

In the end, this volume deepens the non-specialist's understanding of different, mostly politico-economic, aspects of Atlantic history and, more specifically, of the Dutch 'White Atlantic'. By providing valuable insights into the Dutch contribution to the shaping of the Atlantic and the ways the Atlantic world shaped the Dutch, this collection of essays may prod Atlantic colleague historians to seriously rethink some of the basic analytical frameworks deployed in their approaches to Atlantic history. Nevertheless, if this volume is indicative of the state of the art in the writing of Atlantic history today as the editors claim, one can only wish for a more comprehensive paradigmatic turn, one that will rise to the challenge of producing truly global and entangled histories of the Atlantic world.

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THE ATLANTIC WORLD AND AFRICA'S GUINEA COAST

Making Money: Life, Death and Early Modern Trade on Africa's Guinea Coast.

By Colleen E. Kriger.

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In 1697, Hope Heath, a Euro-African widow and native of the Gambia region, successfully defended her rights to inheritance before a court in London, where she had arrived as a pregnant migrant planning to reunite with her English husband who had died unexpectedly *en route* to join her. Life circumstances had carried Heath far from her birthplace where she had been given the Luso-African name Esperanza, or Hope. For reasons lost to the documentary record, she arrived as a young captive at England's Royal Africa Company (RAC) at James Island where she worked for many years as an enslaved domestic to James Booker, the company factor responsible for managing merchandise and sales. Booker, one of several important men whose actions shaped Hope's life, had the young girl educated in England, and his will stipulated that she should be freed upon his death. In England, Hope eventually became a wealthy merchant in her own right, enjoying physical and social mobility not often associated with African and Afro-descended women in the seventeenth-century Atlantic world. But it is the pursuit of the sometimes surprising details of individuals like Hope Heath and many others interacting with Atlantic commerce — in all their vagaries, complexities, and unresolved contradictions — that is the primary concern of this study, which is loosely organized around the theme of 'making money'.

This book by Colleen Kriger seeks to illuminate the human dimension of a trade that seems overwhelmed by the inhumanity of enslavement, forced removal, violence, and cruelty. Its geographical focus centers around the RAC trading forts and outstations, which spread several hundred miles from Senegal's Petite Côte, south of contemporary Dakar, to Cape Mount in contemporary Liberia.

As part of a series that seeks to appeal to a broad audience of non-specialist readers, including undergraduates, this book is written in clear, jargon-free prose. The author's Introduction foregoes historiographical framing. Instead, at the end of the book, Kriger offers a detailed section of suggested further reading — showing a keen awareness of the numerous historiographical debates that her narrative engages throughout — that teachers and students will find useful.

Kriger brings decades of Africanist research experience to this study. Two previous monographs on iron-working in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and on textile production in Nigeria, as well as numerous articles on the history of African textiles established her expertise as an innovative thinker who deploys material artifacts from museum collections as important historical sources. The current study returns to a more traditional emphasis on in-depth readings of archival documents, particularly between 1672 and 1713 when the RAC held a monopoly of England's trade with Africa. The first two chapters provide a general introduction to the region and its trade linkages both before the fifteenth century and at the outset of RAC operations in the seventeenth century. They include discussions of long-distance caravan trading across the Sahara facilitated by commodity currencies like iron bars, rock salt, and cloth strips, the effects of climate change, the European and Asian sources of goods traded by RAC merchants, and the importance of gifts and protocols in West Africa. The remaining three chapters offer a social history of activity in and around RAC forts, revealing a wide diversity of human ambition among Africans, both free and enslaved, as well as Euro-Africans and Europeans.

Despite the illuminating portraits that emerge from this enterprising approach, however, there is a way in which the framing of this study on the 'Guinea trade', and the almost exclusive reliance on RAC records as source material tends to work against the very diversity of thought and action that the author seeks to highlight. The author's broad claim to reveal Africa's 'role' and the 'hidden', 'African side' of the trade (borrowing terms from the formidable historian Marion Johnson) ultimately obscures the perspectives of many people across this large region that remained independent from, distrustful of, or even resistant to, the agenda of RAC and its African 'partners'.

Throughout the book, the author contrasts the dynamics of the seventeenth century with those of the better known eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Before these later periods, people 'exercised remarkable social and cultural fluidity' and 'seem for the most part unencumbered by prejudice or chauvinistic presumptions' (189). These claims, too, feel like overreach. The process of social differentiation and wealth accumulation that accelerated with the expansion of plantation slavery in the Americas (well underway by the 1680s and 1690s) was significantly informed by notions of racial, cultural, and gender difference that went beyond mere 'prejudice'. Neither was the fierce competition between different sets of European and African rivals a casual, low-stakes affair. Rather than positing a history before entrenched racism, it seems more urgent to clarify the means by which relations between ostensible equals incubated such lasting inequalities. Beyond these limitations, however, the book is an engaging and learned introduction to an important period of African, Atlantic, and world history.

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