. On Rogers' death in February 1681, she demanded the salary due to him, this being one of the complications of the dispute of 1679-81; and the camwood trade was renewed only after her demands were met. The Sherbro ruler was conceivably a Quoja, ruling over Bulloms; (3) and in any case descendants of Zachary Rogers strengthened their position by marrying into the local ruling family of the Massaquoia at Cape Mount.

By 1723, the Rogers must have been well entrenched, because when the directors had a dispute with Zachary Rogers (Jnr), they were forced to handle him with great caution. (4) Some years later, Walter Charles, in his

(1) Christopher Fyfe: A History of Sierra Leone, p.157

(2) F. W. Butt-Thompson: West African secret Societies, p.17

(3) See above, Ch. II, p.107

(4) P.R.O., T70/60 - To Archibald and David Scott, 10 July 1723, fl.35.

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usual disparaging manner, mentioned Zachary Rogers as "a mulatto sprout from a former Company chief", but he conceded that Zachary monopolised the camwood trade at Cape Mount. (1) Charles Rogers, mentioned in tradition as coming from England, must have been a grandson of the first Zachary Rogers. He married the daughter of the king, Kajou, and the son of this marriage, James Rogers, was one of the factors causing the division of the Massaquoia ruling family of the Vais into Kpakas (Rogers) and Gallinas. (2) By this time, camwood had given place to slaves; and in the nineteenth century, the Rogers family, by then completely Africanised, played a major role in the slave trade in an area made notorious by the barracoons of the Spanish trader, Pedro Blanco. (3)

The development of the Caulker family was parallel to that of the Rogers. Thomas Corker, the Englishman, had several sons, one of whom bore his father's name, and was in the employ of the Royal African Company in 1713. (4) Robin and Stephen were two other sons. The mother of some, if not all of Corker's children was known to the English as Senhora Doll, Duchess of Sherbro. She was a Bullom; and their tradition places her as a member of the Ya Kumba family who ruled on the shores of Yawry Bay between the Sierra Leone peninsula and the Sherbro estuary. When she died in 1722, her children kept their

(1) P.R.O., T70/1465 - Diary of Walter Charles.

(2) S.M. Despicht: "A Short History of the Gallinas Chiefdoms", Sierra Leone Studies, No.XXI, Jan 1939

(3) See, e.g., Captain Canot: Adventures of an African Slaver, p.300 et seq.

(4) P.R.O., T70/591 - York Island Accounts 1710-1720

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father's name, while supposedly inheriting her claims to authority. (1) Newton recorded in his journal that when he crossed the bar of the river Bum on the 14th November 1750, a message was sent to James Corker, implying that Corker was the senhor of that area. (2) This coincides with the seat of power of the Ya Kumba family.

However, careful scrutiny suggests that the blood ties on the female side were the least of the qualifications of the mulattoes. After all, they were operating within a patri-lineal framework among the Mane descendants in the Sherbro and the Sierra Leone peninsula, as well as among the patri-lineal Susus of the Pongo and Nunez. Furthermore, it appears that James Cleveland, the most successful of the mulatto chiefs, was not descended from an African ruling family. Cleveland the slave trader, said to have been a member of a respectable Devonshire family and the brother of a Secretary to the Admiralty, arrived at the Banana Islands towards the middle of the eighteenth century, and married the daughter of chief Caulker, who was already established there. But their son, John, did not long survive the father who died in 1758; and the James Cleveland who became notorious was reputedly the son of a Kissi woman named N'Damba. (3)

As far as the situation on the Nunez, Konkouré and Pongo was concerned, a very pertinent parallel is suggested by the careers of mulatto

(1) Christopher Fyfe: A History of Sierra Leone, p.10

(2) John Newton: Journal of a Slave Trader, p.17 (Newton sometimes calls him 'Corker' and sometimes 'Calcker'.)

(3) Claude George: The Rise of British West Africa (London 1903) pp.65-67.

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slave trading chiefs in the nineteenth century. Most of them were offspring of Americans, and boasted names like Curtis, Lightbourne and Wilkinson. According to tradition, when these mulattoes first made their bid for power they were scoffed at and told that their fathers had been duped into thinking they had married the daughters of kings, but that they had only been provided with slave women. (1) Ultimately, they did achieve the status of rulers, but their political power, far from resting on a traditional kinship base, could only have been achieved in spite of previous social prescriptions. The same appeared to have been true of the eighteenth century mulatto chiefs.

At every juncture in their rise to social and political prominence the progress of the mulattoes must be seen in relation to the trade with the Europeans. In the first instance, they inherited wealth from their white fathers, which the latter had acquired from trading and from robbing their employers. Little is known of the original John Tucker, who was in the employ of the Gambia Adventurers, but both Zachary Rogers and Thomas Corker had grown rich by defrauding the Royal African Company, (2) their primary capital accumulation following the general rule of being based on outright robbery. Judging from a report of 1705, the "biggest villains", such as Rogers and Corker undoubtedly were, had started plantations and used the Company's slaves to work them. (3) Such plantations were the nucleus of the chiefly estate.

(1) André Arcin: Histoire de La Guinée Française, p.142

(2) Rogers died in the Sherbro in 1681. Corker died shortly after he had been carried back to England in 1700 to answer charges of peculation.

(3) P.R.O., T70/14 - Greenaway, 18 March 1703.

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At the end of the eighteenth century, the largest plantations on the coast of Sierra Leone belonged to the Caulkers and their cousins, the Clevelands. (1)

With the goods, slaves and boats transferred from the Royal African Company and made to yield increase by trade, the white resident traders and their mulatto progeny were able to build their own towns in many instances. Henry Tucker had his town, and so did Lopez and other individuals in this category. Since the Manes indulged in the breaking up of the patrimony, and the setting up of several village chiefdoms of approximately equal power, (2) when the mulattoes built their towns they automatically had as much power as the average chief in the area. Indeed, the mulatto towns were usually stronger, being protected by European cannon in some instances, as was "Jamaica Town", the home of Zachary Cumberbatch. (3) Owen mentioned that Henry Tucker's strength consisted in the slaves, grumetes and relations who comprised his town. Their functions were not only the relatively peaceful ones of trade, but, as with the Caulkers and Clevelands, they would have been used as the bailiffs who collected debtors bodily for the slave ships.

Perhaps what was even more decisive than the inherited wealth of the mulattoes was their commercial expertise. Walter Charles had realised that for some reason the mulattoes were performing services for the European buyers which the Africans did not. He considered that this was an easily

(1) B.M., Add. Ms. 12131 - Mr. James Strand Journal of Occurrences, 1792, and Mr. Gray's Journal 1795.

(2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol.3, p.267

(3) P.R.O., T70/1465 - Diary of Walter Charles, 1728

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reversible process, which only needed African initiative to oust the 'black-whites'. However, the understanding of European trade possessed by the mulattoes was the product of their training in this sphere and their constant pre-occupation with trade as a profession, and not simply as an additive to agricultural endeavours; and this understanding placed the African rulers perpetually in the debt of the mulattoes.

Apart from the knowledge of European techniques which the mulattoes obtained informally on the coast, quite a sprinkling of them went to Europe from Sierra Leone in the eighteenth century, along with the sons of African chiefs. John Matthews informed the Lords' Committee on the Atlantic slave trade that in 1788 there were fifty African children in Liverpool, and that in some years the figure had been as high as seventy, apart from those in London and Bristol. The purpose, according to Matthews, was that they should "receive such an education such as will fit them for trading with greater advantage". (1) Anna Maria Falconbridge purported to be quoting the African explanation that it was to "read book to learn and be rogue ~~so~~ well as white man". (2) From all reports, the mulattoes succeeded only too well.

There were two other ingredients which went into the success of the mulattoes, apart from their knowledge of the European system of commerce.

- (1) Reports of the Lords of the Committee, 1789 - Part I "Detached Pieces of Evidence relating to the Trade to Africa generally" No. 4, Delegates of Liverpool 1788, and No. 5, John Matthews.
- (2) A.M. Falconbridge: Narrative of Two Voyages to the River Sierra Leone, p.

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The first was the consciousness of the fact that they straddled two worlds, and that there was advantage to be gained by identifying themselves to greater or lesser degree with one or the other, as circumstances dictated. Of James Cleveland, Matthews had this to say, "To sum up his character in a few words: with a White Man he is a White Man, with a Black Man a Black Man". Similarly, it was said of Prince George, an educated son of a Sierra Leone chief, that his European education had no other effect than to enable him to impose upon both his own countrymen and whites with greater facility. (1) In the second place, the mulatto chiefs displayed a ruthlessness which must have stemmed from the fact that for the first generation or two at any rate they were not restrained by any rules or loyalties. Nicholas Owen perceived this. His assessment of the mulattoes was that "they are in a general way worse than the blacks and as they are given to trade, which leads them into the fashions of the English and shews them insight in the manner we trade with the black people, our proffit is not sufficient to satisfy them, but they make new extortions of their own, which renders the poor blacks miserable a both sides". (2) This then was the efficient comprador class of the Upper Guinea Coast in the proto-colonial situation. They squeezed the Africans to make as much personal profit as possible, but essentially they served the wider interests of European commercial capitalism.

(1) Report of the Lords of the Committee, 1789, Loc.cit.,

(2) Nicholas Owen: Journal of the Slave Dealer, p.102.

A HISTORY OF THE UPPER GUINEA COAST, 1545-1800

CHAPTER NINE

THE INFLUENCE OF THE INTERIOR ON THE COAST

CHAPTER IXTHE INFLUENCE OF THE INTERIOR ON THE COAST

Throughout the period under discussion, the littoral strip of Upper Guinea remained in close contact with its hinterland, so that the Europeans did not represent the only external influence which acted upon that society. The impact of the interior can be seen in part as a continuation of the process which had been going on for centuries, and which was responsible for the peopling of the coast; but it is discernible that by the eighteenth century, the hinterland, too, had immensely strengthened the ties which had earlier been established with the Atlantic slave trade, so that the paradox arose that even the influences of the interior in the eighteenth century were reflections of contacts with the Europeans. Both the old and the new themes in this coast - hinterland relationship must be considered.

In certain respects, the Sudanic presence on the Upper Guinea Coast, so powerful in the sixteenth century, was on the wane in the seventeenth century, and virtually non-existent in the eighteenth. For instance, over this period, references to the Farim Cabo and Farim Braço are rare. These kingdoms were no longer part of a centralised empire ruled over by the Mandimansa. Ogilby was well aware of the process of disintegration. He wrote (in 1670) that "the king of Mandinga some years since was so puissant that almost all the kings and people of Upper Guinea abeyed and paid him

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tribute; especially the Cassangas, and other kingdoms lying at the river Gambia. Heretofore he held the seat of his empire in the inland, and gave the lower countreys lying on the west sea, to one Chabos and Faim Braso; placing moreover many other viceroys under him; ... but now these have taken the title of kings, and regard this Mandimansa little or nothing; every one governing his countrey with full power, without acknowledging him or any other for their superior". (1) Besides, some of the subjected littoral peoples were no longer prepared to tolerate Mandinga dominance. The Djolas in particular dealt some serious blows at the Mandinga king of Fogny in the early eighteenth century, when he attempted to assert his authority over them.

(2)

The Mane system of viceroys or dondaghs had broken down even more completely than its Mandinga equivalent, leaving Sierra Leone isolated from the former centre of the empire at Cape Mount, as well as leading to the divisionism within Sierra Leone itself. F.A. Utting, in The Story of Sierra Leone, provides a chronology based on what was in effect a number of Mane dynasties. He mentions Bai Farima (died 1606); Farama Borea (1606-1630); Borea the Great (1630-64); Philip II (1665-) etc. (3) But, no viable centralised Sierra Leone kingdom persisted over this long interval. The area ruled by "Farama Borea", who is the same Farma Bouré christened Philip

(1) John Ogilby: Africa, pp.367,368 (Also p.353)

(2) J.M. Gray: A History of the Gambia, p.179

(3) F.A. Utting: The Story of Sierra Leone (London 1931)

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by the Portuguese, was divided up between four brothers; (1) while the second king in Sierra Leone to be baptised 'Philip', like the first Farma or Farima, ruled over the Port Loko area rather than the peninsula. (2) It is obvious that with time each of the original four kingdoms reported at the beginning of the seventeenth century was disintegrating into several smaller units.

Yet, to concentrate on the decline of the formal political structures of the Mande is misleading. In numerous other spheres, ranging from house-building to language, the peoples of the Upper Guinea Coast have been profoundly influenced by the Mande, sometimes to the point of adopting the identity of the latter. (3) One of the most important sub-divisions of the

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- (1) See above, Ch. II, p. 101. At least one of these brothers, Dom Thomas, was alive in the 1660's. He was seen by the Portuguese missionary, André de Faro in 1663, and by the French trader, Nicholas de Villault in 1667. André de Faro: Peregrinação, p.52; and Nicholas de Villault: Relation de Costes d'Afrique, p.62. See also C. Fyfe: Sierra Leone Inheritance, p.5
- (2) André de Faro: Peregrinação, p.60. (However, the king whom Utting calls Borea the Great (1630-1660) was apparently regarded as 'Philip II' by European traders who knew that his predecessor was baptised and given the name Philip. See Alonso de Sanderval: Natureleza de Todos Etiopes (Second edition under the title De Instaurandum Aethiopum Salute, Seville, 1641).
- (3) A. Carreira: O Fundamento dos Etnónimos na Guiné Portuguesa; and A. Texeira da Mota and M.G. Ventim Neves: A Habitação Indígena na Guiné Portuguesa, p.46. Naturally enough, the process was not one sided. Mandinga construction, e.g., was influenced by the littoral people - p.458.

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Balanta tribe, for example, is called the 'Balanta-Mane'. They modelled themselves after the Mandingax of the Casamance and assumed the Mande family name 'Mane'. It was in the late nineteenth century that a European first drew attention to the 'Balanta-Mane', (1) but such acculturation must have been proceeding slowly over centuries, ever since the first contacts were made between the Balantas and the Mandingas.

No doubt, political conquest stimulated cultural change, but the 'Mandinguisation' (2) of the West Atlantic peoples continued during the eighteenth century when the Mande political empires were crumbling. Besides, even politically there was an up-trend, discernible in the weight of Mande opinion within the councils of the coastal chiefdoms.

Alongside of the Mande, one must take into account the second ethnic group of the Upper Niger Circle: namely, the Fulas. They did not always act in concert with the Mande by any means, but it is a tolerable approximation to consider the Upper Niger Circle as a single entity in so far as it acted upon the West Atlantic Circle. The Islamic state of the Futa Djalon which was created by the Mande and Fulas in the eighteenth century was of the greatest significance in the lives of the people of the littoral.

(1) Bertrand-Bocandé: "Notes sur la Guinée Portugaise ou Sénégalaise Meridionale", Bull. Soc. Geog. Paris, Vol. XI, pp.265-350, and Vol. XII, pp.57-93.

(2) This somewhat heavy-handed term is already in use in the literature on the subject.

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On regarding the several spheres in which the influence of the interior was manifest, trade emerges as an outstanding aspect; and it is one that underwent appreciable changes during the centuries of pre-colonial Afro-European contacts. All these changes ultimately tended to reinforce the connection between the coast and the interior, though this development was not inevitable.

The arrival of the Portuguese caravels automatically meant that the coastal peoples no longer had to maintain exclusive commercial relations with the interior. Under certain circumstances, the interior could conceivably have been relegated into an unimportant position as far as the coastal peoples were concerned. When commodities such as cloth and iron were obtainable from both directions, Europe had the advantages to supplant the interior, as indeed ultimately happened with these two manufactures.(1) Alternatively, European imports could have replaced African products at the coastal end. In Sierra Leone there was a real threat of this occurring if the Europeans imported salt; and it was observed at the end of the eighteenth century that the peoples of the swamps had a ban on European imports of salt, since that was the only coastal African commodity which rated high with the interior peoples at that time. (2) But the element of competition was not pronounced, because European goods were usually novel, and because the Europeans were requesting goods which the Africans had not been exchanging among themselves.

(1) See above, Ch. VII, D

(2) John Matthews: A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone, p.144.

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Given that the inhabitants of the interior were as desirous of European goods as were the coastal residents, and given that they were both capable of supplying the same African products, and given further that the European demand (especially for slaves) could easily absorb the supplies from both coast and hinterland, the overall impact of the European advent was to induce a greater movement of goods between the littoral and the hinterland. A nucleus of the old trade remained; cloth, cattle and shea-butter (1) from the interior being exchanged for salt, kola and rice from the coast; but proportionately what mattered was that black men were purchased with weapons, alcohol, utensils, glass beads and the like.

In the sixteenth century, the Susus and the Djalonkés traveled in large annual caravans from the Futa Djalon to the Pongo, Nunez and Konkouré; (2) while in the seventeenth century, the position seems to have been the same. Coelho calls the traders who arrived at the Nunez the 'Jagancazes', but in all probability they came from the Futa Djalon or Djalonkadoo, as it would then have been called. Anxious to secure supplies of salt both for themselves and their cattle, they despatched every year three large caravans to the coast - one to the Senegal, one to the Gambia and one to the Nunez. (3)

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- (1) Shea-butter is a vegetable product. Its importance among the peoples of the Gambia was discerned by Mungo Park, and hence the tree from which it is obtained is called Bassia Parkii (Sap.). See Mungo Park: Travels ... 1795-97, pp.26,35 and J. Machat: Les Rivières du Sud, p.180.
- (2) See above, Ch. II, p.117
- (3) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, pp. 7,8,61

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It is significant that the caravans travelled to the coast rather than the littoral residents taking the initiative to proceed inland; and it was equally significant that the Portuguese lançados undertook the responsibility of tapping the resources of the sertão, with the Afro-Portuguese following in their footsteps. The Mande and Fulas displayed a flair for commerce which was absent from the coastal tribes. Coelho pinpointed a Mandinga town on the Corubal as the only place where markets were held every day of the week, organised by professional Mandinga traders. (1) Ubiquitous in West Africa in this capacity (usually under the name Dioula), it was the Mandinga merchants who kept the Upper Guinea Coast in contact with the deep hinterland. At Cantor, Geba and Farim, the boats of the Afro-Portuguese handed over their produce to the Mandingas, who set off inland.

Long-distance trade always had its intervening hindrances and hazards. Almost without exception, peoples on or near the coast in Africa were reluctant to allow direct contact to be made between the Europeans on the coast and the sources of trade in the interior. First-hand information on the trading policies of the coastal residents of Sierra Leone comes through an unusual set of circumstances. One Charles Franklin was fleeing from the pirate, Charles Roberts in 1718, and was given sanctuary by king Thom at the Sierra Leone estuary. During his residence, he found that the inhabitants on the sea front used every means of propaganda to keep the inland people away from the Europeans. On the one hand, they discouraged the whites from venturing into the bush by painting a picture of a barren and hostile

(1) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, p.54

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interior, while they had the visitors from the hinterland believe that there was always the danger of being carried off in the slave ships if they turned up to sell their commodities. When Franklin had to be sent to another king ninety miles inland, his journey was conducted in such a way as to prevent him making any useful observations, and particular care was taken to see that he made no written notes. (1)

Caravans and coffles were open to attack along the route. Naturally enough, the travellers made arrangements for their own defence, and the larger the party the better. The Fulas in the late seventeenth century were said to have been foremost among the caravan parties, and travelled with adequate protection and hunters to procure food; though at the same time bands of Fulas were notorious highway robbers. The Fulas were also strong enough to brush aside imperiously the demands for tolls, paying only a trifle which they themselves determined upon. (2)

The administration of such a Fula caravan was an affair of state - an "administered trade", as Karl Polanyi categorises this pre-capitalist form of commerce. (3) The king's permission was necessary and he was to receive half the profit. The privilege of leading the caravan was usually given to a

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- (1) A.W. Lawrence:(Ed.): A Series of Uncommon Events which Befell Captain George Roberts (London 1930) pp.160-167, 176-178.
- (2) Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas en Africa, Vol. II, p.132
- (3) K. Polanyi: "The Economy as an Instituted Process", in K. Polanyi, C.M. Arensberg and H.W. Pearson (eds.): Trade and Markets in the Early Empires (Glencoe 1957) p.263.

