

the coming of colonialism only rarely brought about an abrupt caesura, an absolute ending of soldierly ways of seeing and doing; in some cases, and parts of the Horn of Africa are especially suggestive in this respect, colonialism itself had only a slight impact upon social structures which had long had important military sinews and were to continue to do so, albeit in much altered ways, into the present. Similarly, looking at the tragic, recent history of the inter-lacustrine region and the badlands of the eastern DR Congo, some representation of the admirable literature on the role of war-lords in the early colonial period might have demonstrated the value of historical studies to contemporary understanding.

Collections seldom satisfy all of their readers. Despite the criticisms above, this is an admirable, sensitively selected edition with a helpful analytical introduction; we are accordingly in John Lamphear's debt. That said, this is by its very nature a reference work which will be used – and footnoted – by many in the years to come. The proof-reading glitches are too numerous for a work of this sort. The table of contents begins this list by being unable to spell Martin Klein's name, an error repeated twice on p. xxi and again on p. xxxv; on p. xix, the names of Stanley Engerman and Kristin Mann are mis-spelt, as are those of Patrick Harries on p. xxii and p. xxxiv, Larry Yarak on p. xxiv, and Aylward Shorter thrice on p. xxxix. Readers who are new to African historical studies, consulting the editor's introductory bibliography, might wonder whether J. J. Guy is the same scholar as Jeff Guy, whether Sue Miers is the same person as Suzanne Miers, or whether R. J. Reid also writes as Richard Reid. Although many authors alter the ways in which they sign their work over time, these changes are not bibliographically explained. And lastly, while this work is very welcome, and despite the criticisms the applause is sincere, one wonders what future such editions have in this brave new world of Internet access to learned journals. This reviewer is not a geek and has not surfed the Net to discover how many of the articles reproduced here can be consulted electronically. Given the price of this book, such a search might prove to be literally rewarding.

Aberystwyth University

RICHARD RATHBONE

A GLOBAL HISTORY OF THE SLAVE TRADE

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Les traites négrières: essai d'histoire globale. By OLIVIER PÉTRÉ-GRENOUILLEAU.

Paris: Editions Gallimard, 2004. Pp. 468. €32, paperback (ISBN 2-07-073499-4).

KEY WORDS: historiography, slave trade, slave trade abolition.

Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau has been one of the most prolific and distinguished historians in France in the last decade or so, writing in the grand tradition on topics ranging broadly from French Atlantic commerce to political economy, and moving via the slave trade increasingly towards Africa. This particular volume, recognized with the prestigious Prix de l'Essai de l'Académie française and the Livre d'Histoire prize of the Senate of the Republic, puts Africa at the center of the three conventional export 'trades' across the Sahara, into the Indian Ocean, and into the Atlantic, with added emphasis on the significant numbers of people moved about within Africa through slaving. The book introduces the problem, starting with the conventional bow to slaving in the ancient and Renaissance Mediterranean, then tracks each of the three (or four) trades in the first half of the book; the book's

second half assesses 'slaving in world history' in terms of the 'abolition process' in Europe and then its alleged profitability, its political-economic consequences (if any) in Europe, and its effects in Africa and the 'Muslim world'.

The author primarily interprets the secondary literature in English, favoring the efforts of Lovejoy, Eltis, Herbert Klein, Austen and other relatively quantified approaches. The balance of the coverage accordingly favors the Atlantic trade, where over the last four decades these authors have refined Curtin's 'numbers game' enormously. The Saharan trade receives less developed treatment, with Indian Ocean slaving covered still less thoroughly. The internal African trade(s) figures more as an insistent premise than as a topic developed at all systematically. Thus Northrup and Nwokeji for the Igbo region hardly appear, and nor does the ample discussion of internal slaving in Cordell or Lovejoy or several others, for the upper Nile region, appear as extensively as do other aspects of these works covering exports. The western African trade(s) is treated much more fully than those in central Africa, though Harms and this reviewer are not absent. Modern slavery is hardly touched on.

