

# Africa's Understanding of the Slave Trade

## Oral Accounts

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Antao Gonçalves, a Portuguese explorer, began the slave trade in 1445 with the first purchase of slaves on the African coast: "nine Blacks and some gold powder in exchange for European merchandises."<sup>1</sup> Portuguese sailors continued this trade until the end of the fifteenth century. The slaves, black for the most part, were brought to Portugal or sold in the markets of Lagos, which were crowded with buyers seeking colored servants. These slaves also served in the development of the Atlantic Isles (Sao Tome, and the Cape Verde Islands) where their knowledge of agriculture and their endurance for labor were of great value. As we know, the conquistador's enslavement of indigenous people to develop the New World followed soon after its discovery, but the Indians, a fragile workforce, could not take the hard labor of the mines and fields. The obvious solution was to replace them with black slaves. Thus began the triangular trade at the start of the sixteenth century. For the next four centuries this commerce would continue to grow. It would become the largest trafficking of slaves that humanity has ever known, as well as the dominant feature in dealings between Europe and Africa south of the Sahara. The frequency and density of the human cargoes extracted from Africa would intensify until the trade's peak in the last third of the eighteenth century. Although relatively short (1800-1880), the period of underground trade that followed nonetheless inflicted a particularly significant drain on an already anemic continent.

## Atlantic Europe and the Slave Trade

Atlantic Europe was slave-trading Europe. After Spain and Portugal, France, England, Holland, and even Denmark entered into the slave trade, which revealed itself to be very profitable despite its risks. Trading on the European coast set significant amounts of capital in motion and created powerful trading fleets with captains and sailors who specialized in the work. With its shipyards and ports, the trade, which created jobs and proved a source of wealth, was in part responsible for the prosperity of such cities and towns as Bordeaux, Nantes, and La Rochelle, while Liverpool became the largest slave-trade port in Europe. The trade spurred the birth of strong European industries whose products were destined for Africa. In the eighteenth century, out of a global population estimated at 20 million, the slave trade put a large population to work, estimated at more than 6 million people in France alone. To give an idea of the importance of the trade, we need only repeat after the specialists that "the figure of 15,000 European expeditions in the course of the eighteenth century should not be rashly rejected."<sup>2</sup>

We will not take on the debate over the number of slaves deported from Africa, justly called "the number game" by Philip Curtin, for the disparities between estimations in this controversy are too great. Between the maximalists who say that the number reaches or exceeds 50 million people, and the minimalists who estimate it to be nearly 12 million people, there is a great difference. In reality, these figures are the result of "feelings" rather than the impartial analysis of documents.

Nonetheless the archival deposits of old slave trading powers are an extensive source of documentation available to help us understand the formidable history of the trade from the European standpoint.

The slave trade has not given rise to many scientific works in Europe, despite the existence of considerable amounts of the aforementioned documentation.<sup>3</sup> A prudish veil thrown over this sad business has made it a taboo subject, for the question of European moral responsibility remains at the center of the issue. Indeed abolitionists were blaming Europe before the Africans even expressed

their own views. Today, however, a distinct evolution is taking place: researchers and specialists on African issues tend to consider the slave trade for what, in fact, it was: a profit-making commercial activity practiced by men at a given moment in the history of humanity. This change in perspective is at the origin of interest in the "Slave Routes." It is significant that this project was initiated by two black states: the Republic of Haiti and the Republic of Benin. Haiti, the first black republic, was born of the revolt of black slaves who won back their liberty at the beginning of the nineteenth century; as for the Republic of Benin, the heir to the kingdoms of Abomey, it earned the name Slave Coast for its location in one of the areas that furnished the most slaves during the trade.

The most eloquent testimony to the evolution of perspective remains that expressed in the organization of the exhibition "*Les Anneaux de La Mémoire*" (The Links of Memory) in Nantes. This poignant exhibition brought to light an entire array of torture and other instruments that slave traders used to tame their slaves. Stamps, cards, and trading logs served to edify visitors about the nature of the slave trade.