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son or an important personage who had the power of life and death over his followers. He set out for the coast at the beginning of the dry season, taking up a position on a well-frequented path, while despatching small bands of retainers to other trails throughout the neighbourhood so as to blockade access to the sea. This would be kept up for a month or more until sufficient traders were trapped to constitute a valuable caravan. For this unsolicited protection, each trader had to hand over a small percentage of his profits to the caravan leader. (1)

When the caravan reached the end of its journey at some place where the Europeans had a factory, such as Port Loko or Kambia on the Gt. Scarcies, they applied to the African inhabitants of the given settlement to serve as brokers and interpreters, the latter being a ceremonial rather than a functional role. Small huts or boughs were built to shelter them from the heat of the sun, though the leader of the caravan was usually accommodated by the European factor. Before the two sides embarked on business the factor had to give the leader his present or boonyar, comprising usually kola, malaguetta pepper, tobacco, rice and palm oil. The first two articles were of the greatest consequence, and once the kola was chewed a bargain could be completed. The trade for rice was soon settled as an equal measure of salt was offered to the Fulas. Other goods were bartered for individually, each requiring a fresh 'palaver' and all its attendant formality. Not surprisingly, the Europeans complained that the Fulas had no idea of time, since they would spend all day to gain an extra shilling or two in value. Eventually, the deal

(1) Captain Canot: Adventures of an African Slaver, p.92

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was completed, and the caravan leader requested his second boonyar, proportionate to the amount of business transacted. The articles involved in this barter were slaves, ivory, rice, soap and cattle on the one hand, and salt, kola, guns, gunpowder, cloth, tobacco, beads, etc. on the other. (1)

A marked increase in the number of caravans was noticeable by the latter part of the eighteenth century, with all the rivers between the Sierra Leone estuary and the Nunez discharging slaves into the hulls of the European ships. But this was not all. Long before this, the Mande and Fulas had been drawn closer to the coast by the European presence. The movement across the plains and down to the littoral plains was two-pronged, consisting of peaceful penetration and aggressive domination.

Invasions such as those of the Fulas in the fifteenth century and those of the Manes in the sixteenth century obviously affected the ethnographic picture on the Upper Guinea Coast in a dramatic manner, but, on balance, they were not the most important means by which population changes came about. The Mande and the Fula appeared among the coastal tribes in small groups, perhaps at times even individually. They were allowed to have their own quarter in a village or a village to themselves, and the result was a cunda or home. (2) The Fulas had their Fulacundas, the Soninke their Tienecundas, and the Islamicised Mandingas their Morocundas. (3) As these cundas grew large and more numerous, the contradictions between themselves and the host

(1) T. Winterbottom: An Account of the Native Africans of Sierra Leone.

(2) Cunda is really a suffix, though it is used here as a substantive.

(3) A. Texeira da Mota: Guiné Portuguesa, Vol. I, p.158.

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community intensified, and eventually the Mande or Fula aliens took control of the region, with the main body of the tribe usually supporting their irridentist members.

As would be expected, the above process was a long drawn out one. Though the Fulas had been in the Senegambia centuries before Jobson wrote in 1621, they were at that time still slowly building up their position on the river Gambia, transforming themselves from a nomadic to a sendentary existence. "Their profession is keeping of cattle, some goats they have, but the herds they tend are beefes, whereof they are abundantly stored: In some places they have settled towns, but for the most part they are still wandering, uniting themselves in kindred and families, and so drive their heards together; where they find the ground and soil most fit for their cattle, there with the king's allowance of the country, they sit downe building themselves houses, as the season of the yeare serves." (1) Later in the century, they were mostly resident in their own towns, still subject to the Mandingas. (2)

Eventually, the Fulas rose from the position of vassalage in which they were held by the Mandingas on the Gambia to one of equality rather than hegemony. In other places, the complete inversion of power did occur, though not always within the period under discussion. In Cabo and the Badjar, for example, it was not until the nineteenth century that the Fulacundas among the Mandingas and Beafadas proved Trojan horses for Fula imperialism. (3)

(1) R. Jobson: The Golden Trade, p.46

(2) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, p.8.

(3) Velez Caroco: Monjur o Gabu, e a Sua Historia, p.106; and J. Mendes Moreira: Fulas do Gabu (Bissau 1948) pp.80,82.

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But the eighteenth century witnessed the establishment of Fulacundas not only in Cabo and on the Badjar, but also much closer to the coast among the Djolas and the Banhuns, and among the Beafadas and Nalus in the Geba-Nunez area. This latter district also harboured several Morocundas and Tienecundas as did the whole of Sierra Leone as far south as the rivers leading into the Sherbro estuary. In two instances, the process had been carried to completion, resulting in Susu domination of the coast between the Pongo and the Melakouré, and in Fula rule in the Futa Djalon.

The map produced by Mungo Park after his first journey inland shows the left bank of the Gambia studded with Fulacundas. He himself commented that "the Fulas are pastoral people who have introduced themselves into all the kingdoms of the Windward Coast, as herdsmen and husbandmen, paying a tribute to the sovereign of the country for the lands which they hold". (1)

Fortunately, a brief account of the Fulacundas in the Geba-Corubal region in the late eighteenth century is available, demonstrating what they were like in this embryonic stage. The isolated Fula communities were tightly organised mutual interdependence and economy were stressed; and the harvest was never sold until the following one was reaped. Not that many of the Fulas worked the land. Their main concern was their large herds of cattle, whose milk they exchanged for grain, as well as manufacturing butter and cheese. They were monogamous, in contrast to all their neighbours, and the men married strictly within the ethnic group. (2)

(1) Mungo Park: Travels...1795-97, p.17

(2) Damão Peres (ed.): Planta da Praça de Bissau e Suas Adjacentes por Bernardino Antonio Alvares de Andrade, (Lisboa 1952) pp.56-58.

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Fula traditions speak of a dispersal from the Futa Boundou, tracing the route of travel and pinpointing the positions in the Geba-Corubal area where the immigrants set up their Fulacundas and Fulasos (another word meaning Fula family hamlets). Led by one Kunta Meta, they brought their cattle across the Badjar to Cabo (Gabu), founding the settlement of Cuntanto in what is now Tumana de Cima in Portuguese Guinea. Later they tried to form another colony in Chanha to the south, but were discouraged, and returned to Tumana to build a stronghold at Gabu-Sara. From there a number of other settlements were formed, mainly in the chao or territory of the Mandingas, but also among the Beafadas; tribute being paid to the respective sovereign tribe. (1)

Meanwhile, south of the Geba, the Mande had long been advancing towards the coast. Both the Susus and the Mandingas were involved, though because of the reputations of the Mandingas, Susus were often called Mandingas by the European traders. (2) Up to the mid-seventeenth century, the Susus were still a land-bound tribe, but they were approaching much closer to the sea. Coelho remarked that the Susus had no kings: only villages like the Bijagos, each under the command of a headman. (3) This is clearly erroneous if applied to the Susus of the interior, who lived under a more developed state system than the inhabitants of the littoral. The isolated villages were the outposts of the Susus, the cundas in the territory of the Nalus and Bagas.

(1) Velez Caroco: Monjur o Gabu, e a Sua Historia, pp.133,134

J. Mendes Moreira: Fulas do Gabu, pp.76-79

(2) A.G. Laing: Travels, p.69

(3) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, pp.59,210

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Almost a century later, Nicholas Owen echoed the comment about the Susus living only under headmen. He was referring to the coast, so that some of the Susus had made their way to the waterside by that date. (1) Several late eighteenth century accounts show that between the Pongo and the Scarcies the coastwards thrust of the Susus had reduced the Bagas to a few straggling villages along the coast, and had forced some to take refuge in the Isles de Los. (2)

The process of Mande penetration was well exemplified by the development at Port Loko Creek. A Temne town called Old Port Loko was the earliest settlement in that area; while at a later date the Temnes built another called Romarung. Susu incursion was represented by two towns, Sandegu and Robatt. After a period as guests, the Susus seized power in Port Loko, apparently at the end of the eighteenth century. Tradition names the Susu leader as a member of the Sankong family which held sway in the Scarcies-Melakouré district, (3) Divisions within the Temne ranks aided the achievement of hegemony by the Susus; (4) though there was to be a reversal of policy and fortunes in 1816 when the Susu king of Port Loko was expelled by a Temne

(1) Nicholas Owen: Journal of a Slave Dealer, p.69

(2) J. Matthews: Voyage to the River Sierra Leone, p.16; and T. Winterbottom An Account of the Native Africans of Sierra Leone, p.5.

(3) Christopher Fyfe: Sierra Leone Inheritance, Section 9, extracts 1 and 2, pp.166-170

(4) A.G. Laing: Travels, p.73

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alliance. (1)

Unlike the Mane invasions, the eighteenth century Mande offensive was stimulated and accompanied by Islam. Towns like 'Mori Kunda' and 'Mori Funde' sited in Koranko territory in the early nineteenth century could mean only one thing - the presence of Muslims. (2) They were built up by Mande traders professing Islam, who had complete freedom of movement over the whole of the Upper Guinea Coast and were the most wealthy individuals in the region. Families such as the Sankong were Muslims, and their rise to power was followed by the establishment of mosques and inducements to the Temne chiefs to send their sons for an Islamic education.

Islam made its appearance on the Upper Guinea Coast at an early date, taken in the context of West Africa. This fact has received little consideration, largely because the coast seemed to fall outside the radius of light cast by the Sudanic empires. (3) In the sixteenth century, if not earlier, Islam had reached a stage of development in the Mande dominated sections of the Upper Guinea Coast comparable to that in the Western and Central Sudan in essentials: that is to say, a body of Muslim clerics was in existence, a programme of instruction in Arabic was available, and the ruling class was

(1) Christopher Fyfe: Sierra Leone Inheritance, loc.cit., (Peter Kup places these traditions in a late sixteenth and early seventeenth century context - A History of Sierra Leone, p.142.)

(2) A.G. Laing: Travels, pp.188,189

(3) A standard work such as J.S. Trimingham: A History of Islam in West Africa makes scarcely any reference to the Upper Guinea Coast.

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heavily influenced by Muslim advice. There were three important Islamic centres on the Gambia - one at the estuary; a second at Malor, 200 miles inland; and a third at Sutuco a further 150 miles distant in the territory of the Farim Cabo. In these the imams (called 'bisserins' and 'marabouts' by the Europeans) were trained, and the important mosques were to be found.

(1) The authority of the Almani at Sutuco extended to the south over the Susus as well as the Mandingas, and the region was divided into units which the Portuguese equated with bishoprics. (2)

The imams lived separately from the mass of the people, and their way of life was distinctive. The practices of their religion were adhered to. They were described by De Almada as being thin and debilitated, because of abstinence and fasting; they did not eat pork, nor drink wine, nor eat flesh killed by any hands other than theirs; and they performed their ablutions and their prayers. (3) What their religion was like in a qualitative sense it is difficult to say. Lemos Coelho noted that certain Moorish devotees who visited the Senegambia commented that the religion practised there was filled with a thousand deviations from the law of Mohammed. (4) Conceivably, however, the Moors might have been speaking from a sectarian position. The great emphasis on education along with the possibility of regenerative influence from outside must have helped to keep

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", p.275.

(2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. III, p.242

(3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.275,276

(4) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, p.107

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the religion of the Upper Guinea Coast relatively orthodox, at least by Sudanic standards; though at the same time, somewhat paradoxically, it was the flexibility of religious practice which helped to maintain the Muslims high in the favour of the mass of Africans.

It is obvious that the Muslims were extremely tolerant of the African religion and way of life, and as such they were not regarded as aliens. This was in a sense a survival technique of a tiny minority, but their forbearance is in distinct contrast to the attitude of the Portuguese priests who went about breaking ancestral images and demanding the limitation of the number of wives of the polygamous peoples they were trying to convert. (1) On a fundamental issue such as initiation and circumcision, the imam quickly became the individual in charge of the ceremony, as Valentim Fernandes observed. (2) Very probably this involvement was possible because the African Muslims still shared most of the fundamental conceptions of their society, especially with regard to metaphysical force. Neither party found it incongruous that the Muslims inexorably usurped the power and authority of the "medicine man" or priest.

All over the Upper Guinea Coast even when there was no suggestion that the people in a given area embraced Islam, both the imams and the Muslim

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- (1) André de Faro: Peregrinação. (This missionary nearly lost his life as a result of his conviction that it was necessary to destroy all African 'idols'.)
- (2) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.44 (referring to the Mandingas and the Wolofs.)

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traders were welcomed and revered as the dispensers of 'greegrees' or amulets. Any object or collection of objects could constitute a 'greegree', provided it was recognised as having power; but the Muslims standardised their prescriptions by writing on a piece of paper and sewing it up within a decorated leather bag, the work of Mande craftsmen. There was more than a hint of the 'greegrees' being perverted into a pardoners' trade. When Barreira tried to effect the conversion of the Susu king of Bena, he was opposed by a Muslim whose principal fear seemed to Barreira to have been the loss of 'greegree' revenues. (1) Writing at the end of the eighteenth century, Beaver voiced his suspicion that a number of illiterate frauds had entered the profession, but whoever could win the reputation for producing "strong greegrees" had his fortune made. Even the Bijagos welcomed the Muslims and purchased their dispensations. (2)

The above phenomenon stimulated the demand for paper on the Upper Guinea Coast. Paper was one of the items prohibited by Manueline legislation from being sold to the Africans; (3) but the Portuguese and other Europeans did ~~not~~ carry small supplies to the Upper Guinea Coast, and particularly to the Gambia, where, in Coelho's time, four quires of paper had the same purchasing power as an eighth of an ounce of gold. (4) Paper was also needed for the books and manuscripts upon which the Muslims placed the greatest value, as

(2) P. Beaver: African Memoranda, pp.201, 323

(3) See above, Ch. VII, p.382, note 1.

(4) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, p.24

(1) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação anual, Vol. 3, p.245

the basis of their programme of education. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, there was a large Islamic school to be found at Bena among the Susus. Every day, the young men would write on their parchments and read aloud, no doubt memorising the Qur'an. (1) Richard Jobson describes a similar school^{or} the Gambia in 1621; (2) and indeed, up to the end of the eighteenth century, this was the kind of tuition which was to be found on the Upper Guinea Coast, (3) increasing in extent slowly as Islam spread.

With their monopoly of literacy and their ability to prescribe powerful spiritual 'medecine' added to their role as traders, the Muslims formed a close alliance with the coastal ruling class, though the latter invariably remained committed to the beliefs of their ancestors. (4) Even among the Mande and Fulas of the Upper Guinea Coast and its hinterland, the Islamic community remained a very small minority until the eighteenth century, but members of these tribes were nevertheless the ones who were extending the faith. Consequently, the direction in which Islam spread on the Upper Guinea Coast was southwards from the Gambia and westwards from the Futa Djalon. In the sixteenth century, the Beafadas and the Casangas were the

(1) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 3, p.245

(2) R. Jobson: The Golden Trade, p.92

(3) T. Winterbøttom: An Account of the Native Africans of Sierra Leone.

(4) It is quite possible that one section of the ruling class, namely, the priests, opposed the Muslims, but there is no evidence forthcoming on this point.

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most exposed to the influence of Muslim traders and priests, (1) no doubt partly because they were the littoral peoples over whom the Mandingas exercised some degree of direct political control. Further south the Sapes were as yet relatively free of Muslim peregrinations; but Islam was widely enough propagated for the Jesuits to view the question of proselytisation on the Upper Guinea Coast not simply as Christianity vs Paganism, but also as Christianity vs Islam. (2)

There were no Muslims among the Manes, and all Islamic influences appear to have reached the southern section of Sierra Leone from the north and north-east. By the mid-eighteenth century, the Muslim "greegree" men were privileged individuals among the Bulloms of the Sherbro-Cape Mount area; (3) and by 1785 John Matthews could write of Sierra Leone: "I have never visited a town in this part of Africa where I did not find a Mandinga man as prime minister, by the name of bookman, without whose advice nothing was transacted".

(4) This was the end-product of a lengthy process, which had been speeded up in its later stages by the Jihad of the Futa Djalon.

There is a concensus of opinion on the general outlines of the developments leading to the proclamation of the eighteenth century Jihad of the Futa Djalon and the rise of the Fulas to power in that region. The earliest Fulas went to the mountain massif before Coli Tenguela's time, and were re-inforced

(1) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.291-93, 327

(2) Fernão Guerreiro: Relação Anual, Vol. 3, p.284

(3) Nicholas Owen: Journal of a Slave Dealer, pp.58,81

(4) John Matthews: Voyage to the River Sierra Leone, p.69.

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by his arrival. Much later, there was an influx of new Fula immigrants from beyond the Gambia and the Niger - from the Futa Toro, Futa Boundou, Macina and even the Sahel and Tichit. At first they were welcomed by the Djalonkés and their own kinsmen, but, as outlined earlier, peaceful penetration by Mande and Fula aliens invariably gave way at some stage to violent struggles. Squabbles arose primarily over the division of land between the pastoralist newcomers and the indigenous agriculturalists, and a further line of distinction was drawn because the later Fula settlers were Muslims in contrast to their forerunners and the Djalonkés. After the contradictions between the Muslims and the non-Muslims had matured, a Jihad was proclaimed, ultimately producing a state that was both Islamic and dominated by the Fulas.

The history of the Jihad of the Futa Djalon as such, which has been discussed at length by Louis Tauxier, is outside the scope of this study, but a few cardinal points are of interest in relation to the coast. The first is that the Fula presence in the Futa Djalon did not become significant only after 1694, when, according to Tauxier, the first Muslims arrived. (1) A. Teixeira da Mota has drawn attention to the contemporary Portuguese evidence in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries showing that the Fulas were very well entrenched in the Futa Djalon ever since the sixteenth century (2) From that time, the Fulas were the principal trading partners of the littoral peoples, and it is significant that the Susus and Limbas sought

(1) L. Tauxier: Moeurs et Histoire des Peuhls (Paris 1937) p.219

(2) A. Teixeira da Mota: Nota sobre a Historia dos Fulas: Coli Tanguela e a Chegada dos Primeiros Fulas ao Futa-Jalon.

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their support against the Manes, even though the Fula forces in the encounter were a handful. (1) Descriptions such as those of André Dornelas, Alvares de Almada, Baltezar Barreira, Lemos Coelho and the Spanish Capuchins all refer to the Fulas as constituting a centre of power behind the Susus. Indeed by Coelho's time, the Fula-Susu alliance was broken, and these two groups were engaged in conflict. (2)

Furthermore, the Muslim Fulas must have arrived in the Futa Djalon much earlier than 1694, as Tauxier suggests, (3) and had been indulging in peaceful proselytisation, especially among their animist Fula brethren. Thus, by 1726, when the "Holy War" was proclaimed, peaceful penetration had proceeded long and successfully enough to allow the struggle to proceed on to a new level - that of military combat, while the size and aggressiveness of the Muslim forces was sufficient to bring about a considerable displacement of Djalonkés towards the coast. Some of the Djalonkés took refuge among their cousins, the Susus. The Susus of the Pongo recall that "there arrived from the Futa Jallon district people whom the Peuhls call Yalunkas ... They told them that the yellow Peuhls of Futa Jallon had made war on them and that they had wanted to convert them to their fetish called Allah". (4) Other Djalonkés

(1) See above, Ch. II, p. 90

(2) Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, p. 59

(3) Tauxier places four generations of the founding family of Muslim Fulas between the years 1694 and 1726. This is clearly untenable, and the error does not lie with the latter date (1726) nor with the number of generations.