Pétre-Grenouilleau's strategy is basically to critique and historicize the often relatively structural or theoretical premises of the literature on which he draws. That is, he acutely and accurately outlines the opposing positions on issues and assesses the ways in which economic or demographic theory or modeling have driven the arguments; examples include the theoretical contrast between slaving in Africa being driven by economic and/or by political motives, the extent to which politics, culture or economics motivated European abolition, the population dynamics of the trade in Africa and so on. The book covers ground of this sort quite comprehensively, and well. It is a relief to find no resort to Finley's highly structural distinction between 'slave societies' and 'societies with slaves'. Pétre-Grenouilleau consistently concludes that these debates have been overly theorized and have tended to reduce complex historical processes to monocausal dimensions. He then accents contexts within a loose and pragmatic Braudelian framework contrasting 'continuities' ('day-to-day structures') and varying phases (*flux et reflux*), largely in quantitative terms. The post-structural epistemology, however, remains more a declaration of principle than a practice implemented to reveal dynamics or processes not featured in the literature on which he draws; it may not be possible to transcend in a substantive way the premises of the secondary literature from which the author is working. With regard to Africa, although Pétre-Grenouilleau declares a promising historical sort of principle, he does not transcend the tendency of internal African historical dynamics to remain opaque to even the most accomplished and earnest of visitors from backgrounds in European or American history.

The book appears in one of the relatively popular academic series favored by major French publishing houses, and the publishers have chosen to list the other 125 or so titles in the series (including great names among French historians, a few British counterparts, and only Bill Cohen's *Français et africains* touching on African history) rather than to include a bibliography. Scanning the largely very adequate footnotes, one might be struck primarily by the absence of Claude Meillassoux's *Anthropologie de l'esclavage* and Robin Blackburn's *Making of New World Slavery*. Anglophone specialists will often find thoughtful reflections on familiar literature, but the work was designed to introduce the educated French reading public to a literature that few had otherwise engaged. The book might well have served as a starting point for the recent, belated and highly politicized surge in French academic interest in slavery and slaving.

And indeed it did. Inaugurating a debate of proportions not unfamiliar to Anglophone scholarship forty years ago, in an interview the celebrated author

defined *les traites négrières* as purely economic phenomena, and thus not directly comparable to the Second World War genocide in Europe. Against the background of France's Loi Taubira (2001) declaring the (Atlantic) slave trade among the world's 'crimes against humanity', an activist coalition representing former colonized Francophone territories protested. A lawsuit and considerable public debate over distinctions between 'crimes against humanity' and 'genocide' descended into notoriously personal terms, dividing academic historians defending their professional standards from others (including very public figures) insisting on the validity of historical memory. The lawsuit was eventually dismissed, but the discussion continues, and money now seems to be pouring into the French academy for work on *les traites*. Change happens in unpredictable ways, and not always comfortably for those to whom it happens.

University of Virginia

JOSEPH C. MILLER

DUTCH SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY DOCUMENTS ON THE GOLD COAST

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Expeditie naar de Goudkust. Het journaal van Jan Dirckz Lam over de Nederlandse aanval op Elmina, 1624–1626. Edited by HENK DEN HEIJER. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2006. Pp. 208. €25 (ISBN 90-5730-445-7).

KEY WORDS: Ghana, precolonial, sources.

With the possible exception of the Upper Guinea Coast, the Gold Coast (today's southern Ghana) must be the region of sub-Saharan Africa for which we possess the largest amount of published primary documentation from before the eighteenth century. Considerable progress has been made in editing these sources in the past 25 years, but the Dutch archives in particular still contain a wealth of largely unknown material.

The texts presented here, taken from a manuscript in the Rijksarchief, relate to the Dutch attempt to seize Elmina Castle (São Jorge da Mina) from the Portuguese in 1625. A total of 1,200 Europeans and 150 Africans from the nearby minikingdom of Sabou/Asebu marched upon Elmina; but the attack was a disaster and, according to the Dutch, 441 Europeans and 25 Africans were killed. The first text is a day-by-day journal by the admiral in command, or rather – as is pointed out – probably a copy of the manuscript written mainly by his secretary. There follow the resolutions of the fleet's council, which, although couched in formal language, throw valuable light on how the decision-making process worked as the crisis deepened. Unfortunately we are not given a third source – the text of the anonymous 13-page pamphlet *Waerachtich verhael van den gantsche reyse ...*, published immediately after the fleet's return to the Netherlands in 1626. Although more concise than the other material, it would have been interesting to compare this printed account, written in retrospect, with the unpublished documents.

Henk den Heijer's sixty-page introduction provides a considerable amount of new information on shifts in Dutch policy, on the officers commanding the fleet and on the attack itself. Combined with the primary material, it is an enormous improvement upon the account given in John Vogt's book, *Portuguese Rule on the Gold Coast 1469–1682* (1979), 179–82, which mentions but hardly uses the Dutch