Spain and Portugal are following Nantes' lead. To give one of several examples, a "Meeting of experts on the old Iberian archives of the slave trade" was held at the University of Alcalà in 1995. The extensive documentation of the Iberian Peninsula, until then under lock and key, is now computerized and available to researchers.<sup>4</sup>

So today we relinquish established methods of research to take up scientific studies based on documentation, but what is Africa's attitude faced with this new state of things? How do Africans understand the slave trade, considering the notorious deficiency of written documentation in black Africa? What memory has been kept of the trade? Finally, what do the traditions teach us, for they constitute the best historical source in Africa south of the Sahara?

## **Africa and the Slave Trade**

The slave trade extended across 3500 kilometers, from the mouth of the Senegal river to Angola, along about fifty ports or shelters. It is important to understand that it is not in Europe alone that

people are reluctant to speak of the slave trade. Despite the dramatic denunciations and accusations against Europe, the African opinions that one encounters when studying the trade in the field are altogether different. Here there are two sides: that of the victims and that of the slave procurers and merchants. Passions smolder under the cinders.

The first use of the oral tradition to investigate the trade revealed that it would furnish first rate documentation of the production of slaves and their commercialization. African slave traders created a vast commercial network, and as we shall see, the production of slaves was anything but easy. If white slave traders ran risks by investing in the trade, African kings, chiefs, and merchants ran equally great risks by investing proportionately substantial sums. In 1977 the University of Abidjan organized a seminar entitled "*Table ronde sur les origines de Kong*" (Round Table on the Origins of Kong), a trade city on the Upper Ivory Coast. In this case, the oral tradition cast a strong light on details of the production and sale of slaves which was one of Kong's principal industries.<sup>5</sup> The district chiefs and notables took the stand to explain how highwaymen made victims of the Palakaa and Tagbana tribes to sell them in Kong or in the markets thereabouts. Important studies have been undertaken by African universities, notably those in Nigeria where the research of historian Mahdi Adamu furnished details of the slave trafficking in central Sudan and near the coasts of the gulf of Guinea.<sup>6</sup>

More recently, the colloquium "*Traditions orales et traite négrière*" (Oral traditions and the Slave Trade), held at Conakry in March of 1997, pertinently addressed the use of oral traditions as a resource in the study of the slave trade.<sup>7</sup> This international meeting demonstrated the value of oral sources in the case of both the Americas and black Africa. In what follows, we will focus in more detail on similar research conducted by Africans in old slave trading ports and in the hinterlands. The reports provided unprecedented details concerning the trade. Their most significant contribution was to the understanding of how the trade deeply shaped the social relations, language, and culture of African societies. It was not always easy however to get the keepers of these traditions to share their knowledge, for most of them

are either descendants of the "Inventors" or producers of slaves, or court griots concerned with preserving social harmony by suppressing parts of the past.

The first conclusion is that the production of slaves was essentially founded on war. Violence and its cortege of demolition, pillaging, and fires are inseparable from the production of "captives" destined for deportation. Today, the accounts "are shaming," admits a village informer, and they still provoke a passionate response.

Although the facts related to the trade are occasionally difficult to date in spite of the numerous markers that help to situate them (chronology being one of the weak points of orality), they make the horror of the slave trade tangible to all.