(4) M. Saint-Père: "Petit Historique des Sossoe du Rio Pongas", in Bulletin du Comité des Etudes Historiques et Scientifiques, 1930, tome XIII, pp. 26-47.

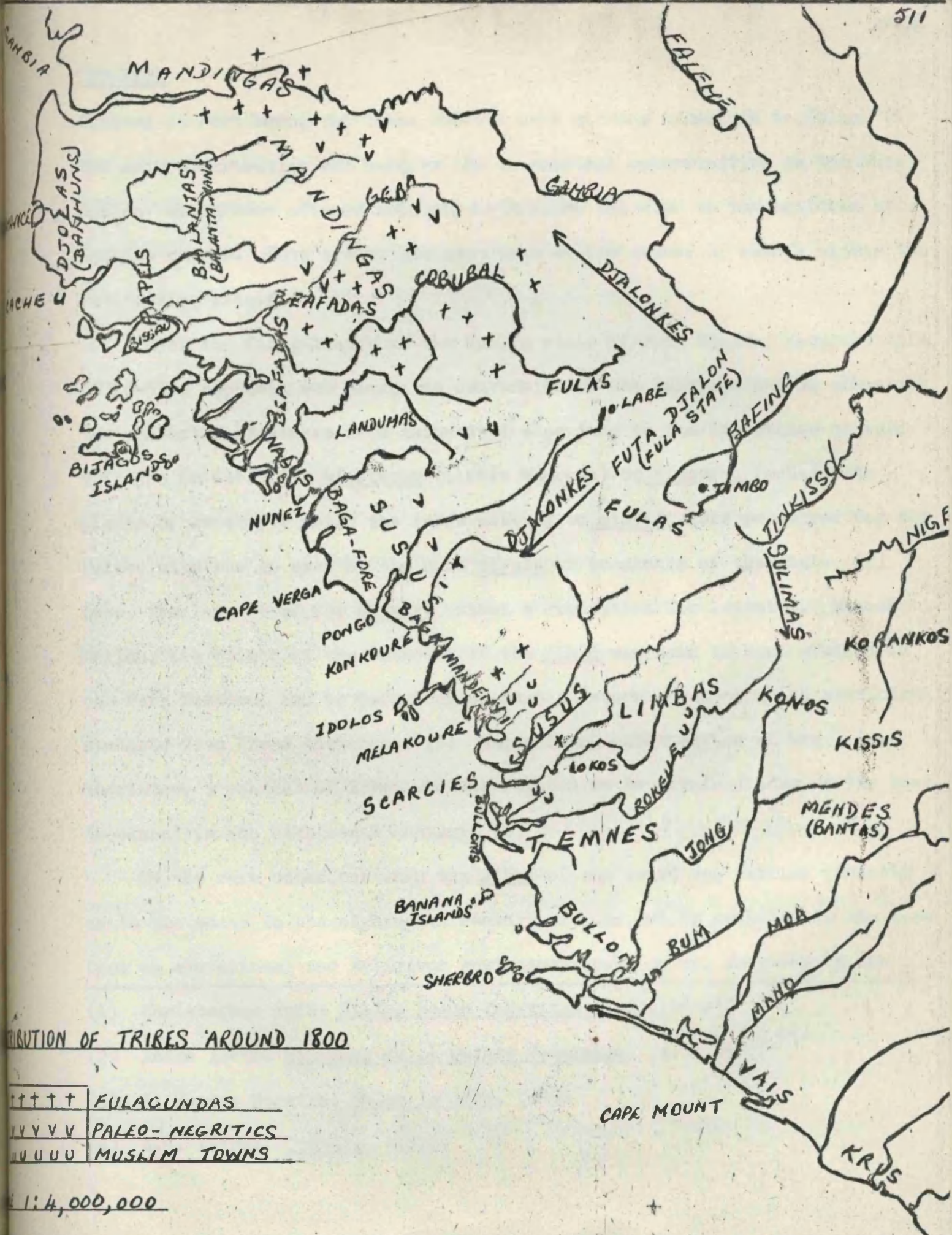
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settled among the Bagas, Nalus, Landumas, Temnes and Limbas, stimulating the process of Mande interpenetration which was observed by the Europeans on the coast, and which, as already mentioned, reached a very advanced stage by the end of the eighteenth century.

Each river and each locality offered its own variation on the same theme. For instance, Fula successes in the Futa Djalon caused a Mande family, the Mikhiforé, to move on to the left bank of the Nunez, with the permission of the Bagas and Landumas: a welcome that soon gave way to disagreements and wars. The Bagas between the Konkouré and the Scarcies (known as the Baga-Mandenyi) had previously been exposed to the Mande, having been in contact with the Susus and the Manes, and they were ethnically mixed. Consequently, their attitude to the new Mande immigrants of the eighteenth century was more favourable. When in the second half of the eighteenth century, a Mande chief named Soumba Toumane descended to the coast, he found two Baga-Mandenyi states, led by Manga Gnienie and Manga Tomboli. He had the help of the first and conciliated the second by marrying his daughter. This allowed the children of Toumane to take power in the country, founding a number of settlements, the most important of which was Dubreka, not far from modern Conakry. (1)

Although the Mande pressure on the coastlands in the second half of the eighteenth century was partly due to refugees from the Jihad, Islam made great inroads within the coastal ruling class at this period. By the early nineteenth century, even when the Temnes turned against the Muslim family of

(1) André Arcin: Histoire de la Guinée Française, p.134



DISTRIBUTION OF TRIBES AROUND 1800

++++	FULAGUNDAS
vvvv	PALEO-NEGROIDS
uuuu	MUSLIM TOWNS

1:4,000,000

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Sankong at Port Loko, the Temne leaders were already adherents to Islam. (1) The main contribution was made by the educational opportunities in the Futa Djalon, which were offered not only to Muslims but also to the children of animist chiefs. Here again, one must turn to the course of events within the Futa Djalon itself.

Under the first leader of the Muslim state of Futa Djalon, Karamoko Alfa (1726-51), emphasis was placed on conversion of the animists and on education. The converted Djalonkes were authorised according to the importance of their villages to establish missikoun (little mosques) or tipourou (substitute places of worship); while the large mosques or missidi were preserved for the Fulas, with one in each of the nine diwals or provinces of the state. (2) Labe, the largest of the diwals, gained a reputation for learning. Mamadu Sellou, its prince, at the outbreak of the Jihad was said to have studied in the Futa Boundou, and to have founded on his return a school which attracted students from great distances. (3) Major Laing made mention of one Salem Gherladoo, a teacher of Labe, who was reputed to have trained some of the best 'bookmen' in the eighteenth century. (4)

On the rare occasions when the Jihad of the sword was carried directly on to the coast in the eighteenth century, it was led by individuals who came from an educational and religious environment such as was provided by the

(1) Christopher Fyfe: Sierra Leone Inheritance, pp.166-170

(2) André Arcin: Histoire de la Guinée Française, pp.94,95

(3) J. Mendes Moreira: Fulas do Gabu, p.266

(4) A.G. Laing: Travels, p.375

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schools and mosques of Labe and Fugumba (the religious capital). The first such occasion seems to have been in the 1750's, after one Amara, supposedly a Mandinga, secured the chieftainship among the Susus in the Melakouré-Scarcies district. Amara had received his education in the Futa Djalon, where he was considered one of the best Koranic scholars in the country. Presuming on his reputation and his good understanding with the Fulas, which he assiduously cultivated, he commenced his reign with a system of oppression. (1) Nicholas Owen knew of a Muslim king in the Scarcies at this time, who was attempting to bring the country under subjection; and had in fact conquered two petty kingdoms near the coast by 1757. (2) The coincidence of time, place and activity suggests that he was referring to Amara.

Amara's attempts to serve his Fyla mentors eventually alienated all but one of the Susu chiefs. Political hegemony bred its own reaction and the Susus formed an alliance against Amara's brand of the Jihad imported from the Futa Djalon. The same sequence of events was repeated with the appearance in 1790 in the Melakouré-Scarcies district of a self-styled Mahdi, an emissary of the Prophet. From traditional sources, this individual appears to have been one Laye-Salou, who came from as far afield as the Bambouk in the Senegal. (3) For a while, he was very successful, until a coalition of Susu

(1) A.G. Laing: Travels, pp.126,127

(2) Nicholas Owen: Journal of a Slave Dealer, pp.96,100,101. (Owen calls him Musolum or Furry Do ("bastard son"). Peter Kup mistakenly attributes these events to the Sherbro area. See A History of Sierra Leone, p.155.)

(3) André Arcin: Histoire de la Guinée Française, pp.135,136.

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effected his death in 1793. (1)

However, Islam and the influence of the Fulas continued to make headway on the coast along non-military channels. In this eighteenth century situation, Islam was beamed only at the ruling class on the Upper Guinea Coast. The latter either imbibed the new ideology or were in danger of being replaced by those who were its advocates. Thomas Winterbottom, whose brother travelled to Timbo, the capital of the Futa Djalou, in 1794, gave some useful insights into the role of the Futa Djalou in this respect. "Not more than seventy years ago," he wrote in 1800, "a small number of Mahomedans established themselves in a country about forty miles to the northward of Sierra Leone. (2) As is the practice of the professors of that religion, they formed schools in which the Arabic language and the laws of Mahomed were taught... The whole power of that part of the country in which they have settled has gradually fallen into their hands. Those who have been taught in their schools are succeeding to wealth and power in the neighbouring countries, and carry with them a considerable proportion of their religion and laws." (3)

(1) C.B. Wadstrom: An Essay on Colonisation p.85; and

Christopher Fyfe: Sierra Leone Inheritance, pp.87,88

(2) "About forty miles to the northward" is a serious under-estimation. It is about 60 miles from Freetown to Port Loko, a convenient point of departure for the Futa Djalou, and from Port Loko to Timbo is about 150 miles.

(3) T. Winterbottom: An Account of the Native Africans of Sierra Leone.

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Linked to the question of education was the political and military power of the Futa Djalon. This could generate jealousy and fear in the minds of neighbours, as happened both in the interior and on the coast. Sulima traditions relating to their wars with the Fulas in the second half of the eighteenth century show that fear of the power of the Futa Djalon was the principal factor which caused them to turn against the Fulas who were formerly allies; and the same attitude was adopted by the Korankos. (1) On the other hand, some Sulima chiefs sought to associate themselves with the Fulas' ascendancy. For instance, the large town of Berria, which stood at the source of the Rokelle, was deliberately destroyed by its Sulima sovereign, because certain prominent elements there wished to switch their allegiance to the Fulas. (2)

On the coast, there was similar ambivalence. When Watt and Winterbottom were making their journey to Timbo, they found that the Landuma chief of Kakundi on the Nunez was extremely reluctant to allow passage through to the Almami, because he felt that Watt's party might bring down the Fulas to drive him out of the country. (3) On the other hand, most of the chiefs on the Upper Guinea Coast appeared to have been mindful of the prestige and advantages of trade which would accrue from an alliance with the Fulas, even though this meant the payment of tribute. The extent to which the Futa Djalon

(1) A.G. Laing: Travels, pp.405-408

(2) Ibid, pp.318,412

(3) "Journal of James Watt in an expedition to and from Timbo in 1794",

Rhodes House Library, Ms. Africa, S.7, fl.6

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had become an external point of reference for the Upper Guinea Coast was dramatised by the decision of a Bullom chief in 1769 to send one of his sons to be educated in England and the other to be trained in the Futa Djalon. (1)

In their traditions, nearly all the important Limba ruling families trace their origins to the country north of them. Some of them claim to have come from the Futa Djalon and others from Sankaran (further east); and they afterwards kept their connection with the north, sending their sons to be educated there. Several of the chiefs were Muslims or were much influenced by Islam; and there were also many Fula and Mandinga Muslims settled or travelling throughout Limba country, who kept up their communications with the north. (2) Laing was an eye-witness to this movement of Mande and Fula traders maintaining the influence of the Muslims in the early nineteenth century in Temne, Loko and Limba territory; (3) and before him Golberry had observed that the Fula and Susu colonies on the coast maintained close contact with their 'metropolis' at Timbo. (4) It is a curious coincidence that he should have used the same word 'metropolis' which nearly two centuries before Manuel Alvares had applied to Cape Mount, where the Poro 'University' was sited. (5) The Jihad of the

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- (1) Report of the Lords of the Committee, 1789 - Part I, "Government, religion, manners and customs", evidence of James Penny.
- (2) Ruth Finnegan: Survey of the Limba People of Northern Leone (London 1965) pp.14,15
- (3) A.G. Laing: Travels, pp.69,76,129
- (4) S.M. Golberry: Voyage en Afrique, Vol. 2, p.241
- (5) See above, Ch. II, p.128

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Futa Djalon went even further than the invasions of the Manes towards creating throughout Sierra Leone and other sections of the Upper Guinea Coast a ruling class which was unified in interests and ideology.

It was the Atlantic slave trade which provided the most attractive material prospects linking the members of the ruling class on the Upper Guinea Coast, whether they were parvenus like Cleveland or direct descendants of the Manes, whether they came from the coast or from the hinterland; and the relationship between the Jihad and the Atlantic slave trade was of the greatest importance.

No one challenged the fact that the Jihad was the greatest recruiter of slaves for the European ships on the Upper Guinea Coast in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The only point at issue was the light in which the connection was projected. John Matthews, a slave trader in Sierra Leone and a spokesman for Liverpool slave trading interests, stressed that the captives which were purchased by the European ships were mainly the result of Muslim wars of religion. (1) Beyond this superficial observation he was not prepared to go, because it was the orthodox pro-slavery propaganda that the captives who reached the coast were victims of African wars whose origin and development were quite unconnected with the slave trade. However, not long after Matthews wrote, Thomas Watt penetrated to Timbo in the Futa Djalon, and reported that he was told by the Almami's deputy "with a shocking degree of openness, that the sole object of their wars was to procure slaves, as they could not obtain European goods without slaves, and they could not get slaves

(1) John Matthews: Voyage to the River Sierra Leone, p.94

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without fighting for them". Watt added that "their religion affords them an apology for this horrible injustice, by permitting them to destroy all infidels, a term which seems to include all their neighbours". (1) A close analysis of the activities of the Fulas and their cohorts leaves no doubt that Watt was correct both in reporting his informant and in his conclusions.

It is well to recall that the Mande and Fulas were the vectors of the Atlantic slave trade before they spearheaded the advance of Islam, and Muslim traders were in the forefront of slave trading long before the Jihad began. (2) Sulima traditions, as collected by Laing in 1822, take their starting point about the year 1690 when their king, Geema Fonda came to the throne, and they admit that his principal occupation was raiding the Limbas and Kissis for captives, all of whom were sold to the Mandingas and Susus who came up from the coast with European goods. (3) When the Sulimas joined forces with the Fulas, fighting for Islam against the same Limbas, Kissis and other non-Islamicised peoples, their activities did not change appreciably in character. The real change was one of intensity.

In the case of the Fulas themselves, it is possible to discern many forms of activity in the eighteenth century which were qualitatively different from the slave hunts of their animist predecessors of the seventeenth century.

(1) C.B. Wadstrom: An Essay on Colonisation, Part 2, p.111

(2) See above, Ch. IV, p.224. (For the leading role of the Muslims in the Mandinga slave trade, see R. Jobson: The Golden Trade, pp.108,109; and Lemos Coelho: Duas Descrições da Guiné, p.15

(3) A.G. Laing: Travels, p.400

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In the process of subjugating the Futa Djalon during the regime of Karamoko Alfa, Djalonkés and animist Fulas must have been despatched to the coast, but at least a theocracy was brought into being, schools and mosques built and the faith spread as far as it was possible to spread an ideology by force. Subsequently, however, the annual campaigns did not seek to widen the boundaries of the Futa state, nor to extend the faith outside the mountain massif, except among ruling elites.

In 1751, a commission appointed to investigate the forts and factories of the Royal African Company reported that in Sierra Leone there was a 'prodigious' trade in slaves. (1) This was a startling change from the "dead season", and coincides suspiciously with the extension of the Jihad outside of and the Futa Djalon, with the rise to power of Ibrahim Sori, who took charge of the Fula armies in 1750, became supreme ruler of the state in the following year, and pursued a militarist policy until his death in 1784. At one stage during the 1760's, Sori rebuilt his army by enlisting the support of the Fula chiefs of the bowal to the west. (2) This was an ominous link-up because the bowal chiefs were singled out since the 1680's as the principal agents of the Atlantic slave trade on the Upper Guinea Coast. (3) The fact is that the Fula campaigns in the second half of the eighteenth century showed a pre-occupation

(1) P.R.O., T70/176 - Inspection of George Island, Sierra Leone by Captain Nye, 1751

(2) L. Tauxier: Moeurs et Histoire des Peuhls, p.232

(3) Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas en Africa, Vol. 2, pp.132,133; and see above, Ch. IV, p.221.

with the acquisition of captives and other booty, and the wars between the Fulas and the Sulimas-Oussoulunkés, which were essentially motivated by considerations of state power, boosted slave production considerably. On one occasion, the Sulimas were bea^{er}t back by the Fulas (1767) but as a fringe benefit they collected 3,500 captives from the weaker Limbas and sold them on the Pongo. (1) Thus, though these wars failed to increase the numbers of believers they certainly reduced the numbers of unbelievers.

The genuine religious convictions of the imams and other Muslims of the Futa Djalon would be sufficient to allow their wars to be categorised as 'religious', just as many European wars have been so described, sometimes with less justification. But the Jihad in Muslim theology is rather more precise and exacting. It is an obligation imposed by Islamic writ as an integral part of the faith, and whether it is peacefully conducted or fought with the sword its objective is to spread the Islamic doctrine. In this strict sense, the Jihad had virtually to be abandoned in the context of the Atlantic slave trade.

Without a substitute which could earn them European goods, the Fulas were not prepared to cease export of slaves. This priority accorded to slaving was asserted not only at the end of the eighteenth century, when Watt and Winterbottom visited the Futa Djalon, but several times in the nineteenth century. The slave trader, Theodore Canot, had an interchange with the son of the Almami on the subject of the Jihad and the Atlantic slave trade. He wrote as follows: "My inquisitiveness prompted me to demand whether these holy wars spoken of in the Koran were not somewhat stimulated, in our time at least, by

(1) A.G. Laing: Travels, p.409

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the profits that ensued; and I even ventured to hint that it was questionable whether the mighty chief of the Futa Jallon would willingly storm a Kaffir fortification, were he not prompted by the booty of slaves. He replied that in truth Mahometans were no worse than Christians, so that it was quite likely - if the white elect of heaven, who knew how to make powder and guns, did not tempt the black man with their weapons - the commands of Allah would be followed with less zeal and with implements not quite so dangerous". (1)

This subtle reply is an admission of the role of the Atlantic slave trade in stimulating the Jihad, but at a more fundamental level it can be shown that the latter was conducted with less and not greater zeal because of the former; the crux of the matter being that believers were protected from sale into the hands of the Europeans, (2) so that the definition 'Kaffir' had to be made as wide as possible and had to remain as wide as possible.

As Watt observed, virtually all the neighbours of the Fulas were conveniently categorised as enemies of the faith - only in this way could the obligations of the faith and the demands of the Europeans be reconciled. For those coastal chiefs who attached themselves to Islam and the Fulas, religion was both a cloak and a shield. It was the practice of the Fula caravan leaders to utilise the annual trip to the coast as an opportunity for collecting tribute from the littoral kings and debts from traders. Those who could not pay were liable to be sold as slaves - unless they were

(1) Captain C_anot: Adventures of an African Slaver, p.96

(2) C.B. Wadstrom: An Essay on Colonisation, Part I, p.111

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Muslims. (1) Thus, as was the case with the littoral ruling class in the era of Hispano-Portuguese slaving before 1640, the Muslim elite of the eighteenth century was protecting its own persons and interests: this time under the cover of Islam, while the mass of the people could be enslaved for want of well-pronouncing 'Shibboleth'.