The methods of slave production – war, abduction, and sale – barely changed in the course of the long history of the trade. The oral tradition more than adequately allows us to fill the gaps left by the written sources. The latter, moreover, are of no help regarding what went on in the hinterland. The details provided by early explorers are fragmentary and tainted by their ignorance of ways and customs. Excepting the few rare cases of inland raids organized by white slave traders, the organization of the trade in the heart of the country was almost exclusively the work of Africans. In terms of clarifying the organization of the trade (see Mbaye Guéye, 1997), the oral tradition plainly distinguishes the Dioula, specialists in long distance commerce, from the "Bana-Bana," or salesmen, whose sphere of activity was linked to the weekly markets thus revealing more or less adjoining territorial commands. In Senegambia, and generally in all of West Africa, the Manding were the organizers of long distance commerce. Their caravans were protected by armed escort to discourage highwaymen. Oral sources precisely indicate the main routes, stopover points, and fords where the caravans crossed over. Taxes were paid to each of the chiefs or kings whose territories they crossed. The kingdoms of Bambara of Segou and Kaarta lived almost exclusively off the trade. Caravans from these kingdoms headed toward the coasts of Senegambia. Khasso (a region of Kayes) was a point of convergence from which caravans dispersed toward Gorée (Dakar) or the Little Coast. These caravans crossed Djoloff, Baol or Kajor, kingdoms whose sovereigns protected them in order to collect taxes

from and sell their lots of “captives” to the merchants headed for the coast. The Guinean Rios, situated south of Casamance, were also supplied by the Manding merchants who had to traverse the powerful theocratic kingdom of Futa-Djallon. Beginning at the end of the eighteenth century, the sovereigns and chiefs of provinces in this kingdom kept tight control over business in the Rios. In the nineteenth century, they passed several agreements with the slave traders from the coast on whom they imposed their protectorate. Slaves sold in the Rios (Rio Pongo, Rio Numez, *Mellacorée*) came from the Senegambian borders and Manding (Upper Niger Plateau). The research conducted in the tiny kingdom of Balya, situated between the Upper Niger and Futa-Djallon, provided important data on the captures and abductions in this sector. At the start of the nineteenth century, two chiefs, Sako Boukari Camara, of the Fono village, and Toumaniba Keita, Chief of Toumania, made names for themselves in the slave industry. Their slaves fed the caravans heading toward Sierra Leone.<sup>8</sup> The impressive ruins of the village of Toumania are still visible not far from national road No. 1 on the Tinkisso border. In the Upper Niger the highwaymen were known as *Téguère* or *Teéré*; they worked for themselves or for a chief. Many *Téguère* who served these two kings worked on the roads, stationing themselves on the outskirts of villages, close to the fords, or at the edge of the woods. A *Téguère* wore a cowl or fighting mask both to intimidate and to make himself unrecognizable. One could compile a long list of sites of capture and map out the itineraries that led from Balya toward Sierra Leone, Futa, and Senegambia through the north.

The most significant production, however, came from war: the oral tradition is particularly loquacious on this subject, for it concerns the very history of the kingdoms involved. In fact, from the end of the sixteenth century onward, war became endemic: the demand for slaves grew greater and greater. From this time on, the trade was a disruption to the interior life of states: “military organization and the use of firearms were two driving forces of existence.”<sup>9</sup>

The kingdoms and cities born of the slave trade were numerous. We will not focus on the well known cases of slavery kingdoms like that of Abomey, the principalities of the slave coast, or the kingdom of Segou which has been the object of numerous

studies. The wars of this period had two goals: expansion and defense. In both cases, victory warranted the taking of "captives" who were sold to slave traders to purchase firearms, the best and most effective of which came from Europe. "Throughout the trade violence was the common thread in African history."<sup>10</sup> It resulted in a transformation: kings became tyrants; they ceased to be "foster fathers and dispensers of justice" for the people, and became veritable ogres who killed and sold their subjects. Everything was a pretext for enslavement; adultery, murder, failure to pay debts, and theft were all punished by the sale of the wrongdoer. In this way, justice was transformed and served to feed the flow of living merchandise.

In addition to the wars between states, there were numerous civil wars. Chiefs would organize militias. In Senegambia, the Tieddo, or slaves of the Couronne, are renowned. The oral traditions overflow with details of civil and ethnic wars whose only goal was to trade slaves for European goods.

What goods did black Africa receive in exchange for slaves? Here are the principle ones, in order of importance:

1 – In the lead were firearms and munitions such as lead, powder and gunflints; also white arms (sabers, cutlasses, pocket knives). The "kings," "warchiefs," and "gangleaders" needed arms and munitions to produce slaves, and the demand for firearms increased in proportion to the demand for slaves.

2 – Metals, with iron at the top of the list, followed by copper and lead, in the form of bars or ingots. Copper bracelets and cooking pots were much sought after. The quality of these European objects was plainly superior to those of local production.

3 – Alcohols, wines, and spirits occupied an increasingly important place in trade commerce, as we will see further on.

4 – European textiles very rapidly took the place of local products resulting in greater and greater demands, but the Africans preferred printed Indian textiles, like *shales* and the famous Madras. The heavy African demand for textiles spurred the development of the textile industry in Manchester and Rouen. European imitations were later substituted for Indian prints.

5 – Cowries, seashells from the Indian Ocean (the Maldive Islands), which served as coins in many African States, and which

had formerly been supplied by Arab merchants and European slave traders. They were particularly sought after in the hinterland.

6 – *Pacotilles* or trinkets; at first this word meant “small merchandise.” Crewmen could do business on the side offering trinkets such as beads of glass or coral, colored threads, needles, mirrors, etc.

Many other European goods were offered on the coasts, and the trade created jobs favoring urban expansion in Europe. To assume that slave traders acquired slaves by simply bartering “small merchandises” or trinkets would not be accurate, but we can see where the connotative slippage that made a “pacotille” a thing of little value came from. Whether dealing in firearms or in wine, alcohol or fabrics, the slave traders had to cater to an exacting clientele. The idea that they were dealing with simpletons must therefore be banished. As one historian wrote regarding firearms, “several tens of thousands of units were imported each year along the entire coast, and they were not all peashooters: the clientele was not imbecilic.”

Evidently, this massive importation of all kinds of merchandise was hardly the kind of thing that would develop local industry. To make matters worse, aside from men – the sap, the living force of the country, obtainable only by extraordinary violence – Africa offered Europe almost no raw goods of its own. In the course of the trade, the reinforcement of military power was the priority when investing. It quintupled in efficiency if the king or war chief could outfit himself with a mounted troupe, but even horses were bought by trading slaves. At the height of the trade, one horse was traded for ten slaves!

European investments were therefore productive, fostering enterprise and favoring peacetime activities such as agriculture and craft industry. As for the African investments, their first aim was to develop the capacity to produce slaves. There came a point when chiefs would even carry out raids in the heart of the population that they governed. In the end, it was nothing more than self-destruction.

Oral traditions placed emphasis on the rivalry between the different clans of the Manding and Wolof kingdoms (to cite only two examples), whose fierce combat often resulted in periods during



which the inhabitants of entire villages were taken and sold as slaves. The history of Segou is that of a long list of wars against people and villages waged by slaves of the Couronne or Tondyons. Futa-Djallon, a theocratic kingdom created by the Fula pastors in the eighteenth century, played a key role. The oral traditions of Futa as well as those of the neighboring peoples, give significant details of the wars waged by the Fula. The historian, Yves Person, has written that "Futa-Djallon was characterized by a remarkable thirst for captives."<sup>11</sup> The *Almamy* and the chiefs of provinces created villages or hamlets of cultivation called *roundé*. Slaves who worked on these lands assured the subsistence of the ruling class who in turn devoted themselves wholly to the study of the Koran, politics, and war. If wealth in Segou was measured by cowries, in Futa-Djallon it was measured by heads of livestock and by slaves. Situated halfway between the Manding territories and the coast, Futa-Djallon was the necessary stopover for Manding or Dioula merchants heading toward the Rio slave ports in Guinea. The Fula bought slaves from Manding merchants, but their greatest source was war. They waged two types of war: the *Djihad*, or holy war, conducted principally to enlarge the realm of Islam, and the *razzia*, raids called *goubali*; the sole purpose of these expeditions was to take captives to populate the slave villages or to be sold to slave traders in exchange for prized European goods. In Senegambia, there were also slave villages known as "Gallo among the Wolof, Ban among the *Sérères*." From these villages the nobility would take captives to serve as dowry for marriages and as ransom when a family member was taken prisoner. There were important slave markets in Futa-Djallon such as Kambaya and Baliboko whose famous slave merchants are still talked about today.