(1) Captain Canot: Adventures of an African Slaver, p.92

A HISTORY OF THE UPPER GUINEA COAST, 1545-1800

CHAPTER TEN

SLAVE TRADING, 1690-1800

Slave Trading, 1690-1800

Part I - "The Zenith of the Atlantic slave trade on the Upper Guinea Coast".

The activities of the mulatto, and the muslim chiefs, in the second half of the eighteenth century serve to indicate that the Atlantic slave trade had reached, during that period, a level which surpassed anything that had gone before in its own annals. Yet, it would of course be completely fallacious to portray the mulatto chiefs and the muslim Jihad as the primary causes in that increase in slaving. Like their successors, the colonial elites, the African agents of the Atlantic slave trade must be seen in a global perspective. Specifically, in this instance, the increased slaving was prompted by the expanding markets created by Europe in the Americas.

Since the first phase of hispano-Portuguese slaving partnership had ended in 1640, the plantation system had become firmly established in America and the Caribbean, occasioning English, French, Dutch, Danish and North American interest in the Atlantic slave trade. Besides, old acquaintances were not forgotten. The Spanish Indies and Portuguese Brazil continued to make use of the labour power of Africans brought by force - exploiting them so absolutely, as was characteristic of plantation slavery, that the labour force had constantly to be renewed by the thousands.

By 1690, it seemed as though the former flourishing slave trade between the Upper Guinea Coast and the Spanish Indies was

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about to be renewed. It was in that year, on the 1st January, that the second Company of Cacheu and Cape Verde was incorporated, in the hope of reviving the commerce of the commerce of the area.(1) It was in that year, too, that the Spanish consul in Lisbon pursued the negotiation of an agreement by which Cape Verde-Guinea was once more to be the fount of Slaves for the Spanish Indies. A Spanish agent was to be appointed to serve in Santiago, and a blueprint was drawn up for the employment of captains, crews, pilots, etc. The Conselho signified its agreement.(2) After some delay, the second company of Cacheu did receive a contract in 1694 to supply 4,000 slaves per annum to the Spanish Indies.(3)

At this juncture, Brazil was also crying out for more slaves, at the rate of 10,000 per year; and as James Duffy points out, Angola could not meet this quota, especially since it was supplying slaves to other parts of the New World, so that the Upper Guinea Coast had the option to make good the deficit for the Portuguese.(4) However, demand in the Americas was clearly not the only external factor which influenced the Atlantic slave trade, as far as Africa was concerned. Of equal, if not greater importance was the

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- (1) The second Company of Cacheu and Cape Verde received a six-year contract in 1690, but this was renewed, and it lasted until 1703. See João Barreto: Historia da Guiné, p.141
- (2) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa V - Minute of 10 Nov.1690.
- (3) A.H.U., Guiné, Caixa II - No. 225, minutes of the Conselho, Feb. and May 1694
- (4) James Duffy: Portugal in Africa, p. 36 and Portuguese Africa, p. 137.

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capital resources of the various European powers, and their capacity to deploy such capital into the African trade in the form of consumer goods. It has been pointed out that the most successful phases of the history of the Royal African Company coincided with those when the Company was equipped to despatch considerable amounts of trade goods to Africa; (1) and the same applied to other European companies. Because of its own socio-economic backwardness in the late seventeenth century and in the early eighteenth century, Portugal was not in a position to respond fully to the increased demand for slaves in Brazil and other parts of the New World; and the Upper Guinea Coast was certainly not one of the areas to which the Portuguese allocated their meagre resources.

The second Company of Cacheu was incapable of reviving Portuguese fortunes in that part of the world. Instead of the four ships annually that were promised in the contract, one small vessel was all that was forthcoming, with grossly inadequate supplies at high prices, as several complaints attested.(2) Bissau had been hailed as the slave entrepôt which would be associated with more prosperous times for the Portuguese,(3) and it was from there that the Portuguese directed their operations on the Upper Guinea Coast in the 1690's; but the

(1) K.G. Davies: The Royal African Company

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 219, José Pinheiro, 1 July 1692; and minute of the Conselho, 28 Jan 1694.

(3) Salvador Correia da Sa had shared this view. See above, Ch. V, p.303.

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Conselho Ultra-marino, after consulting the governor of Cape verde and the captain-major of Cacheu, came to the conclusion in 1700 that with Portugal's limited finances Bissau had to go. (1)

For a very brief while after the decision to retrench at Bissau, there were signs of business activity, centred round Cacheu. The captain-major of Cacheu went so far as to purchase slaves from the Royal African Company in the Gambia, (2) reversing the customary roles. This was facilitated by the coincidence of the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Royal African Company for the slave trade in the Gambia at that point. (3) Nevertheless, the Portuguese effort was not sustained for long. By 1707, the captain-major of Cacheu was lamenting that the Portuguese could scarcely muster one shipload of slaves annually.

When the occasional ship arrived from Portugal, it carried very few Portuguese goods. Indeed, ever since the sixteenth century this was the case. At that time, it was the Spanish who supplied most of the more attractive trade goods which the Portuguese used for securing slaves for the Spanish Indies.

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- (1) A.n.U., Guiné, caixa II - no. 271,272, Castanho, 12 March 1699 (in favour of the demolition of the fort of Bissau) and Salgado, governor of CV, 18 June 1699 (against the demolition).
- (2) A.n.U., Cabo verde, caixa VI - minute of the Conselho, 10 Nov 1700
- (3) K.G. Davies: Op. cit., p. 236
- (4) A.n.U., Guiné, maço I - Paulo de Abreu e Lima, 30 June 1707

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Metropolitan Spain furnished a variety of cloths, laces, threads and clothing, apart from iron - the indispensable import on the Upper Guinea Coast. Besides, wine was brought from the (Spanish) Canary Islands, and silver coin from Mexico and Cartagena.(1). Subsequent to the breakdown in the close Hispano-Portuguese relationship, the goods required for the African trade came from the very "Nations of the North" whom the Conselho Ultramarino usually portrayed as Portugal's rivals and enemies. The list of essential commodities recommended by local merchants on the Upper Guinea Coast to the second Company of Cacheu comprised tin and cloth from England, iron from Germany and Sweden, and brandy from France.(2) Dutch knives and linens were also mentioned regularly. (3) Apart from these European imports, the most successful lines were cloths from Geba and from the Cape Verde Islands, so that Portugal's contribution was really minimal.

Most of the slaves were carried from the Upper Guinea Coast in the sixteenth century in Spanish 'bottoms' as attested to by Richard Hakluyt in 1591;(4) and once more the shipping powers of Western Europe succeeded the Spanish in this service to the Portuguese. The relationship between the Portuguese and the Dutch

(1) See above, Ch. VII, p.377

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No. 229, Manuel Cordeira Santos, Oct. 1694

(3) See above, Ch. VII, pp.403,405

(4) Richard Hakluyt: Voyages, Vol. 3, p.188

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is particularly revealing. The Dutch placed a high priority on Portuguese salt, while the Portuguese were dependent upon Dutch ships, ships' stores and munitions, apart from other manufactures. As C.R. Boxer points out, these commercial ties in Europe were in curious contrast to the hostility in colonial affairs;(1) but even overseas there was a measure of cooperation. On the Upper Guinea Coast, the Portuguese authorities were never as anti-Dutch as they were anti-Spanish after the 'Restoration' in 1640, and a few Dutch vessels were given permission to carry slaves from the Upper Guinea Coast to Brazil in an effort to replace the Spanish.(2)

The English had their turn as carriers in the eighteenth century. Nicholas Owen mentioned that in 1751 the captain-major of Cacheu had sent forty slaves and a few tons of wax to Lisbon on an English vessel, and on its return it brought out forty degredados to serve as soldiers.(3) Two years later, evidence was forthcoming from the Portuguese themselves, as the Conselho chartered an English ship to take out building supplies to Bissau. The agreement was drawn up on a printed form with the relevant details, such as the name of captain and ship, nature of cargo, and destination, filled in;(4) so that the procedure appeared to have been a common one.

(1) C.R. Boxer: Portuguese and Dutch Colonial Rivalry, 1641-1661 (Lisboa 1958) p.1
(2) See above, Ch.V, p.279
(3) Nicholas Owen: Journal of a Slave Dealer, pp. 33,34
(4) A.H.U., Guiné, maço III - April 1753, copy of contract with captain Samuel Kittridge.

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In 1755, the captain-major of Cacheu reported aggrievedly that an English ship from Barbados had gone straight up to Zeguichor on the river Casamance without a pilot, something which no Portuguese ship had ever done.(1) This was truly symbolic, because it was in the sphere of navigation that Portugal had led the world in the fifteenth century. The truth is that the financial and commercial infra-structure of European mercantilism and nascent industrial capitalism was never developed within the Iberian peninsula, so that the profits of Iberian expansion ultimately flowed to banking, commercial and manufacturing centres outside of Portugal and Spain. With the pretensions to a monopoly of world trade completely shattered by the seventeenth century, Portugal became a depressed area of the Western European economy.

Of course, capitalism, even in the days of chauvinist mercantilism, was already an international phenomenon; and all the advanced Western European powers displayed a great degree of interdependence in the buying, selling and transporting of goods intended for the African trade. However, Portugal's relationship was one of dependency rather than equality. João Barreto, in his history of the Portuguese colony on the Upper Guinea Coast, stresses Portugal's weakness by way of an apologia for that country's responsibility in the Atlantic slave trade. His argument in effect is that Portugal's moral blameworthiness should be

(1) A.D.U., Guiné, maço III - Francisco Roque Sottomayor, 28 April 1755.

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directly proportionate to the profits they reaped - and these were small. "It is curious to note", he writes, "that the economy of Portugal was the one which profited least from the slave trade. In the first place, the national mercantile fleet was very limited; the majority of the ships, which, since the sixteenth century were used to carry slaves from the African coast being foreign, and no gain accrued to Portugal In the second place, Portugal did not produce the articles which the slavers made use of in their transactions with the peoples of Africa; cotton cloths, trumpery, beads, mirrors, iron etc." (1)

Moral sophistry aside, he is substantially correct.(2)

The above considerations explain why the suggestion that it was

(1) João Barreto: Historia da Guiné, p. 285

(2) This view that Portugal declined after the period of expansion overseas is widely held, but has not gone unchallenged. Frédéric Mauro finds the picture of a decadent Portugal inconsistent with the creation of an empire in Brazil, and demonstrates that profits from the Atlantic trade flowed into Portugal. What is surprising, however, is that in a study avowedly devoted to "commercial capitalism", a supra-national phenomenon, the author does not establish Portugal's role as a sector of European commercial capitalism. The Iberian peninsula was often the direct point of entry for much of Europe's gains from mining, trade and plantations overseas, but how much remained within Spain and Portugal is an issue which cannot be overlooked. See Frédéric Mauro: Le Portugal et L'Atlantique au XVII^e Siecle, 1570-1670

(He formulates the problem in his introduction)

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from the latter part of the seventeenth century that "Portuguese guinea entered a new period of prosperity" is somewhat premature. (1) The heavy demand for slaves in the Americas was not automatically reflected in increased exports from the Upper Guinea coast through Portuguese agency, in spite of the fact that Angola alone could not fulfill the Brazilian requirements. The period of prosperity for Cape Verde-Guinea was to come in the second half of the eighteenth century, when the Portuguese demonstrated both the ability and the willingness to inject capital into the commerce of the area. In the meanwhile, other European powers were more favourably placed; and the French in particular kept the slave trade in the Geba-Gambia region from ever falling to as low an ebb in the seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century as it did in Sierra Leone.

Although no French company was ever formed to operate with its headquarters in the "Rivers of the South", most of the companies in the Senegal took a sporadic interest in that district. In fact, the coast between Cape Blanco and the Bijagos islands was the most profitable part of the trading zone of the French Senegal Company in the latter seventeenth century. (2) Between 1685 and 1689, the agents of the Senegal Company managed to secure 2,800 slaves through their factory at Bissau. (3) Subsequently, the French continued to pay attention to Bissau, and seriously contemplated erecting a fort either on Bissau or the neighbouring island of Bulama at the turn of the seventeenth century, during the regime of an energetic director, André Brue, who followed the precedent set by De la Courbe in visiting the district south of the Gambia. (4) Apparently, an attempt at the construction

(1) James Duffy: Portugal in Africa, p.36

(2) J. Machat: Documents, p.78

(3) See above Ch. V, p.306

(4) J. Labat: Nouvelle Relation, Vol.V, pp.87-114 (Dealing with the visit to Bissau and the attempts to build a fort)

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of a fort at or near Bissau in 1723 was abandoned only after the shipwreck of supplies.(1)

In spite of the lack of a fort, which was probably no great disadvantage, the French dominated the scene at Bissau for most of the first half of the eighteenth century, causing the prices of slaves to rise, and making it virtually impossible for the Portuguese to compete.(2) The most intensive French slaving on the Upper Guinea Coast took place between 1736 and 1744. Every year during that period, a ship was despatched from Gorée along with a sloop, which plied the rivers between November and May. Between 1744 and 1752, the coast was relatively free of the French because of their involvement in wars in Europe.(3) These observations, which were made by the Portuguese on the Upper Guinea Coast, are in accordance with the evidence generated in Europe. The period 1714 to 1744 was a flourishing one for the premier French slave trading city of Nantes, and the Upper Guinea Coast did have some share in this, indirectly through the Senegal, as well as directly in the form of ships to the Banana Islands and Cape Mount. Of the 126 ships which left Nantes with their African destinations named, 24 went to Senegal and 12 to Cape Mount. (4)

(1) J. Barreto: Historia da Guiné, p.144; and A.H.U., Guiné maço I - Antonio de Barros Bezerra, 30 July 1724.
(2) A.H.U., Guiné, maço I - Antonio de Barros Bezerra, 10 May 1727
(3) A.H.U., Guiné, maço III - Francisco Roque Sottomayor, 12 March 1752
(4) Gaston-Martin: L'Ere des Négriers (1714 - 1744) (Paris 1931) p.188

Slave Trading, 1690-1800

In spite of general prosperity, the trade of the port was virtually stagnant during some years, such as 1725 - 1726 and 1747 - 1748. Above all, the Seven Years War proved a disaster as far as the French merchants trading to Africa and the West Indies were concerned.(1)

Intervals provided by French and English confrontation in Europe gave Portugal much needed breathing space on the Upper Guinea Coast and allowed for a recuperation in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Once more, it was envisaged that Bissau would be the focal point for the revival, and this set in motion a series of events with a very familiar ring. The campaign was opened on the religious front on the basis of the news in 1748 that the king of Bissau wished to be converted, that he needed new clothes, and that he would allow a fort to be built. Indeed, it was emphasised that the Portuguese were the only nation to whom permission to build a fort had ever been conceded, and that agreement was still valid.(2) However, the parallel with the previous fort-building episode at Bissau was stretched further by the fact that Papel cooperation was not readily forthcoming, in spite of the permission to start building.(3) In fact, on this occasion, force had to be used to gain the Portuguese objectives.

(1) Ibid:pp.173, 201, 266

(2) A.H.U, Guiné,maço II - Minute of the Conselho, 25 Sept 1748

(3) See above, Ch.V, p.321

Slave Trading, 1600-1800

Apparently, some preliminary construction got underway on the island of Bissau in 1752 under the guidance of the Afro-Portuguese official who represented the Portuguese crown on the island during the many years since 1702 when the captain-major was withdrawn. But, when the frigate, Nossa Senhora da Estrelia, anchored off the island in February 1753 with heavy equipment and men for the fort, it was not welcomed. The Papels, under General Palanca, decided to oppose landing and disembarkation in the teeth of the ship's guns. Unfortunately, it was with good reason the Mandinga Muslims never sold 'greegrees' against "great guns".(1) The Papels simply provided fodder for the Portuguese cannon; and within two days of the commencement of hostilities on the 17th February 1753, the Papels were suing for peace. Several merchant ships in the Bissau harbour at the time had sided with the Portuguese frigate, and their casualties totalled a mere nine men dead and a few wounded.(2)

The whole operation was handled by the captain-major of Cacheu, Francisco Roque Sottomayor, who had accompanied the frigate from Cacheu in a yacht. He had formerly been in Angola, and boasted that his firm hand there had excellent results, since he had taken a leading role in the military suppression of the Gingas and the peoples of Matamba. (3) He was in Angola between 1734 and 1742,

(1) P. Beaver: African Memoranda, p.210; and see above Ch.IX

(2) D. Peres: Nossa Senhora da Estrelia, pp.16-25

(3) A.H.U., Guiné, maço III - Francisco Sottomayor, 29 April 1755

Slave Trading, 1690-1800

and thus served under the Angolan governor, Joacquin Jacques de magalhaes (1738-1748).(1) From Sottomayor's reports in 1755, it emerged that he believed in a "tough line", and was appalled at the way that the rulers on the Upper Guinea Coast were pampered with gifts.(2) It is not surprising, therefore, that the new era of the Portuguese in Bissau should have begun with violence. Furthermore, during a lull in the fighting of February 1753, an important Bissau fidalgo was shot dead by a Portuguese soldier, while engaged in an altercation with Sottomayor. The king of Bissau, Anhanheta Co, though forced to accept the fort, was not prepared to acknowledge Sottomayor's authority, and wrote the king of Portugal in April 1753, requesting that this official be recalled.(3) Sottomayor, as governor of Cacheu, was in any case only on a temporary mission to Bissau, and the Guinea trader, Nicolhão de Pina Arajau, was given an honorary appointment to administer the island.

Personal antipathy was the least of the complicating factors in this new Portuguese attempt to restrict the freedom of the Papel rulers by building a fort. In spite of being regularly supplied with Portuguese ships for the next year or two, the fort of Bissau literally never got off the ground.

(1) J. Ribeiro da Cruz: Resumo da Historia de Angola (Lisboa 1940) p.133

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, maço III - Francisco Sottomayor, 28 April 1755

(3) A.H.U., Guiné, maço V - Anhanheta Co, 13 April 1753. (Another version of this incident, more favourable to Sottomayor, is to be found in D. Peres: Nossa Senhora da Estrella, p.18

Slave Trading, 1690-1800

One of the main problems was labour. The prisons of Portugal were scraped to provide degradados to send to Bissau and Cacheu as labourers and soldiers.(1) The mortality rate was extremely high, and after a few years the Conselho had to rely primarily on labour brought from the Cape verde islands, since the Cape Verdeans found it relatively easy to acclimatise themselves in Bissau;(2) and yet the death toll continued. The second major difficulty was the lack of technical skill. The engineer brought out by the frigate, Nossa Senhora da Estrella, in 1753 died within two weeks of landing,(3) and there was no one to take his place. Thus in 1755, the captain-major of Bissau, Nicolhão de Pina Arajau, stressed that the work could not proceed without an engineer to draw up plans for the fort.(4). As it turned out, it was not until 1765 that an engineer was despatched from the Cape Verde island of Fogo to Bissau, and only after that was such a fundamental matter as architectural drawings attended to.