The oral tradition provides us with valuable information on demographics and population shifts, epidemics of smallpox, for example. But in terms of figures, it suffers a shortage of information. We know today, thanks to oral accounts, that the African coast from Casamance to Liberia represented an especially attractive point of contact; between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, people flocked there, some drawn by the business, as were the Manding, and some to seek refuge in the swamps, such as the Baga and Nalou of the Guinea coast. The oral tradition provides

some very valuable data on the link between the slave trade and the development of alcoholism. "The consumption of alcohol among the aristocrats and among all who shared their lifestyle had taken on proportions that rightly worried the Muslims, to the extent that the word 'naan' which meant 'to drink' ended up meaning 'alcoholic beverage.'"<sup>12</sup> The warriors, the famous *Tiéddo*, were almost always in a state of intoxication.

At the end of the eighteenth century, Abdel Kader, the *Almamy* of Futa-Toro (a leader well versed in Muslim law), forbade the trade in his country in the hopes of eradicating the demographic bloodshed and the introduction of alcoholic beverages into the Muslim country. While the oral traditions of strongly organized states, preserved and taught by griots, are the most well known, the tales of those populations or peoples without states furnish equally valuable details on trading practices. The Baga of the coasts had no king, but at the summit of their social hierarchy was a gerontocracy whose members were the keepers of the oral traditions. In case of war, the community elected a war chief or *Korogba* charged with defense. Independent villages from the same clan would choose a chief only for the time necessary to ward off the danger. To keep themselves from harm, the Baga built their villages on mounds in the middle of marshes or on dams. This kept them safe from attack on horseback. Their oral narratives give details of the first contact with whites at a time when kidnapping and intoxication of the populations by the slave traders (who then threw them into boats) already prevailed. Until the invasion of conquering military columns, the Baga of the Guinea coast were able to preserve their autonomy and develop a powerful culture in the middle of the swamps.<sup>13</sup>

The oral tradition provides a good illustration of how the permanent climate of war created an atmosphere of fear, an ambiance of terror, which curtailed all creativity. A man never went out without a weapon be it a knife, saber, or gun. This fear created and developed a gregarious spirit; one felt vulnerable unless part of a group. Permanent warfare resulted in the glorification of warrior-like qualities in daily life. Meanwhile, brutal force took the place of law, and slavery took on frightful proportions. Soon after colonial conquest in Futa-Djallon, more than half of the population was of

servile origin. "By means of their ideology, the ruling elite made every effort to convince all of society's constituents to respect the principal of the hereditary permanence of social conditions."<sup>14</sup>

### **The Taming of Slaves**

The information provided by oral accounts concerning the treatment of slaves from place of production to port of embarkation is unprecedented. Violence was at the origin of slave production, for the slave was first a prisoner, or the victim of a raid or kidnapping. After capture, the use of violence continued with the aim of mastering and subjugating. Several practices were used to subdue the slaves. The use of religious beliefs was the most efficient, for the beliefs were essentially the same, especially among the Manding and the Futa. The slave was made to take an oath of allegiance to his enslaved status while cracking a cola nut (*Woro Gnimi* among the Manding); or he was forced to eat white bread. Perjurers would be ruthlessly punished or killed. Slaves were also tamed with drugs; keepers of the tradition disclosed certain plants whose decoctions were mixed with meals.<sup>15</sup> The marabout contributed by administering magic potions to the slave, who was also washed in water mixed with talismans based on Koranic verses. The psychological effect was often staggering. In Balya, the encampments in which they kept the slaves were fortresses from which all escape was impossible.