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- (1) D. Peres: "Anotações históricas", in Planta da Praça de Bissau pp.84,85
- (2) A.n.U., Guiné, maço IV - minute of Conselho, 20 Oct 1758
- (3) D. Peres: Nossa Senhora da Estrella, p. 25
- (4) D. Peres: "Anotações históricas", in Planta da Praça de Bissau, pp.80,81

Slave Trading, 1690-1800

In the meanwhile, there had occurred one of the most decisive events in the history of Portuguese slaving on the Upper Guinea Coast - the formation of the Company of Grão Para and Maranhão in 1755. It took over responsibility for the construction of the fort of Bissau, and for maintaining Cacheu and other points on the mainland; and for two decades it conducted the Portuguese slave trade on the Upper Guinea Coast. As the name implies, the Company was designed to serve the interests of the Portuguese in the Brazilian states of Para and Maranhão. At that time, those states were the most underdeveloped on the Atlantic coast of northern Brazil with a small European settler population.(1) Portuguese were still attempting up to the mid-eighteenth century to harness the labour of the indigenous Indian population; but this system was not functioning well, as far as agricultural productivity was concerned, and there were famines in 1754 and 1755.(2) It was against this background that the Company of Grão Para and Maranhão was conceived to solve the problem of mão de obra.

While the first Company of Cacheu was proposed and backed by

(1) Francisco Varnhagen: Historia Geral do Brasil (3rd edition, Rio de Janeiro, 1926) Vol.4, Section XLI, p.108

(2) Report of the Lords of the Committee, 1789 - Part VI, 'Portugal'

Slave Trading, 1690-1800

traders from the Upper Guinea Coast, who were relatively undistinguished private citizens and who had to petition for several years before they gained recognition in Lisbon, (1) the idea of the creation of the slave trading Company of Grão Para and Maranhão was first mooted by Francisco Xavier Mendonça Furtado, governor of Para and brother of the Marquis of Pombal, the first secretary and de facto ruler of Portugal. (2) Pombal's sponsorship of the suggestion made by his brother ensured that the Company had wide privileges and that its charter was readily granted; while, in contrast to the previous Portuguese companies operating on the Upper Guinea Coast, the Company of Grão Para was well endowed, being floated at a time when Pombal was streamlining the administration and finances of the Portuguese state. It boasted a share capital of 1,200,000 cruzados, was granted land in Brazil and was equipped with two frigates by the Portuguese crown. It was registered on the 7th July 1755 with a twenty-year concession - to begin when the first Company ship left Lisbon, which was on the 26th April 1756. (3)

(1) See above, Ch.V, p. 292.

(2) Furtado became a minister and Secretary of State sometime during the 1760's.

(3) J. Lucio d'Azevedo: O Marquez de Pombal e a sua Epoca Lisboa 1909) pp. 163-165

Slave Trading, 1690-1800

Apparently, the statistics of slave exports from the Upper Guinea Coast in the twenty years spanned by the Company of Grão Para are not available, but the volume of the trade is indicated by three factors: firstly, the strenuous efforts which the Company made to protect their interests on the Upper Guinea Coast; secondly, the extreme profitability to the shareholders, which was a most unusual feature for these joint-stock endeavours trading to Africa;(1) and thirdly, the influx of slaves into Para and Maranhão, most of them being acknowledged as originating from Bissau and Cacheu.(2)

Bissau's most prolific period of slave trading during which it sometimes surpassed Luanda,(3) was presaged a year or two before the Company of Grão Para and Maranhão went into operation. The Conselho was reliably informed in April 1755 that since the previous year Bissau had handled more slaves than ever before. Several Portuguese ships had left loaded with captives; one French ship took more than 250, while another was in the process of loading and had accumulated 240; and there was yet another Portuguese vessel which had close to 200.(4)



- (1) See above, Ch. VII
- (2) Grande Enciclopedia Portuguesa e Brasileira. Entry under "Companhia Geral do Grão Para e Maranhão".
- (3) J. Duffy: Portugal in Africa, p. 36
- (4) A.H.U., Guiné, maço III - Francisco Sottomayor, 29 April 1755

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With this report added, firstly, to the information in 1751 that the English slave traders in Sierra Leone were despatching large quantities of slaves, and secondly to the evidence of increased fighting and raiding in the hinterland at that point, it can be clearly established that the zenith of the Atlantic slave trade on the Upper Guinea Coast dated from the mid-eighteenth century. Supply, demand and capital investment were all complementary.

In dealing with the Africans, the Company's approach was quite similar to that of the Portuguese crown, in that they utilised the services of priests and missionaries to intercede on their behalf with the Bissau king and nobility. After getting renewed permission in 1765 to carry on with the fort, the Company promised that they would not hinder the trade of other Europeans, though the Papels by no means fully accepted this blatant piece of dissimulation. Even though the Bissau king was bought over by bribes, his council remained divided, and the majority of his fidalgos were sceptical of the Portuguese entrenching themselves in such a manner as to be able to pursue their policy of monopoly. Later, it was affirmed that the king of Bissau had met his death by 'witchcraft', because of this unpopular decision.(1) In the meanwhile, the Company of Grão Para and Maranhão had unloaded men, munitions and materials; and began construction in a tense atmosphere.

By 1785, the efforts put into the second fort of Bissau had resulted in nothing more than a badly laid foundation, which was abandoned and a third venture initiated. The sum total of human

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, maço V - Sebastião da Cunha Sottomayor, 5 Aug 1766

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Endeavour that went into this fort - called the São José de Bissau - would have been heroic in most contexts other than that of the Atlantic slave trade. It was not completed until the 20th August 1775 and the last decade alone of its erection cost 2,602 lives.(1)

The soldiers mutinied because of inadequate rations; the rate of work at best was very slow; the rain undid what had been done in the dry season; and the Papels resisted passively by withholding foodstuffs. But the determination of the Conselho and the Company of Grão Para and Maranhão was demonstrated by the Conselho's willingness to provide a well armed frigate to support Portuguese forces on the mainland, and by the fact that the Company expended the enormous amount of 147,690,763 reis. (2)

The outlay in Bissau and to a lesser extent in Cacheu and Cabo Verde did not stop the Company of Grão Para and Maranhão from realising great profits for its stock-holders, including Pombal himself, to whom considerable sums were disbursed in the name of his wife.(3)

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- (1) Bernardino de Andrade: Planta da Praça de Bissau, p. 51
- (2) J. Mendes da Cunha Saraiva: "A Forteleza de Bissau e a Companhia do Grão Para e Maranhão", in Congresso Comemorativo do Quinto Centenário do Descobrimento da Guiné (Lisboa 1946) Vol. 1 p 190 (He is of the opinion that the fort was completed by the end of 1773; but this was an inference as opposed to the direct evidence of De Andrade who was in Bissau. See p. 188)
- (3) J. Lucio d'Azevedo: O Marquez de Pombal, p. 165

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Above all, the Company justified its existence in terms of importing a labour force for the provinces of Para and Maranhão. At least, while there is some doubt as to its efficacy in Para, all historians of Maranhão are in agreement that the agricultural prosperity of that area dated from the era of the Company. From a position where it was on the verge of ruin, Maranhão began to produce rice and cotton, on a scale which brought it into line with the richer provinces.(1) Thus it was that the Company of Grão Para and Maranhão epitomised the tri-continental implications of the Atlantic slave trade.(2)

When the contract of the Company of Grão Para and Maranhão was about to expire, great efforts were made to have this profitable monopoly renewed, but to no avail, and it went into liquidation in February 1778.(3) This meant that the basic tasks of revenue collection and the maintenance of officials, forts and factories devolved once more upon the Conselho Ultramarino. In 1780, the Conselho decided to reorganise the fiscal system for Cape Verde and the Upper Guinea Coast establishing Santiago, Bissau and Cacheu as their revenue posts. This plan yielded little results, and the revenues

(1) Francisco Varnhagen: Historia Geral do Brasil, Vol.4,pp.307,308

(2) The Company was also a crucial issue in the conflict between Pombal and the Jesuits, both in Portugal and in Brazil. One Jesuit priest declared that those who joined the Company of Grão Para would not enter into the Company of Heaven. See J. Lucio d'Azevedo: Op. cit.

(3) Francisco Varnhagen: Op. cit., Vol. 4, p. 307

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were farmed three years later to a private company, the Commercial Society of the Islands of Cape Verde.(1) However, it is again to be stressed that the inability of the Portuguese administration to develop techniques to secure revenues was no indication of the volume of trade.

After the demise of the Company of Grão Para and Maranhão, the Portuguese on the Upper Guinea Coast maintained their connection with Brazil, and continued to send a regular flow of slaves to that country. Very occasionally, this emerges from their own records. For instance, an administrator of the ~~Company~~ ^{Company} of Grão Para and Maranhão who was stationed at Bissau, wrote in 1778 that Cacheu exports had registered an immediate decline after the Company came to an end, but it nevertheless exported 800 slaves, while Bissau despatched 1,200.(2) In May 1793 the captain-major of Bissau reported that during the season just concluded he had despatched more than 1,000 slaves to Brazil, (3) Then, in the second decade of the nineteenth century, the attempts to put an end to the Atlantic slave trade by legislation and treaty provoked responses from Brazil and the Upper Guinea Coast, which showed that a substantial trade persisted between two regions. On the 5th October 1818, the governor of Rio de Janeiro wrote the governor of Cape Verde, expressing his concern over the suppression of the slave trade

(1) J. Barreto: Historia da Guiné, p. 154
(2) A.H.U., Guiné, maço III - João da Costa, 1778
(3) A.H.U., Guiné, maço X - José Antonio Pinto, 10 May 1793.

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"which the factories of Guinea have conducted until now, with such well-known profits, both with those very islands (the Cape Verde Islands) and with some Brazilian ports". (1)

Other observers commented in the late eighteenth century on the pattern of trade mentioned above, whereby some captives from the Upper Guinea Coast went to the Cape Verde Islands (and to the Madeiras), while the majority were despatched to Brazil. Indeed, Para was still the destination of 2,000 of these Africans every year, according to Golberry, while 1,000 went to Cape Verde and the Madeiras. Golberry and another French informant, Labarthe, also provided the useful information that in 1786 the 'Portuguese' trade on the Upper Guinea Coast was controlled by Englishmen resident in Lisbon; (2) indicating that Pombal's reforms had not succeeded in ousting English capital. (3) The British Parliamentary enquiry into the Atlantic slave trade in 1789 revealed the same dependence of the Portuguese on foreign imports, which then had to be re-exported to Africa. Figures of the Portuguese slave trade were also provided. They transferred a total of 20,000 slaves annually from West Africa, three-quarters of whom were from Angola.

(1) João Barreto: Historia da Guiné, p. 180
 (2) S.M. Golberry: Voyage en Afrique, Vol. 2, pp 231,232; and P. Labarthe: Voyages au Sénégal, p. 144
 (3) Pombal's attempts were aimed primarily at English holdings in the wine industry of northern Portugal.

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Roughly one-seventh of the remaining 5,000 came from Juda on the Slave Coast, with the Upper Guinea Coast accounting for over 4,000. (1) Not only was this figure quite distinct from the export of slaves by other Europeans and by the North Americans, but in fact the main impetus behind the Atlantic slave trade on this section of the West African littoral was not Portuguese but English.

After the Royal African Company had been driven from Sierra Leone in 1728, the English private traders were the only ones with whom Lopez could trade, and they came to dominate completely the commerce of the region. (2) Bence Island was occupied by three London merchants - Alexander Grant, John Sargeant, and Richard Oswald - and in 1744 their title to this island was upheld by the British Crown, so that in 1751, Bence Island, unlike the other possessions of the Royal African Company did not pass into the hands of the Company of Merchants trading to Africa. Of equal importance with the act of George III which gave these London traders title to Bence Island, was the agreement with the local sovereign, who considered the land as being rented to Grant, Sargeant and Oswald. In fact, a number of separate contracts with the neighbouring African rulers allowed most

(1) Report of the Lords of the Committee, 1789, Part VI, 'Portugal'

(2) Arquivo Colonial, Vol. 1, "Documentos acerca a Serra Leoa"

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of the islands in the Sierra Leone estuary to be used by the traders, and they were renewed when the assets of these three merchants were acquired by John and Alexander Anderson in 1785 (1).

Meanwhile, the Banana and Plantain islands, which had long been the haunt of private traders, had risen to great prominence, along with the islands off modern day Conakry, the Idolos. The Bananas and Plantains became the home of the mulattoes, while the Idolos were taken over by a Liverpool firm, headed by one Barber, and known on the coast as the Liverpool Company. In 1755 materials were brought out to construct a solid factory on one of these tiny islands where the Bulloms had strewn their Xinas, (2) and the land-based structures were supplemented by an 800-ton ship, permanently moored in the port. It carried 24 guns for defence, and on it was stored the most valuable merchandise (3). The factory at Bence Island was even more impressive. Well furnished quarters of residence and ample storerooms were protected by a strong fort; while the island also boasted a golf course of two holes.

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- (1) Claude George: The Rise of British West Africa (London 1903 pp.285, 286.
- (2) Arquivo Colonial, Vol. 1, "Informações da Guiné em 1777".
- (3) S.M.Golberry: Voyage en Afrique, Vol. 2, p. 237; and J. Montefiore: An Authentic Account of the late expedition to Bulama (London 1794)

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Bence, the Idolos, the Bananas and the Plantains were all strongly manned by whites, mulattoes and blacks; and adequately supplied with boats which they built and conditioned themselves. (1)

The impressive infra-structure of the English slaving industry in Sierra Leone during the second half of the eighteenth century was not wasted. It showed results in increased productivity. The scope of the Atlantic slave trade as conducted on the Upper Guinea Coast at this period and more specifically in Sierra Leone, has not been fully appreciated. It is held that the exports of slaves only reached significant proportions during and immediately after the American war of Independence (1776 -85); (2) but while this short period was undoubtedly a peak, the general level throughout the second half of the eighteenth century was high.

As cited earlier, one apparently reliable opinion of slave trading in Sierra Leone in 1751 was that it was 'prodigious'.(3) Translated into statistical terms, this would have meant at least a few thousands per year. Judging from the accounts of Nicholas Owen, who was familiar with the coast between 1750 and 1757, and that of John Newton, who made

(1) S.M. Golberry: Voyage en Afrique, Vol. 2, pp. 239, 240; and J. Machat: Documents, pp. 116, 124

(2) Peter Kup: A History of Sierra Leone, pp. 60, 61; and Christopher Fyfe: A History of Sierra Leone; p. 7

(3) See above, Ch. IX, p. 519

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three voyages to Sierra Leone between 1750 and 1754, it would appear that Sierra Leone was capable of filling the holds of several small vessels over a trading season through a process of accumulating a few at a time at every port and cove, with the resident whites and mulattoes acting as agents. Besides, the extension of the Sierra Leone trade-net to the north was responsible for a great many more slaves. It was said that the English from Sierra Leone took 1,000 slaves from Bissau during the first five months of 1748; (1) and when it came into being in 1755, the Company of Grão Para and Maranhão was ~~informed~~ ^{faced with the fact} that English competition was the greatest threat in the area. (2)

Important European wars did have disruptive effects, as discussed earlier in the case of the French, and the evidence of Nicholas Owen clearly pointed to the difficulty of obtaining European goods and hence slaves after the outbreak of the Seven Years War. (3) However, peace in Europe allowed the exploitation of Africa to be fully resumed. The French closely watching their rival's progress noted that, as far as the slave trade was concerned, English commerce flourished after 1763; and this was maintained until after the outbreak of the American War of Independence. In 1778, information reaching the French Minister

(1) A.H.U., Guiné, maço V - Report c. 1749 advocating a new Company to Brazil.

(2) N. Owen: Journal of a Slave Dealer, pp. 75, 80

(2) J.M. da Cunha Saraiva: "A Forteleza de Bissau e a Companhia do Grao Para e Maranhao" (Op. cit.)

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of Marine gave English exports as 3,000 from the Gambia; 2,000 from the Casamance, Cacheu and the Bijagos, and 4,000 from Sierra Leone. (1) Wherever these figures can be checked against alternative sources of evidence, they are more or less corroborated. Witnesses before the Lord's Committee on the Slave Trade in 1789 indicated that the Gambia trade then stood at between 1,200 and 1,400 slaves per annum, but that it had been declining steadily for nearly two decades, and had in fact been 2,500 some 17 years previously, that is, in 1772. (2) Another English slave trader who had served at the Liverpool Company's factory in Idolos between 1768 and 1770 stated that they handled 2,500 slaves per year in Sierra Leone. (3) Possibly he was excluding the Bence Island figures and certainly the Sherbro-Cape Mount trade. The governor of Gorée gave the total figure for Sierra Leone as 4,500 in June 1778 (4) while the previous year a Portuguese official of the Bissau Fort wrote that the English factories in Sierra Leone collected more

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- (1) J. Machat: Documents, p. 116
- (2) Report of the Lords of the Committee, 1789 - Part 1, 'Slaves', evidence of Mr. Heatley.
- (3) Report of the Lords of the Committee, 1789 - Part 1, 'Slaves' Evidence of Mr. James Penny.
- (4) J. Machat: Documents, p. 116

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than 5,000 slaves every year. (1) When these minor discrepancies are ironed out, they substantiate the view that the slave trade on the Upper Guinea Coast as conducted by the English had got into full stride after the interruption of the Seven Years War, and had not been immediately affected by the outbreak of the American War of Independence in 1776.

It was not until 1779 that the English factories on the Upper Guinea Coast suffered attacks as a direct consequence of external wars, as had occurred during earlier phases of Anglo-Dutch and Anglo-French military confrontation.(2) The French welcomed the possibility of being able to deal a few blows at the English in the Senegambia and on the Upper Guinea Coast. They were confident that with complete control of the coast they would secure annually 3,000 slaves from the Gambia; 300 from the Casamance and the Bijagos and 6,000 from Sierra Leone. (3)

(1) Arquivo Colonial, vol. 1, "Informações da Guiné em 1777"
This was supplied by Bernardino de Andrade. When he published his description of the upper Guinea Coast in 1796, he revised this to "between 8,000 and 10,000". See Planta da Praça de Bissau, p. 53

(2) See above, Ch. VI, p. 351

(3) J. Machat: Documents, p. 135 (1)

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The Bostonians struck first at the Liverpool Company factory at the Idolos and deprived the French of this plum; but the French Commander Pontevéz, made a thorough job of demolishing the Ponce settlement in March of 1779. The spoils taken from the slave barracoons and storerooms allowed two ships to be sent to Saint Domingue with slaves, while ivory and camwood were forwarded to France. (1) Yet, even these were temporary setbacks from which the English slave traders recovered within five years.

A most ironical situation arose in 1785 when the French resorted to the same factories which they and the Americans had bombarded, and the English, without bothering to rebuild to the previous standards of luxury or solidity, were only too happy to supply the French West Indian market. In January 1785, the Liverpool Society concluded an agreement with a company of Le Havre (Machelor, Corbison and Carmichel), under which the English were to deliver in the course of a year 3,000 slaves to one Captain Rousseau, an accredited agent of the French company. The slaves were to be of both sexes and of all ages and were to be chosen by the captain and paid for at a rate of 600 francs per head. Captain Rousseau arrived in the river Sierra Leone on the 25th September 1785 and by

(1) J. Machat: Documents, p. 124

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the 1st May he had packed and despatched 2,000 slaves to the French sugar colonies in ships commissioned by his company. He then awaited the arrival of more vessels to take the remaining 1,000 who were already assembled. Similar orders were captured by the Liverpool Company in 1787 and 1788 on behalf of commercial houses in Nantes. (1)

Certain influential Frenchmen who were cognisant of this state of affairs, felt that it was intolerable that the French colonies should be dependent upon an English source of supply, and that the English should reap profits in the process. Having failed to secure any of the British possessions in the Gambia or Sierra Leone by war or by treaty, the French hoped to gain an entrée into the Sierra Leone trade by occupying the small island of Gambia in the Sierra Leone estuary. Their choice of this site was based on the fact that a Frenchman named Hannibal had been residing there since 1772, earning his livelihood by handling some 30 to 40 slaves per year. Another French citizen, Ancel, joined him in 1780 and took over the following year when Hannibal died. In the 1785-86 trading season, he handled 140 slaves. The French administration therefore hoped to displace these petty adventurers with a capitalised enterprise.