All taming techniques were magical/religious. In Faringhia, in the Rio Pongo where the famous slave trader Niara Bely, alias Mamy Lightburn, ruled, there was a rock on which the slave was made to sit. "Once brought to this place and properly seated on this rock," said the informer, "the slave became docile and could no longer flee his master." He was washed with decoctions of roots and he rejoined the troupe. According to this tale, Niara Bely created six villages of slaves destined for the trade. During the wait that preceded boarding, slaves were placed under the guard of watchmen, monitors of sorts charged with educating them. From time to time a priest or master fetishist would pass through to judge their behavior. The slave was induced by means of songs

and incantations that would convince him of his destiny of enslavement, or *maraguiri*. The practices in Rio Pongo were similar to those that took place in Benin (once Dahomey) or in Zomaï. There the slaves were led through a grove from which they emerged transformed and resigned to their future of servitude.<sup>16</sup>

The sites of occult slave conditioning in Rio Pongo are known today, but the descendants of the priests who performed the rituals remain particularly reticent. In Santane (Rio Pongo), the occult treatment of slaves took place in a sacred forest. Fossikhouré was a river where they were made to take a ritual bath.<sup>17</sup>

The oral tradition, however, details numerous uprisings, particularly in Futa-Djallon and in the slave compounds on the coast. A few cases remained famous in Rio Pongo toward the end of the trade period, between 1840 and 1880. The village of Sagna Sossota was founded by rebel slaves around 1860; they barricaded themselves in the existing village and went on the offensive, running raids on the slaving ports against their former masters from Sagna Paulia. The escaped slaves made themselves terrifying by painting their bodies with kaolin and red clay. They also knew how to camouflage themselves by dressing in leaves and blending in with the scenery. They were given the formidable name of *Souté* ("beast" or "thing terrible to see"), for they spread terror on the roads and became bandits. Both the villages of Konyeya (Rio Pongo), whose name meant "slave village," and Gbassaya, would remain impregnable until the colonial conquest. The old slaves from Konyeya acquired the reputation of being sorcerers, and as sorcerers inspired the greatest fear, they sowed terror in the heart of the population. It was said that the village of Konyeya was impregnable because its inhabitants knew how to work on the spirits of enemies from afar; they confused them and rendered them incapable of finding the road that would lead them to Konyeya. It was also said that they "suspended their village in the air," so that the aggressor could not find it on his path. Weary of war, the slave traders finally left the slaves of this village in peace; all slaves that managed to reach it were saved. In addition, Konyeya offered the distinctive feature of a priestess responsible for "occult protection." The fugitive slave received there was washed by the priestess at night with water mixed with various

ground plants "at the hour when the earth and sky slept." After this bath, the slave became a free man again; at daybreak, he took his place among his fellows.

We will end our account of slave rebellions in Rio Pongo with the famous war known as the "mulatto war," *Mulatri gueré* in the Soussou language, which took place around 1880. This was the revolt of the Soussou kings and free men against the last slave traders, mulattos descended from white slave traders. This would be the last bout of the slave trade before France's seizure of the Guinean Rios would assure the triumph of "legal commerce," and the period of trade would be finished.

As we can see, Africa has a clear and precise understanding of the trade of blacks and its impact on the evolution of society. The informants who agreed to talk said, in substance, as if to excuse the African slave traders: "It was a function of the time period; it was necessary to defend oneself; it was necessary to acquire indispensable goods. The men of that time could not have done otherwise." To better grasp the import of the village informer's remark, let us cite this passage by Major Gordon Laing, an English explorer who stayed in the area of Sierra Leone and Futa-Djallon:

The history of wars in the savage nations is only of limited interest to the majority of readers, but when one considers those of Western Africa from their own point of view, when one sees that they were always troubled and always undertaken by motives that found their source in European greed, a quick listing of these inglorious combats is neither without instructional value nor without interest. One frequently observes a large inland nation coldly invade its weaker neighbors, without anger and without provocation in order to acquire goods through the sale of slaves, when all the while, if this trade had been forbidden to the Europeans, there is every reason to believe that these nations would have long since been devoted to agriculture and business, and that in their way, would have made rapid progress in the ways of civilization that Great Britain offered to open to them with such noble perseverance.