(1) S.M. Golberry: Voyage en Afrique, vol. 2, pp.274-281

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Having obtained permission in 1786 from king Naimbana to settle on Gambia island, the French for a brief while demonstrated a serious purpose in the Sierra Leone area. They introduced a garrison, as well as experienced African traders from the Senegal; (1) but the effort was overpowered by the unhealthiness of Gambia island, as well as by the determination of the English at Bence island to brook no competitors.(2)

Bence island, which was under the Andersons of Philpot Lane (London) since 1785, had enjoyed even greater prosperity than the Idolos after the American War of Independence. In 1785 and during the first five months of 1786, the Bence traders had delivered to the Danes more than 3,000 slaves, besides which they sent to the English colonies nearly 4,000 (3).

Most of the above information was provided by the French captain, Lajaille, who went to Sierra Leone to negotiate the establishment of the factory on Gambia island. The figures given for the exports of the English factories of the Idolos and Bence alone totalled 10,000 for the year 1785-86 (4)

- (1) A. Wurie: "The bundukas of Sierra Leone", in Sierra Leone Studies (New Series) No. 1, Dec. 1953.
- (2) P. Labarthe: Voyages au Senegal, pp.151,155,240
- (3) S.M. Golberry: voyage en Afrique, vol. 2, p.282
- (4) Ibid - That is to say, 3,000 to the Danes, 3,000 to the French and 4,000 to the English.

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This contrasts with the estimates of 3,500 given by Matthews and Norris, two Liverpool representatives before the Lords' Committee.(1) However, for the purposes of this analysis, it is enough to know that the slave trade of the English in Sierra Leone was reckoned in thousands, and that the same was true of the Portuguese, the scale of the trade can then be assessed in relative rather than absolute terms. On the one hand, the Upper Guinea Coast was one of the least afflicted sections of the West African coast. As stated earlier, 4,000 slaves exported annually by the Portuguese from the Upper Guinea Coast measured up against 15,000 from Angola; while, according to Norris, the 3,500 captives taken by the English from Sierra Leone supplemented by 700 from the Gambia, were to be seen against 10,000 per annum taken from the Gold Coast, 14,500 from Bonny and New Calabar, and 13,500 from the Congo and Angola. On the other hand, within the context of the history of slaving on the Upper Guinea Coast, the latter part of the eighteenth century was a period of frightening activity.

(1) Report of the Lords of the Committee, 1789 - Part 1, 'Slaves'.

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Part II - "The Scars of the Atlantic slave trade"

Recently, there has been an attempt to revise the portrayal of the Atlantic slave trade as a purely destructive force in West Africa. It is contended that "the Portuguese slave trade began with violence and destruction, but soon became orderly"; it brought rulers manufactured goods and revenue; and in many cases the relationship between African and European was one of equal trading partners. (1) The weakness of this line of argument is that it calls attention to certain aspects but not to the totality of the Afro-European connection in which the Atlantic slave trade played so giant a role. For the most part, therefore, these propositions cannot be sustained, and have in fact been implicitly refuted in the earlier account of the Hispano-Portuguese slave trade and the discussion of the nature of Afro-European commerce on this section of the West African littoral.

Order, for instance, was introduced into the conduct of the Atlantic slave trade only in the sense that Europeans ceased direct raiding and turned to trade. But, the rapine and plunder, the organised manhunts, the kidnapping that bred more kidnapping, the

(1) The Transatlantic Slave Trade from West Africa (Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh, Mimeographed Report of Conference held in June 1965) See "The Impact of the Slave Trade on West Africa" by Christopher Fyfe, pp.81-88 and subsequent discussion.

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deterioration in the customary law - all these lay behind the facade of the relatively orderly and peaceful agreements between European slavers and coastal chiefs. Once the alliance was established, it is important to underline that the African rulers managed to maintain not simply equality but sovereignty, in their personal contacts with the Europeans. However, the commercial nexus was an entirely different matter. Here there could be no equality, because the demands of a developed system of production were imposed upon a society which scarcely rose above subsistence agriculture. The Africans displayed a weakness for and indeed an obsession with European commodities, and given this fatal flaw, the tragedy unfolded inexorably. The impression that the African society was being overwhelmed by the involvement with the European economy was most strongly conveyed at points when the Africans conceded that their slaving activities were the consequence of the fact that nothing but slaves would purchase European goods. (1)

In a limited sense, the African ruling class benefited by obtaining European goods. On the Upper Guinea Coast, the traditional ruling class was partially replaced by the mulattoes and by members of the Mande and Fula groups, but at all times it was the members

(1) See above, Ch.IV, p.233

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of the ruling stratum who received the best cloth, (1) drank the most alcohol, (2) and preserved the widest collection of durable items for prestige purposes. (3). It is this factor of realised self-interest which goes some way towards explaining the otherwise incomprehensible actions of Africans towards Africans.

While empathy with the African rulers is a difficult exercise, this is not the case with the Europeans. As individuals and as part of an economic system, they sought profits in a strictly definable sense, and they calculatedly threw aside all restrictions.(4) In modern society, rules are drawn up to protect the members of possessing class from devouring each other, and even to prevent them from eating the workers raw; but on the Upper Guinea Coast and the West African littoral as a whole, capitalism paraded without even a loin-cloth to hide its nakedness. With no restraints on

(1) See, e.g., Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor" (He describes the Papel chiefs as having rich silks and brocades) Also K.G. Davies: The Royal African Company, p.176 (The point is made that woollens were normally too expensive to use as slave goods, but were given to the coastal rulers as 'gifts').

(2) See above, Ch.VII, p.394

(3) P. Cultru: Premier Voyage de Sieur de la Courbe, p.252. (He lists a large number of articles in the possession of the Farim Cabo, which were virtually useless except for purposes of ornament and display.)

(4) See above, Ch.IV, p.239

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either side, the confrontation between the two cultures, which produced the Atlantic slave trade, was neither peaceful nor orderly, contrary to the exploratory revision, and it proved entirely detrimental to African society, which was the weaker party.

The methods by which the Atlantic slave trade were conducted on African soil could lead to none other than destructive consequences. On the basis of observations made in the Senegambia in 1787 and 1788 (and later confirmed in Sierra Leone) the anti-slave trade advocate, C.B. Wadstrom, categorised the methods of the trade as warfare, pillage (under which he included attacks by kings against their subjects), robbery (by which he meant kidnapping by the Europeans), and treachery or stratagems. Of the wars he had this to say: "these predatory incursions depend so much on the demand for slaves that if in any one year there be greater concourse of European ships than usual, it is observed that a much greater number of captives from the interior parts of the country is brought to market the next." He also noted the sale of individuals for "acts of petty larceny which scarcely deserved the name of crimes"; the professionalism associated with slave raiding; and the protection extended by the ruling class to their own kin.(1)

(1) C.B. Wadstrom: Observations on the Slave Trade and a Description of Some Part of the Coast of Guinea during Voyage made in 1787 and 1788 (London 1789) pp.1-17, 27, 28.

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Thus, the methods of the slave trade were in essentials no different in 1787 from what they were in 1686 when the Capuchins wrote; and by 1800, given the cumulative effect of nearly three and a half centuries of slave trading on the U.G.C. the destruction was proportionately more marked. For one thing, the disquietude and disruption had been spread further inland, and for another, upon the coast itself conditions had deteriorated to a state of near anarchy.

In the 16th and early 17th centuries, the Portuguese and Spanish appeared to have secured most of their slaves below the limit of the tides on the river, but subsequently the effects of the Atlantic slave trade were felt further and further inland. On the Gambia, for example, in places where Jobson had found that the people had had little to do with the coastal trade and were thus unmindful of tolls and customs, Mungo Park found them grasping for the petty profits which this European-generated trade allowed the Africans. (1) Some sixty years before Park, Richard Moore had commented on the great distance inland that the slave trade was pursued, with the majority of captives proceeding from the deep hinterland; (2) while six decades prior to that, Coelho had observed

(1) Mungo Park: Journal..1805, pp.69,73

(2) Richard Moore: "Travels into the Interior Parts of Africa", in Thomas Astley: A New and General Collection of Voyages Vol.2.

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that the Basserels on the middle Gambia were the chief victims of the Mandinga slave trade; (1) so that the progressive intensification and extension of trade along this main waterway is well illustrated.

South of the Gambia, the situation was quite similar. In the latter years of the 17th century, the greatest business ally of the Europeans on the U.G.C. was the Farim Cabo. (2) Below the province of Cabo or Gabu, that is, to the south of the Corubal, the Portuguese and Afro-Portuguese made the territory of the Susus into their principal purchasing zone. The Bence Island factor of the RAC claimed in 1703 that the Susu country was the "Portuguse Arcana", which was supplying most of the products for the coast by that date. (3) Besides, the Fulas had already joined the Mande as the foremost suppliers of slaves on the U.G.C. in the late seventeenth century, and this was even more marked during the Jihad.

It follows from the locale of the Fula campaigns that a significant proportion of captives were taken from beyond the Futa Djalon watershed. After 1750, the Fula and Sulima armies fought in Sangara and beyond, that is to say, considerable distances to the east of the Niger. Non-Islamised Mandé and

(1) See above, Ch.IV, pp. 222, 223

(2) P. Cultru: Premier Voyage de Sieur de la Courbe, pp.252,253

(3) P.R.O., T70/14 - Greenaway, 18th March 1703.

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the Kissis seem to have been the main victims of these assaults.(1) In the latter eighteenth century, the word 'Kissi' made its appearance as the name of a small river north of the Scarcies. Certainly the Kissi tribe lived nowhere in that vicinity, but it is conceivable that the name arose because of the large number of Kissis who were brought to the coast at that point. The factory on the Idolos was well positioned, precisely because the main flow of slaves from the hinterland reached the coast on the rivers north of the Scarcies. (2) A report of 1778, relating that the victims secured at the Idolos were in poor physical shape after travelling great distances in a slave coffle, (3) suggests that this was a pattern identical with that described by Mungo Park, who personally journeyed with such a coffle from beyond the Niger to the Gambia estuary. (4)

Although three-quarters of the slaves exported from the U.G.C. in the eighteenth century were said to have come from the

(1) See above, Ch. IX, p. 518

(2) Captives reached the coast on all the main rivers between the Gambia and the Scarcies, but sometimes for one reason or another, a particular river had the greatest traffic. When John Matthews was on the coast in 1785-87, the Pongo had replaced the Nunez as the most important slave route. See A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone, p.11.

(3) J. Machat: Documents, p.128.

(4) M. Park: Travels..1785-87

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interior, (1) it was on the narrow coastal strip that the impact of the trade was most marked. For one thing, in the hustling years of the eighteenth century, the frequency of direct European attacks on the Africans was much greater - often in alliance with a resident trader or a chief. Several such incidents involved North American ships, (2) possibly because of their relative inexperience in the trade. Besides, greater trade meant more slaving captains making their last voyages, and these individuals were always prone to 'panyarring' a few extra victims. (3) Obviously, these depredations took place close to the waterside.

However, as was true in the era of the Spanish registros, what mattered most was the setting of tribe against tribe and the exploitation practised by the African ruling class on its own subjects. By the latter part of the eighteenth century, the cumulative effects of both these practices threatened to tear apart the littoral societies in which they obtained - which meant virtually the whole of the U.G.C. Acts of opposition to the Atlantic

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- (1) Report of the Lords of the Committee, 1789 - Part I, 'Slaves'
Evidence of Mr. James Penny.
- (2) C.B. Wadstrom: An Essay on Colonisation, pp.76
and M. Winterbottom: An Account of the Native Africans of Sierra Leone, and A.M. Falconbridge: A Narrative of Two Voyages to the River Sierra Leone, p.35.
- (3) J. Newton: Journal of a Slave Trader, p.109

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slave trade on the part of the Africans were as unsuccessful as they were rare. In 1720, for example, Tomba, a Baga chief, tried to organise opposition to the slave trade in the Pongo area. His alliance of a few villages inevitably failed, and he himself was placed on a slave ship. Obviously an indomitable individual, Tomba led a revolt on board ship, killing three of the crew, but paid for his courage with his life. (1) It is also true that the Balantas and the Djolas remained largely indifferent to the slave trade; and when raided, the Balantas retaliated with great ferocity. They not only beat off attacks on their homes led by Afro-Portuguese from Bissau, but they retaliated by raiding the island of Bissau for cattle. (2) But to greater or lesser extent, all were involved and all were consumed.

Labat, writing in 1728, after having gained his impression of the U.G.C. in the early years of that century, was struck by the continual round of wars, piratical expeditions and skirmishes in the area where the Portuguese had so long been present: namely, the Gambia-Geba district. He commented that "the Europeans who trade in this country are careful not to preach peace and union; this would be contrary to their interests, because their wars are solely for

(1) J. Atkins: A Voyage to Guinea, pp.42,72

(2) A.H.U., Guiné, maço V - Relação of the 2nd Nov 1778.

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the capture of slaves". (1) While it would be impossible to prove that every instance of hostilities was directly motivated by the Atlantic slave trade, it is at least clear that all other motives had been subsumed by the slave trade. John Newton, on the basis of his experiences as a slave trader in Sierra Leone around the middle of the eighteenth century, was very guarded in his statements on this matter. He thought that it was quite unnecessary for the Europeans to arrive on the shore and provoke a specific casus belli, but he was convinced that with the cessation of the Atlantic slave trade the incidence of violence on the coast would decline dramatically. (2) In effect, what had happened was that once the original impulse had been given by the European demand for slaves, the tragedy played itself out.

On the Malaguetta Coast, where the Manes had once trod, the picture in the eighteenth century was one of conflict that probably retained some of the elements of tribal imperialism, but these were submerged under the Atlantic slave trade. The coastal peoples raided inland to procure slaves, and then the interior peoples retaliated, starting a cycle of wars. The slave trader, John Atkins, relating the situation around 1720, attested to the fact that the inland nations of the Malaguetta Coast had suffered from the

(1) J. Labat: Nouvelle Relation, Vol.V, p.133

(2) J. Newton: Journal of a Slave Trader, pp.108,109.

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'panyarring' forays of the littoral inhabitants, and in consequence had moved down and destroyed several towns and villages. For a while, trade was at a standstill, (1) but by 1728 the agent of the R.A.C. in Sierra Leone wrote that "there is at present a great number of slaves in this place, the people being at war with those of Bassoe where the malaguetta used formerly to be bought in plenty, but the people of Cetera Crew make daily inroads upon them and bring off many slaves." (2)

Several years later, violence from the direction of the Malaguetta Coast again reached Sierra Leone. It was said in 1750 that the whole country between Mana and Sierra Leone was in a flame of war. (3) The Mendes must have been involved in these hostilities. Nicholas Owen reported that the Konos and Bantas were among the victims of the slave trade as pursued in the Gallinas. (4) The Bantas are in fact a sub-group of the Mendes, left by the first Mane passage, (5) while the Konos were closely related to the Vais. By the early 19th century, both the Mendes and the Vais advanced towards the coast to take up the leading roles in the Atlantic slave

(1) J. Atkins: A Voyage to Guinea, p.73

(2) P.R.O., T70/1465 - Diary of Walter Charles 1728.

(3) J. Newton: Op. cit., p.25

(4) N. Owen: Journal of a Slave Dealer, p.54

(5) Y. Person: "Les Kissi et les Statuettes de Pierre", in Bulletin de l'I.F.A.N., Tome XXIII; and see above, Ch.II.

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trade of the Gallinas and Cape Mount. (1)

There was a point at which even the slave traders had to put a brake on the coastal wars. Wadstrom's diligent enquiries into the nature of the slave trade in Sierra Leone about the year 1793 elicited the information that formerly the whites often encouraged 'palavers', promising presents of liquor if the prisoners were sold to them, and they gave ammunition to both parties in any war. However, by that time, "the inhabitants being much diminished, and their wars interrupting remoter trade, the factors have endeavoured to preserve peace to secure the people inland a free passage down." (2) The notorious John Ormond was named as one who used his influence to put a stop to hostilities on the coast so as to ensure the flow of the much more lucrative interior trade. (3) This was a tacit admission on the part of the slave traders themselves of the chaos that the Atlantic slave trade had brought to the coast.

To the tribal feuds there must be added the innumerable personal vendettas fed by the many sharp practices which Mercado in 1569 termed enganos (deceits) and Wadstrom in 1787 called

- (1) For the Vais, see Captain Canot: Adventures of an African Slaver, p.302; and for the Mendes in the 19th century, see C. Fyfe: Sierra Leone Inheritance, section 12.
- (2) C.B. Wadstrom: An Essay on Colonisation, p.77
- (3) Captain Canot: Op. cit.

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"treachery or stratagems". In the opinion of Bernardo de Andrade, these acts to ensnare private individuals had multiplied to such an extent as to 'engulf' the Africans. Though he had served for many years as an official of the slave trading company of Grão Para and Maranhão, De Andrade wrote the Portuguese Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in 1796 urging that if the slave trade were replaced by other forms of enterprise, it would mean that the people of the Upper Guinea Coast would "put an end to their continuous dissensions and return to agriculture." (1)

Above all, any analysis of the impact of the Atlantic slave trade must take into account the fact that the coastal society had always been differentiated and stratified. This was what primarily determined the way in which external forces were received and internalised. When one traces the exploitation of the majority of the society by the dominant layer then the full extent of the destruction wrecked by the Atlantic slave trade on the society of the Upper Guinea Coast is revealed.

By the eighteenth century, the African ruling class in relation to its own subjects was no longer carrying out its functions of maintaining order and policing the state. These were incompatible with the mode of production which they had adopted in response to the lure of European goods. Their responsibilities

(1) Bernardino de Andrade: Planta da Praça de Bissau, p.50

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for the security of the persons of their subjects had been almost entirely jettisoned during the centuries of supplying the European slave ships. Even the Poro, the greatest pillar of Sape and later of Mane society, was no longer a cementing force in the society, but simply an instrument in the hands of the slave trading chiefs;(1) and the same seems to have been true of the womans' organisation, the Bundu. (2) The active assaults of the ruling class on their subjects moved from the plane of perverted justice to outright man-stealing. In the Gambia, kings raided their own outlying villages under cover of darkness; (3) the sort of incident referred to by Clarkson, probably the best informed protagonist of his day. (4)

In reality, even the coastal ruling class had been overwhelmed in the gross trade that they had helped to conduct. Many of them had been replaced by chiefs of Mande origin, often professing Islam, as noted earlier. (5) This was particularly true of the Nalus, Bagas and Temnes; while elsewhere the mulattoes had stepped into the breach. Where the old coastal ruling class persisted, usually as the headmen of petty settlements, they were as debt-

(1) See above, Ch. VIII, pp. 479, 480

(2) T. Winterbottom: An Account of the Native Africans of Sierra Leone.

(3) C.B. Wadstrom: Observations on the Slave Trade, pp.7,8.

(4) Thomas Clarkson: History of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade. (London 1808) Vol 1, p.13

(5) See above, Ch.IX, p. 516.

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ridden as the West Indian planters who ultimately received a large proportion of the slaves; and because of their indebtedness to the mulatto and white factors they were forced to sell their subjects or be sold themselves. (1)

Matters had clearly reached an extremely low ebb, when one of the principal means of becoming a slave was to be found guilty in a "sauce palaver", that is to say, to be adjudged to have been rude to a member of the ruling class. (2) This meant that even the informal rules of behaviour in relation to constituted authority had assumed the form of law, and were contributing to the Atlantic slave trade.

Of course, the African rulers continued to protect themselves, even to the point where they sought the return of any noble who had inadvertently been shipped to the Americans. In 1792, for example, the king of Bissau wrote the king of Portugal demanding the return of the fidalgo Ijala, who had been carried in Maranhão, and also the recall of the official who had permitted this. (3) Besides, by this time, many of the rulers on the coast were Muslims,

(1) See above, Ch. VIII

(2) T. Winterbottom: An Account of the Native Africans of Sierre Leone, p.127

(3) A.H.U., Guiné, maço X - King of Bissau, 20 June 1792; and Petition of Bissau residents, 1793,

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and this provided further protection. (1) Conversely, the mass of the people were still exposed both to capture and to recapture if they managed to escape. In 1751, when the Portuguese signed a contract with a Beafada noble for the setting up of a trading settlement at La, on the river Geba, it included a "fugitive slave clause" in which the noble undertook to return all escapees. (2)

It was, therefore, the common citizens or plebeus, whose vulnerability was at its maximum. The Lords' Committee on the Atlantic slave trade had good reason to ask their witnesses whether the Africans "enjoy any protection from any Civil Rights they have"(3) For the vast majority of the people on the U.G.C. the answer was in the negative. Their civil rights had evaporated as the laws of their society had become deformed to facilitate a trade which was a constant threat to their existence. Under these circumstances, individuals had to seek their own means of security. "They never care to walk even a mile from home without firearms; each knows it is their villainies and robberies upon one another that enables them to carry on a slave trade with Europeans", wrote John Atkins in 1721. (4) Overlooking this informant's brazen inversion of

(1) See above, Ch. IX, p. 522
(2) A.H.U., Guiné, maço V - Copy of doação by Tamba Ocho Nanquim, 30 June 1751.
(3) Report of the Lords of the Committee, 1789 - Part I, "Government, Religion, Manners and Customs", question put to Robert Norris with respect to the Gold Coast.
(4) J. Atkins: A Voyage to Guinea, p.151

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cause and effect, his testimony clearly points to a state of insecurity bordering on anarchy. Another graphic illustration of this was to be seen in the dislocation of villages in Sierra Leone, and their re-siting in almost inaccessible hide-outs, away from the main waterways and the slave raiding chiefs. (1)

In the face of the above information, it is totally misleading to refer to the society of the U.G.C. at the end of the slave trade as 'traditional'. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to maintain that "the social, political and economic life of West Africa became reorganised to produce one result, a steady flow of slaves for ships anchored along the coast". (2) Yet, far too often, there has been a ready acceptance of reports on West Africa in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as representing certain timeless institutions, and it is even assumed that the field studies of 'indigenous' African societies in the twentieth century constitute a fundamentally unchanged pattern. In many instances, this is far from the truth, and the regime of law and punishment is the first case in point.

When a modern ethnographic survey of Sierra Leone indicates that "punishments formerly included" enslavement for a wide variety of crimes, (3) this itself needs to be placed in historical

(1) See above, Ch. VIII, p. 479

(2) D. Mannix and M. Cowley: Black Cargoes, p.32

(3) M. Mc.Culloch: Peoples of Sierra Leone, pp.24,25

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perspective rather than constituting historical evidence valid for an earlier period. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, most of the tribal societies between Sierra Leone and the Gambia enslaved individuals locally on the basis of the same petty crimes which they had used to stock the slave ships. No doubt, the English administration of the Gambia thought it was bringing enlightenment to the backward natives by refusing to return slaves who had escaped from the Mandingas of Combo, on the left bank of the Gambia estuary; while the Mandinga chiefs accused the English of "abetting their criminals and... receiving offenders flying from punishment brought upon them by their own conduct". (1) However, one Portuguese official was able to perceive the relationship between the patterns of legal punishment and the Atlantic slave trade, drawing attention to the fact that the Djolas provided an exception. He wrote as follows: "The Felupes (Djolas) never made slaves, nor did they sell their own kind, as did their neighbours, and, from this fact there resulted a great difference between the penal morality of the one from the others: on the one hand, the Felupes punish murderers and feticeiros by seizing their goods, demolishing their houses and exiling them; and for thefts, cases of wounding and adultery, they exact fines and compensation; - the Cassangas, the Banhuns and nearly all the people of the coast, punish everything with captivity, which in many instances embraces

(1) J.M. Gray: A History of the Gambia, pp.319,320 (Citing Lt. Gov. Huntley of Bathurst, 23 July 1840)

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the whole family". (1) Having placed this in the context of the mild penalties requested before the Atlantic slave trade had made its impact, nothing more need be said. (2)

The captivity referred to above was an entirely local matter, persisting long after the Atlantic slave trade had ended. One of the most widely held generalisations about 'indigenous' African society which stands in greatest need of a close re-appraisal is the contention that slavery and other forms of social subjection prevailed on the African continent before the arrival of the Europeans, and facilitated the rise and progress of the Atlantic slave trade. Daniel Mannix has been cited earlier in this study as espousing this view. (3) He spelt it out as follows: "many of the Negroes transported to America had been slaves in Africa, born to captivity. Slavery in Africa was an ancient and widespread institution, but it was especially prevalent in the Sudan". (4) According to P.D. Rinchon, "from the earliest days of the trade, the majority of the Negroes were living in a state of servitude, and the native chiefs did not have far to seek for the human merchandise". (5)

(1) H.A. Dias de Carvalho: Guiné, Apontamentos Inéditos, pp. 72, 73

(2) See above, Ch. IV, pp. 213, 214

(3) See above, Ch. IV, pp. 197, 198.

(4) D. Mannix and M. Cowley: Black Cargoes, p. 43

(5) D. Rinchon: La Traite et l'Esclavage des Congolais par les Européens (Brussels 1929) p. 169

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A third and more judicious expression of this view comes from J.D. Fage. After stating that African "domestic slavery" involved relatively small numbers, and after making it clear that this institution was in no way comparable to slavery in the Americas, he adds that "nevertheless, the existence of domestic slavery has an important bearing on the development of the slave trade in West Africa... The presence of a slave class among the coastal peoples meant that there was already a class of human beings who could be sold to Europeans if there was an incentive to do so... So the coastal merchants began by selling the domestic slaves in their own tribes." (1) From a chronological assessment of the society of the U.G.C. it can be demonstrated not only that these tenets are inapplicable but that, on the contrary, it was the Atlantic slave trade which spawned a variety of forms of slavery, serfdom and subjection in this particular area.

Not only did the Upper Guinea Coast have a lengthy association with the Atlantic slave trade, beginning in the 1460's and extending over four centuries, but it is also a very useful exemplar as far as the present problem is concerned, because the so-called African 'slavery' was known to be widespread in this region during the colonial period, and emancipation was eventually brought about by the intervention of the metropolitan powers

(1) J.D. Fage: Introduction to the History of West Africa
(London 1959) p.78.

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involved. Sometimes, what obtained was a quasi-feudal exploitation of labour by a ruling elite, who received the greater portion of the harvest as in the use of the rounde or "slave towns" of the Futa Djalon. (1) At other times, the "domestic slaves", as they have been categorised, were members of their masters' households. They could not be sold, except for serious offences; they had their own plots of land and or rights to a proportion of the fruits of their labour; they could marry; their children had rights of inheritance, and if born of one free parent often acquired a new status. Such individuals could rise to positions of great trust, including that of chief. (2)

Quite obviously, R.S. Rattray's well-known description of the Ashanté 'slave', (3) which is cited in most discussions on this subject, (4) is fully applicable to the Upper Guinea Coast. Rattray was primarily concerned with the "slave child" (Odonko ba), whose privileges were quite different from those of their parents and foreparents. On the Upper Guinea Coast too the servants born in the household were distinguished from the individuals who were

(1) P. Marty: Islam en Guinée

(2) M. Mc.Culloch: Peoples of Sierra Leone, pp.28,29,68

(3) R.S. Rattray: Ashanti (London 1923) pp.40-43, 222,230

(4) E.g., Stanley Elkins: Slavery, A Problem in American Institutional and Social Life (New York 1963) p.96; and Basil Davidson: Black Mother, p.40 (For a full discussion of African 'slavery' and 'serfdom' see pp.33,40)

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recruited from captives of war or from those pledged and not redeemed. These latter were vulnerable to sale, being exchanged for goods as well as serving as currency in a number of transactions such as marriage payments. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, after the Atlantic slave trade was no longer conducted from the Upper Guinea Coast, one of the major problems facing the administration of the colony of Sierra Leone was the persistence of the internal slave trade, mainly supplying victims to the Mande and the Fulas. (1) Thus, an examination of the society of the Upper Guinea Coast at a relatively recent date does reveal the presence of a category of slaves, as well as agricultural serfdom and personal service.

In seeking the roots of the indigenous slavery and serfdom of the Upper Guinea Coast, and in attempting to juxtapose these phenomena with the Atlantic slave trade, one is struck by the absence of references to local African slavery in the sixteenth or even the seventeenth century, when such evidence could reasonably be construed to mean that the institution preceded the advent of the Atlantic slave trade. Sometimes, the word 'slave' was indeed used, but so loosely as to apply to all the common people. For instance, the Jesuit, Alonso de Sandoval, reported that while in Cartagena in the early seventeenth century, a priest who came over

(1) C. Fyfe: A History of Sierra Leone, See Index, under "Slave Trade, internal".

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on a slave ship told him that all the talk about the injustice of slavery was nonsense, because all the Negroes were slaves of absolute kings. Sabdoval then went on to pin-point the king of Casanga on the river Casamance as one such absolute monarch, whose subjects were his slaves. (1) In this arbitrary and figurative sense, the word 'slave' is equally applicable, not only to the common people of Europe at that time, but also to the proletariat of the world today.

There is only one clear instance where labour services on the Upper Guinea Coast were associated with the limitation of the privileges of free men. In Sierra Leone, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, when a subject was in danger in one kingdom, he could flee to the court of another king and place himself at the mercy of the latter. He became the 'slave' of that king, either remaining in his service or liable for sale (to the Europeans). (2) At that time, local customs were already influenced by the presence of slave-buying Europeans, as well as by the arrival of the Manes as an alien ruling element some decades previously; but the essentials of the practice almost certainly preceded these two external factors. In 1507, the Portuguese chronicler, Valentin Fernandes made a statement which could refer to nothing else:

(1) Alonso de Sandoval: Natureleza de Todos Etiopes

(2) B.R.A.H., Papeles de Jesuitas, tomo 185, No.1346, Barreira, 1606.

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"The king has no servants other than his slaves. Sometimes a young stranger arrives and seeks the protection of the king, who looks upon the young man as his own". (1)

The interlude of the Manes is itself quite instructive. When Hawkins arrived at Sherbro island, he found that the Sapes were being used as the 'slaves' of the Manes to produce a wide variety of agricultural crops. (2) This points to the subjection which automatically followed conquest, but no institutionalised slavery or serfdom resulted in this instance, because the invaders were rapidly integrated and had essentially the same relations with their subjects as the previous rulers. What did matter was that within the social structure there was much greater antipathy between the rulers and their subjects. Sales of Sapes by the Manes are thus adequately explained, firstly, in terms of warfare and, secondly, in terms of class exploitation. (3) In any event, the Atlantic slave trade had started long before the Manes arrived. In so far as the society of the Upper Guinea Coast can be reconstructed at the moment of contact with the Portuguese, one can discern, at the very most, the presence of a small number of political clients in the households of the kings and chiefs of the area. If they were to have constituted the pad for launching the Atlantic slave trade, it would never have left the ground.

(1) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.82

(2) Hakluyt Society, No.LVII, The Hawkins Voyages

(3) See above, Ch.II, p.116 and Ch.IV, p.201

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It is difficult to believe that any observer could possibly have overlooked features such as chattel slaves, agricultural serfs or even household servants if these were numerous and disprivileged enough. Several of the sixteenth and seventeenth century Portuguese descriptions of the Upper Guinea Coast are replete with details of the structure of African society on that section of the West African littoral; and the only distinction that they consistently emphasised was the one between rulers and subjects - the fidalgos and plebeus. (1) For the neighbouring Senegambia, Valentim Fernandes left testimony that the Wolof nobles had several households, each comprising a wife, children and 'slaves', the latter working six days for the mistress and one day every week for themselves. (2) Alvares de Almada in 1594 also referred to Fula 'slaves' ruling the Wolofs. (3) Both these writers dealt with the area between the Gambia and Cape Mount at great length, without mentioning any similar phenomena.

On matters of trade, even more than on matters of ethnographic interest, the early Portuguse chroniclers were scrupulous in recording details. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they knew of the trade routes between the Futa Djalon and the coast, linking the littoral peoples with the Mande and Fula of the interior.

(1) See above, Ch.I, p.71
 (2) Valentim Fernandes: La Côte Occidentale d'Afrique, p.10
 (3) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guiné", pp.234, 235.

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Yet, in enumerating the products exchanged, they never once mentioned or hinted that slaves were involved in this commerce although it was specified that the Moors purchased slaves in the Senegambia. (1) Cloths, pieces of dried indigo and iron bars were noted as being the circulating media in the barter economy of the Upper Guinea Coast, but never slaves in the early period. Non-mention in such circumstances is presumptive of non-existence.

Though one can identify no African slavery, serfdom or the like on the Upper Guinea Coast during the first phase of European contact that region was one of the first sections of the West African coast from which slaves were exported; and the transfer of Africans from the Upper Guinea Coast to the Spanish Indies in the sixteenth century was already a significant undertaking. In part, this was based on inter-tribal raiding, but if any internal division was necessary for the initiation of the Atlantic slave trade, it was available not in the relationship of free vs slave, but in the contradiction between the nobility and the commoners.

While the view that African slavery and "domestic slavery" preceded and stimulated the Atlantic slave trade has been given wide currency, no thought has been spared for any other possible connection between the two. Was it merely coincidence that it was only after two and a half centuries of slave trading that the vast majority of the peoples of the Upper Guinea Coast were said to have.

(1) See above, Ch.VII, pp.406, 407

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been living in a state of subjection? Curiously enough, Mungo Park, though he added his authority to the pro-slavery arguments, had posed this question, while absolving himself from answering it. After describing what amounted to both chattel slavery and household service in the Senegambia and the western Sudan, he wrote: "How far it is maintained and supported by the Slave Traffic which, for two hundred years, the nations of Europe have carried on with the natives of the coast, it is neither within my province, nor in my power to explain." (1)

It is a striking fact that the greatest agents of the Atlantic slave trade on the Upper Guinea Coast, the Mande and the Fulas, were the very tribes who subsequently continued to handle the internal slave trade, and whose society came to include significant numbers of disprivileged individuals labouring under coercion. The sequence of events pointed in that very direction in which Mungo Park had not cared to look too closely. In the first place, the political and religious dominance of the Mande and the Fulas over the littoral peoples of the Upper Guinea Coast in the eighteenth century was based on a mixture of motives, among which the desire to sell more slaves to the Europeans featured prominently. Thus the Atlantic slave trade can immediately be tagged as being partly responsible for the vassalage to which the coastal tribes were reduced. In the second place, the raiding of individuals for sale

(1) M. Park: Travels, pp 297,298

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to the Europeans encouraged the marauding tribes to retain numbers of their captives to serve their own needs. When, for example, the Mandinga Farim Cabo raided his neighbours to obtain captives for the slave ships he retained a small proportion for his own needs. (1)

One of the most direct connections between the Atlantic slave trade and the nineteenth century pattern of social stratification and oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast lay in the fact that numbers of Africans were captured with a view to being sold to the European slavers, but they remained for greater or lesser periods (or sometimes for ever) in the service of their African captors. To begin with, there was usually a time lag between capture and the moment when a buyer presented himself. Then, there were always individuals whom the Europeans rejected for one reason or another; while the African merchants also decided against carrying through the sale under certain circumstances.

De Almada related that on one occasion on which the Portuguese refused to buy some 'pieces' who had been kidnapped by Fulas, the latter killed their captives. (2) This may have occurred in isolated instances, but, in general, persons who were offered for

(1) P. Mateo de Anguiano: Misiones Capuchinas en Africa, Vol.2 p.136; and P. Cultru: Premier Voyage de Sieur de la Courbe pp.250-52

(2) Alvares de Almada: "Rios de Guine", pp.274,275

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sale and who were not purchased by the Europeans were utilised for the economic benefit of their African captors. C.B. Wadstrom, an activist in the movement for the colonisation of Sierra Leone, addressed himself to interviewing those engaged in the Atlantic slave trade in the area on this specific point. Firstly, there was the testimony of the chief of Port Loko, who affirmed that those captives whom the Europeans did not buy were always put to work on the coast. Secondly, "two other intelligent native traders mentioned the great number of slaves now confined on the coast for purchasers: one trader had no fewer than 200... They said that the slaves would certainly not be put to death; for nobody was ever put to death, except in war or for crimes". Further questioning by Wadstrom revealed that when the average price of slaves fell from 160 bars to 120 bars, the king of the Fulas, to bring the European slave traders to terms, forbade his subjects to carry any slaves down to the coast. As a consequence of this manoeuvre, the Fula, Mandinga and Susu territories had become full of slaves who were set to cultivate rice. (1)

For the sake of safety, the captives were put to work in small groups. (2) Ever since the seventeenth century (and perhaps earlier), it had been the habit of the Mandingo Farim Cabo to

(1) C.B. Wadstrom: An Essay on Colonisation, pp.113-117. See also J. Matthews: Voyage to the River Sierra Leone, P.147

(2) C.B. Wadstrom: Op. cit., p.117.

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disperse his captives among his subjects, expecting to have them returned when a buyer was available. (1) Those captives thus became for a while literally "household slaves" of the Mandingas. At any given moment, therefore, two of the components of the domestic slave population of the Upper Guinea Coast as viewed by observers at the end of the eighteenth century would have been, firstly, captives drafted into alien tribes in servile disprivileged positions, as by-products of the Atlantic slaving industry; and secondly, the real products, who were stock-piled in bond for export.

The majority of the tribes of the Upper Guinea Coast were active participants in the Atlantic slave trade, and most of them must have retained supplies of slaves for domestic consumption. But the Mandingas, Susus and Fulas stood well to the fore - partly because of their own key role in the slaving operations on the Upper Guinea Coast, and partly because they succeeded in reducing many of the littoral peoples and the inhabitants of the Futa Djalon to a state of vassalage, under the banner of Islam. Military conquest and political ascendancy involved in most cases nothing more than the payment of tribute, but in some instances the Mande or Fula ruling class was directly super-imposed on the subjugated peoples. The latter were not dispersed within individual households, but were grouped together in the roundes or "slave villages", which were

(1) P. Cultru: Premier Voyage de Sieur de la Courbe, p.252

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economic units producing for the benefit of the master class.

During the latter part of the eighteenth century, some of the Mandinga chiefs on the Upper Guinea Coast had "slave towns" with as many as 1,000 inhabitants. Travelling in Sierra Leone in 1823, Major Laing found that Falaba, the capital of the Sulima Susus, had its own "slave town", Konkodoogorée. Intense agricultural activities were carried on there, and the fields in that area were the best tilled and best laid out that Laing had seen in his travels. (1) Several other European observers, both before and after Laing, commented on these roundes. Matthews, for example, in the 1780's, noted that it was not unusual for the headmen of Sierra Leone to have 200 to 300 'slaves', while some of the Mandinga rulers had between 700 and 1,000 inhabitants in their "slave towns". He estimated that at least three-quarters of the Susus, Bagas, Bulloms and Temnes were already enslaved in their homelands, while the percentage was higher among the Mandingas. (2) In the late 1820's, Canot also attested to this high proportion of inhabitants of the Fula and Susa countries who lived in a state of subjection. (3) In some instances, their status was far removed from slavery, but the fact remains that the social relations in the

(1) A.G. Laing: Travels, p.221

(2) J. Matthews: A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone, p.149

(3) Captain Canot: Adventures of an African Slaver, p.128

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society of the Upper Guinea Coast had been profoundly altered in the direction of disprivilege and unfreedom during the period of contact with the Europeans, and the Atlantic slave trade bears the major share of the responsibility.