Such is the motivation that spurred me to write a history of the wars of the Soulimas. I have collected the facts that I will recount from the mouths of griots, who, as I have already mentioned, preserve the memorable acts of their compatriots in their songs.

What follows is the endless account of the wars between tribes and kingdoms to produce slaves in order to buy products manufactured in Europe.

If the black trade was an economic enterprise creating a European-African partnership, the latter did not enjoy its economic benefits for obvious reasons. In the end, the exchange of merchandise for men impoverished Africa; the inevitable wars to produce the slave resulted in the disorganization of a society, which was, on a technological level, plainly behind in relation to Europe, the initiator of the trade. The famous triangular trade did benefit Europe and America, but that hardly concerns us.

The slave trade impacted the collective African memory in an indelible fashion and even influences the behavior of modern Africa. The present Africa is only three or four generations apart from the time of the last slave traders. That is why the word "slave" still has a very strong resonance in everyday language. If the expression "slave routes" seems only a symbol, the beginning of a methodological questioning, close inquiry can help to reconstruct the trails and roads that funneled millions of slaves toward the coast. Sayings and proverbs of the vernacular also shed light on this period. In Futa-Djallon, the supreme menace of master to slave in an agricultural hamlet was to say "Next time, I'll sell you to the traders headed for Rio Pongo!" The one way trip contained in this threat was as formidable as death.

The understanding of the slave trade is not a bookish, theoretical understanding for Africans; their culture and daily life constantly refer to this past. It is thus vital to pursue research and apply scientific treatment to oral accounts if an objective consciousness of the long history of the trade is to be had.

*Translated from the French by Beatrice McGeoch.*

## Notes

1. Eanes de Zurara Gomes, *Chronique de Guinée*, Mémoire de l'IFAN no. 60 (Dakar, 1960), pp.92 and 124.
2. François Renault and Serge Daget, *Les Traités Négrières* (Paris, 1985), p.86.
3. Let us underline that the French researchers are at the forefront of the research on the slave trade. The remarkable works of Jean Mettas should be cited, author of *Répertoire des expéditions négrières françaises au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in *Société Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer*, vol. I (Nantes, 1978); *Les autres ports*, vol. II, (1984).
4. Many countries are making their documents available to researchers; such is the case with Denmark which shows great interest in the "Slave Route" project.
5. *Table ronde sur les origines de Kong* (Université nationale de Côte D'Ivoire IHAAA, 1977).
6. Mahdi Adamu, *The Delivery of Slave Trade from Central Sudan to the Bight of Benin in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (New York, 1979).
7. *Traditions orales et traite négrière, colloque UNESCO* (Conakry, 1997).
8. Called *djikoma* by the Malinke, meaning "beyond the river" because one had to traverse several water flows before reaching the coast. *Traditions orales et traite négrière* (see note 7 above); Koba Mamara, *Lieux et méthodes de capture dans les Balva*.
9. François Renault and Serge Daget, *Les Traités Négrières* (see note 2 above).
10. Guéye Mbaye, *Traditions orales et traite négrière* (see note 7 above).
11. Yves Person, *Samory. Une révolution Dyula*, Dakar, IFAN 1968, 1 pp.99, 101, 115.
12. Mbaye, (see note 7 above).
13. Malinke populations created the kingdom of *Moréah*, in the eighteenth century and took up slave trade. Numerous mandingos buried themselves in the forests of the south to escape slave traders. In the eighteenth century, the conquest of Fouta by the Peul pastors drew the Baga toward the swamps of the Lower Coast.
14. Frederick Lamp, *La Guinée et ses héritages culturels*. A very thorough study on the means by which the Baga survived by creating an art that stunned the world.
15. Mbaye, *Traditions orales et traite négrière* (see note 7 above).
16. Mamadi Koba Camara and Camara Lefloch, *Traditions orales et traite négrière* (see note 7 above).
17. Major Gordon Laing, *Les Mystères de la Sierra Leone* (Paris, 1992), pp.193-194.

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