It was also at the tail-end of the Atlantic slave trade that evidence was forthcoming about the existence of an internal trade in slaves, and there is every reason to believe that this was an accurate reflection on the date that it came into being. Captain Canot, who was familiar with the Upper Guinea Coast in the 1820's and 1830's, wrote vividly on both the Atlantic slave trade and the internal slave trade, implicitly linking the two. With the Atlantic slave trade as the main preoccupation of the Susus and the Fulas, "a man, therefore, becomes the standard of prices. A slave is a note of hand that may be discounted or pawned; he is a bill of exchange that carries himself to his destination and pays a debt bodily; he is a tax that walks corporately into the chieftain's treasury". As far as the home market was concerned, the victims not only became agricultural labourers, but men were required as personal attendants and women as wives or concubines. (1)

While one major contribution to the rise of "domestic slavery" on the Upper Guinea Coast was made by the coastwards thrust of the interior peoples and their involvement in the slave trade, an equally great contribution was being made by the European forces

(1) Captain Canot: Op. cit., P.128

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acting on the littoral from the seaward side.

In the forts and factories of the Royal African Company, a distinction was made between "sale slaves" and "castle slaves" or "factory slaves". Both were acquired in the same way, but while the former were destined to face the Middle Passage, the latter were permanently retained around the forts and factories to help in the conduct of trade. (1) For that matter, the "sale slaves" too, had to work around the factories. As was the case with the African captors, whenever captives were kept over a period of time, it was imperative to ensure that they were not an intolerable economic burden, and as a result the attempt was made by the Royal African Company to exploit them for profit even before they set sail for the Americas. In 1702, the Sierra Leone factor was told that, so long as it was compatible with security, he should use the "sale slaves" in useful pursuits such as clearing Tarso Island which was being used for agricultural purposes by the Company. (2) It would be surprising if they had not been doing just that previously, for their own benefit at least, if not for the Company. Two years later, the Company was informed that it was customary in the past for the factors to employ the Company's slaves on their private plantations.(3) These may well have included both "sale slaves" and "castle slaves".

(1) P.R.O. T70/1465 - Diary of Walter Charles, 1728. This mentions "Cayoba, a castle slave, who had been made such from a sale slave.

(2) P.R.O. T70/51 - To John Freeman, 4 Aug. 1702, fl.275

(3) P.R.O. T70/14 - Agent Greenaway, 18 March 1703

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The Directors took some interest in the "castle slaves". In 1702, they issued instructions that a Negro overseer should be appointed over them. They were to be converted to Christianity, given names, taught to speak English, and be allowed to have one wife (another "castle slave"). Perhaps the most important provision from the Company's point of view was that the "castle slaves" should be taught skills to enhance their value and utility. Such workers were not to be sold or transported overseas except for great crimes. (1)

Apparently, no record remains of the number of "castle slaves" in the forts of York and Bence Island and their subsidiary factories, but in 1702, it was felt that there were too many in Sierra Leone, and that some should be transferred to Cape Coast Castle. (2) However, some years later, there was talk of shortage. At least, the Directors had been made to understand that it was cheaper to use their own slaves than to hire African servants, and they gave their factors authority to purchase slaves for the factories. (3) Walter Charles, the last of the chief factors of the Royal African Company in Sierra Leone, was certainly convinced that if the Company used their own slaves, it would be cheaper and more convenient; and he urged that some "castle slaves" should be sent to Sierra Leone from the Gambia establishments. (4) The same

(1) P.R.O. T70/51 - To John Freeman, 4 Aug 1702, fl.268

(2) P.R.O. T70/51 - To John Freeman, 1 Dec.1702 fl.310

(3) P.R.O. T70/60 - To Alexander Archibald, 5 Oct 1723, fl.45

(4) P.R.O. T70/1465 - Diary of Walter Charles, 1728.

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situation was to be found in the Portuguese trading centre of Cacheu, where the captain-major argued in 1694 that it cost too much to get the help of the Africans. (1)

Apart from the trading companies, private European traders also owned slaves on the coast, so that altogether the number of Africans bought by Europeans and remaining in servitude on the Upper Guinea Coast was considerable. The practice probably began with the arrival of Portuguese ships in the fifteenth century, giving rise to the term grumete, ("bailor's slave"). As stated earlier, the grumete was usually a wage earner, and in many cases, African rulers on the Upper Guinea Coast voluntarily sent their children to live with the Europeans and to serve as auxiliaries in the coastal trade. (2) There was a somewhat similar practice in the nineteenth century, involving the sending of children from the hinterland to the colony of Sierra Leone to learn "white man fashion". However, these children were usually unpaid servants, and when they grew old enough to realise that they were free, they were then sold to the Mande and Fula traders. (3)

Some of the Africans purchased by and remaining in the service of the resident Europeans were little better off than slaves in the New World. The "castle slaves", like their American counter-

↖ (2) See above, Ch. VIII, pp 444, 445

↘ (1) A.H.U., Guiné, caixa II - No.230, Minute of the Conselho, 30 Oct 1694.

(3) C. Fyfe: A History of Sierra Leone, p.270

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parts, were branded with their owners' marks. (1) When a "castle slave" committed a crime, his punishment was often brutal. In February 1682, the Bence Island factor reported that some of the "castle slaves" had stolen, and he had executed one as an example. (2) Escape and rebellion led to the same fate. If the "castle slave" was not sold, executed, or did not die an early natural death, then he could look forward to being freed when he was "old and useless". (3) With the private traders, it was equally obvious that unmitigated chattel slavery prevailed at times. Occasionally, the owners displayed those fits of sadism which afflict those who have absolute power over human life. When in 1694, Francisco Vaz, member of the prominent Afro-Portuguese trading family, cruelly disposed of his slaves in his Nunez emporium, the matter reached the ears of the Conselho Ultramarino. (4) In the latter years of the eighteenth century, John Ormond, thirty five years a slave trader in Baga territory, was notorious for amusing himself at the expense of the lives and limbs of his servants, in much the same way as his contemporaries in Saint Domingue. (5)

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- (1) P.R.O. T70/53 - Instructions to agent Plunkett, 9 Feb 1721
(He was sent a new branding iron.)
- (2) P.R.O. T70/16 - Edmund Pierce, 21 Feb 1682, fl.27
- (3) P.R.O. T70/361 - Bence Island Accounts, 1682
- (4) A.H.U., Cabo Verde, caixa VI - Bishop of Cape Verde to the Conselho, 27 July 1694
- (5) C.B. Wadstrom: An Essay on Colonisation, pp.84,85,87

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The servitude directly introduced on the Upper Guinea Coast by the Europeans slowly assumed an African character. The slave owners were originally white and foreigners, but the late eighteenth century saw the emergence of powerful mulatto slave trading chiefs, who were said to own large numbers of "domestic slaves". Wadstrom explained that "if an African slave is impertinent he is sold. The children of such are occasionally sold also. But with the rich traders this is not common." (1) The rich traders to whom he referred were the mulattoes, who kept 'slaves' not only to serve as crews on the coastal and riverain vessels and to act as porters, but also to provide labour for the production of food and manufactures, which indirectly facilitated the Atlantic slave trade. These categories of labour were the basis of the towns owned by the Tuckers, Cleveland and Caulkers.

In the above respect, the mulatto chiefs and more so the Mande and Fula rulers derived concrete benefits from the Atlantic slave trade - not the ephemerality of consumer goods, but the incorporation of large supplies of labour into their hierarchy of production. The extensive Susu rice fields were capable of providing the food for the numerous slaves shipped from the Upper Guinea Coast in the late eighteenth century, the annual amount of

(1) Ibid: p.117.

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rice purchased by the European traders being several hundred tons. (1) It is not surprising that the Mande and Fulas continued to expand during the nineteenth and twentieth century at the expense of the fragments of the coastal society left by the Atlantic slave trade. This, incidentally confirms to a pattern discernible elsewhere on the West African coast whereby the coastal peoples suffered because of their direct exposure to the Atlantic slave trade, while the tribes of the hinterland grew strong from the benefits of the same trade. (2) Even so, however, on the Upper Guinea Coast the advantages accrued to a minority ruling element in the near hinterland, and this barely modifies the assessment of the Atlantic slave trade as a totally degrading force.

Furthermore, like the colonial powers in a later era, the Mande and Fula ruling class found that they had to use force to cement their authority over those they sought to dominate. The agricultural serfs of the Upper Guinea Coast and its hinterland signalled their oppression by rebelling or escaping when the opportunity presented itself. The uprisings of the rimaibe of the Futa Djalon have already been instanced, and these were not unique. One of the most explosive situations in the near hinterland was

(1) Report of the Lords of the Committee, 1789, - Part I,
'Produce', Evidence of John Matthews.

(2) The Transatlantic Slave Trade from West Africa, C. Fyfe:
"The Impact of the Slave Trade on West Africa", pp.81-88

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caused by a revolt against the Mandingas in 1785. (1) Availing themselves of a war between the Mandingas and the Susus, a large body of rimaibe revolted and escaped from Mandinga control, establishing themselves in Susu territory. When peace was restored between the Susus and the Mandingas, the latter resorted to sporadic attacks against their former vassals, who in turn retaliated by plundering Mandinga towns, with the tacit approval of the Susus who allowed them to receive supplies of arms and ammunition from the coast. However, after this affair had dragged on for nearly ten years, a disturbance arose among the serfs of the Susus, and it was feared that they would join forces with the deserters from the Mandingas, so the two ruling groups joined forces to crush the former Mandinga vassals after the rainy season of 1795. (2)

The local slaves, serfs and the like had every reason for revolting, because having been spawned by the Atlantic slave trade, they in turn constituted the section of the society most liable to be exported. Again it is from Captain Canot's account that the inter-relationship between the two phenomena most clearly emerges. When, on one occasion, Canot visited Timbo, the capital of the Futa Djalou, the inhabitants of Findo and Furto, two slave settlements on the outskirts of the city, fled in consternation on hearing that Canot wanted slaves. They knew that they were earmarked as the

(1) John Matthews: A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone, p.154

(2) T. Winterbottom: An Account of the Native Africans of Sierra Leone, p.154

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first to be exported; and as it turned out, flight did them no good, because they were hunted by Fulas on horseback, and Canot was provided with his coffle to return to the water side. (1)

The village of local slaves and serfs thus became a warren supplying the Europeans. This was the ultimate degradation to which the Atlantic slave trade had brought the African society of the Upper Guinea Coast. Without doubt, as far as this region is concerned, to speak of African slavery as ancient, and to suggest that this provided the initial stimulus and early recruiting ground for slaves exported to Europe and the Americas is to turn history on its head. When the European powers involved in the area (namely: Britain, France and Portugal), intervened to end slavery and serfdom in their respective colonies, they were simply undoing their own handiwork.

Much of the disruption caused by the Atlantic slave trade was slowly put to rights in the colonial period, often with the active help of the metropolitan powers, who were forced to remedy some of the chaos they had formerly encouraged, and to promote instead the peaceful production of primary products such as cocoa, palm oil and groundnuts. But the significance of the examples

(1) Captain Canot: Adventurers of an African Slaver, pp.168, 169.

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above, relating to the code of punishment and the creation of new disprivileged classes on the Upper Guinea Coast, is that they indicate that long after the encounter with the European slave traders the coastal society bore the scars to prove it. In the wider sphere of race relations, some of the wounds inflicted during that epoch are still festering.

BIBLIOGRAPHYManuscript Sources

Portugal - Since the Portuguese were the first Europeans to venture along the West African coast, and since they were also the first to establish the rudiments of settlement and colonisation in the Cape Verde Islands and Upper Guinea, the records generated by their activity are by far the most voluminous and useful for the pre-colonial period. All of the early chronicles of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have supposedly been published, but much seventeenth and eighteenth century material is still available only in manuscript form.

A.H.U. - Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisbon.

This repository contains the records of the activities which came within the jurisdiction of the Portuguese Conselho Ultramarino. Reports from the officials in Cape Verde-Guinea are supplemented by letters from private traders, priests, and, occasionally, African rulers. These were all considered by the Conselho, which advised the Portuguese crown on these matters.

Six caixas or boxes of papéis avulsos (miscellaneous papers) are available for the Cape Verde Islands, covering the period 1602-1700. These are followed by seventy-eight maços or bundles of similar material up to 1846; but the eighteenth century records of the Cape Verde Islands contain very few references to the mainland. For the mainland, the correspondence begins fitfully in 1614 and increases in volume

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after 1640. Two caixas are available until 1700, and eleven maços contain the eighteenth century records, often with considerable duplication. There are separate codices of consultas or minutes of the Conselho's deliberations, but their decisions were usually included in the Cape Verde and the Guinea caixas and maços, along with the relevant letters and reports received by the Conselho. Unless specifically stated to the contrary, all letters to the Conselho were written by the governor, in the case of the Cape Verde correspondence, and by the captain-major of Cacheu, in the case of the Guinea correspondence.

On matters of ethnographic interest, the records of the A.H.U. are of extremely limited value, and they contain a considerable proportion of administrative correspondence relating to applications for appointments, salaries, pensions, etc. However, they provide a basis for an understanding of the relations between the Portuguese and the African chiefs on the Upper Guinea Coast, especially those around Cacheu and Bissau.

Bib. de Ajuda - Biblioteca de Ajuda, Lisbon

The archives of this Library contain, among other material relevant to the history of West Africa, an important document of the early seventeenth century, entitled "Relações do Descobrimento da Costa de Guiné", and catalogued 51-VIII-25. This has been published in part by Luciano Cordeiro: Estabelecimentos e Resgates Portuguezes na Costa Occidental de Africa.

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The manuscript is also referred to by A.F.C. Rider: Materials for West African History in Portuguese Archives (1965); but no mention has been made of a description of the Upper Guinea Coast under this entry. It is called "Outra relação em 14 capitulos que fez André Donellas ao Governador e Capitão Geral Fr. de Vaz Concellos da Cunha; sobre a Serra Leoa, Reys e Senhores que a habitão, e secunvezinhos, ritos, costumes de todas variedades de rios, portos, arvores, animais, aves, pexes com os proveitos que dela se tirão". (The author's preface was written on the 27 Nov 1625, apparently on the completion of the work.) The title speaks for itself, except that the area which Donellãs covers is not simply modern Sierra Leone, but the whole coast as far north as Cape Verde. He was born in the Cape Verde Islands, and traded on the mainland during the third quarter of the sixteenth century.

A few smaller items of interest to the history of Upper Guinea also appear in this Library, including consultas of the Conselho da India in the early seventeenth century, and a description of the Cacheu-Geba area, which is an unsigned copy but can be ascribed to Sebastião Casão, a lançado who wrote several other letters and reports around 1607-1608.

Biblioteca da Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa

This Library possesses another lengthy manuscript on Upper Guinea in the early seventeenth century. It is in fact an eighteenth century copy of the work of a Portuguese Jesuit, Manuel Alvares: "Ethiopia Menor o Descrição Geografica da Provincia da Serra Leoa".

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This again deals with the coast from the Gambia southwards to Cape Mount, and, in spite of a tendency to interpolate lengthy theological discussions, the author manages to pay considerable attention to the social and religious customs of the country where he remained for seven years until his death in 1616.

A.T.T. - Arquivo Torre do Tombo, Lisbon

This, the best known of the Portuguese archives, yielded very little unpublished material of relevance to this study. The Cartorio dos Jesuitas, 304:36 contains correspondence on the question of establishing a seminary for Africans. Father Baltezar Barreira wrote from the Upper Guinea Coast, strongly urging Santiago as the site; but there is little reference to the actual missionary endeavours on the Upper Guinea Coast.

Spain - Because of the close cooperation between Portugal and Spain in conducting the Atlantic slave trade, and because of the unification of the two monarchies during the period 1580-1640, records concerning the Upper Guinea Coast were created in Spain. Besides, there was considerable Spanish missionary interest in the area during the second half of the seventeenth century. It is in fact quite probable that much more material on the Upper Guinea Coast and West Africa as a whole is extant in Spain, but is unprocessed, especially in the Biblioteca Nacional, in whose catalogues 'Africa' means the Mahgreb.

B.R.A.H.- Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid

This Library houses a large collection of Jesuit records, including a section relevant to Cape Verde-Guinea in Papeles Jesuitas,

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Tomo 185. My attention was drawn to this by Padre Buenaventura de Carrocera. Apart from reports from Baltezar Barreira, who was on the Upper Guinea Coast from 1605 to 1612, there is a memorandum, which apparently proceeded from the Conselho da India, when they were considering the possibility of colonising Sierra Leone around 1610.

A.G.I. - Archivo General de las Indias, Seville

The organisation of the Hispano-Portuguese slave trade is brought out by the records of this well-known archive, but no references to the African coast as such were encountered. A small amount of information on the entry of slaves into Spanish America is buried amongst the records of the viceroalties.

Italy - The potential contribution of Italian sources to the reconstruction of the past of the Upper Guinea Coast is based, not on direct contact, but on the centrality of Rome in the Catholic world. In this connection, the Italian archives are thoroughly surveyed by J.R. Gray: Materials for West African History in Italian Archives (1965).

A.R.S.I. - Arquivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Rome

Here, the activities of the Jesuit missionaries on the Upper Guinea Coast are well documented. The Jesuits collected information on the region before they arrived in 1605, and one description forwarded to them was written by Antonio Velho Tinoco, who visited Sierra Leone in 1578, and was later governor of Cape Verde. The Jesuit acquaintance with this area was broken off in 1627 with an assessment

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entitled "Reasons why it is not worthwhile that the Company should remain in Cape Verde". Letters from the lançado, Sebastião Casão, form part of this Jesuit collection, along with a short letter from each of the three Beafada kings of the Ria Grande de Daba in the early seventeenth century.

A.P.F. - ~~Arquivo~~ Archivio di Propaganda Fide, Rome

With the Jesuit missions under a different jurisdiction, the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda Fide dealt primarily with Capuchins and Franciscans. Their records indicate that prominent individuals in Spain and the Spanish Capuchin order were pre-occupied with the Upper Guinea Coast throughout the second half of the seventeenth century. However, the information is most relevant not to the history of the African peoples of the mission field but to the missionary effort itself, and it has been utilised in this manner by Rosci Corrado: "Le Missioni dei Cappuccini sulle Coste della Guinea Superiore nel Secolo XVII", an unpublished thesis of 1937, a copy of which is retained in the Library of the Propaganda Fide.

A.S.V. - Archivio Segredo Vaticano, Rome

Only a few trifling items were recovered here. The main connection between the Vatican and the Upper Guinea Coast lay in the appointment of bishops to the see of Cape Verde-Guinea (S. Jacobi Capitis Viridi), and the subsequent reports of those bishops. The former were simply formal instruments, while the latter were irregular and said little or nothing about the mainland.

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Great Britain - The Main body of British records on Sierra Leone and the Gambia relates to the period subsequent to the one with which this study deals. The earliest reports of the Sierra Leone colony established in 1787 were of some slight help, but for the most part, the records of the private trading companies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were utilised.

B.M. - British Museum, London

The only unpublished manuscript of interest was Add.Ms. 12131, "Papers relating to Sierra Leone, 1692-1696".

P.R.O. - Public Record Office, London

The records of the joint-stock companies trading to Africa have been utilised and described by several scholars. Letters from the London officials to the agents in Sierra Leone and the Gambia are cited in the footnotes as 'To' a given individual. All other references in the series "T/70" are to letters or abstracts of letters written by the factors on the African coast. Like the Portuguese records, this material seldom relates to the African scene outside of the context of European trade on the coast, but they are invaluable for the Afro-European commerce, especially for the period 1678-1728 on the Upper Guinea Coast.

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