

THE UNCOMMON MARKET

Essays in the Economic History of the Atlantic Slave Trade

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CONCLUSIONS: A CONSTRAINING ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

Late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century slave traders in Angola faced significant restrictions on their ability to invest elsewhere than in local slaving. Royal decrees and Brazilian merchants hindered the movement of funds out of Angola, retarded the development of an autonomous Angolan merchant marine, and kept merchant capital from flowing into agricultural or other enterprises not directly related to slaving. Merchants who built up wealth at Luanda seem, first, to have invested in consumer imports, then to have expanded their slaving operations within Angola, and only belatedly to have found ways to purchase ships or begin selling in Brazil on their own account. Short-term inelasticities in the supply of slaves in the highly competitive environment of Luanda slaving limited the amount of funds that could usefully be applied to expanded slaving, since the common results were only inflation and risky loans of trade goods to bush traders. The persistent complaints of Angolan merchants during the decades before 1800 or so were symptoms of an economic structure that was also retarding diversification of the Angolan economy beyond its narrow concentration on the export of African labor. The expanding slave trade also braked economic diversification by reducing local labor supplies until government military expeditions lacked logistical support and local agriculture failed to feed the city of Luanda. These constraints, however, were not absolute. After the opening of Brazilian ports to foreign commerce, the merchants of Angola showed increasing signs of a financial independence that may eventually have supported economic reform that followed the end of legal slaving, later in the nineteenth century.

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The Slave Trade in the Bight of Benin, 1640-1890

PATRICK MANNING

Between 1727 and 1890, scores—probably hundreds—of Europeans were invited to make the 90-mile journey by hammock from Ouidah to Abomey, where they witnessed the Annual Customs of the kings of Dahomey. There they were treated to several days of parades and spectacles, involving considerable human sacrifice, great displays of wealth, and the adulation of the king by all his subjects. Meanwhile, throughout the eighteenth century, directors of the English, French, and Portuguese forts sat on the coast in Ouidah, attempted to increase the flow of slaves to their nations' colonies, and took part in intrigues involving each other and a variety of factions in the states of the region.

All eighteenth-century observers recognized Dahomey to be part of a larger grouping, known variously as the Costa da Mina, Bight of Benin, or Slave Coast, extending from Keta to beyond Lagos.¹ They remained,

¹ More recently, I. A. Akinjogbin has called this area the "Yoruba-Aja Commonwealth," including the northern and western Yoruba and all the Aja peoples. With the partition of the area by the British and French, ties throughout the larger area were deemphasized for many years.

nonetheless, fascinated with the kingdom of Dahomey and transfixed by their experiences at the Annual Customs and in the forts at Ouidah.

Accordingly, eighteenth-century writers developed two main aspects to the interpretation of Dahomey: a fascination with the power of the king, and an emphasis on slave trade as the key factor in Dahomean political history.

These two themes have remained dominant in the interpretation of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Dahomey to this day. In the hands of various authors they sometimes coexist and at other times conflict, but the two are invariably present. The first theme has made Dahomey into a commonly cited example of African absolutism. The second has fueled an approach to African history that may be called "trade determinism."

Archibald Dalzel made a key contribution to the infamy of Dahomey by drawing together the writings of earlier observers and publishing *The History of Dahomy* in 1793.² Dalzel tied together the events recorded from the forts in Ouidah and on the road to Abomey with chronicles of an endless stream of wars and executions. So brutal and despotic is Dalzel's history that it might well have served as the source for Professor Trevor-Roper's conclusion, some years back, that African history was no more than the "picturesque but unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes."

The image of Dahomey created by the experiences in Abomey and Ouidah is so strong, especially as presented by Dalzel, that it shows up in all later writings.³ That same image has also attracted writers with an axe to grind—writers who hoped to harness the strong symbolic content of the Annual Customs and the slave trade to the demonstration of the validity of their point of view. Many writings on the history of Dahomey are largely polemical. To cite three prominent examples, Dalzel himself wrote with the intention of defending the slave trade, Akinjogbin has bent much of his effort to refuting Dalzel, and Polanyi chose Dahomey as a society that would help validate his approach to institutional economics.⁴

By any standard, the interpretations given thus far, to the history and economic history of Dahomey, are inadequate. They are based on insufficient source materials, they include numerous errors, and they are limited to a narrow set of foci. They chronicle wars, they describe the

² Dalzel, *The History of Dahomy, an Inland Kingdom of Africa* (London, 1967).

³ The French and English left the coast of Dahomey in 1797 and 1812 respectively, but when they returned in roughly 1840, they again saw Dahomey through the Annual Customs and from coastal forts and factories. Now, however, they were trying to restrict rather than expand the slave trade.

⁴ Dalzel, *History*; I. A. Akinjogbin, *Dahomey and its Neighbours, 1707–1818* (Cambridge, 1967); Karl Polanyi, *Dahomey and the Slave Trade, an Analysis of an Archaic Economy* (Seattle, 1966).

institutions of the kingdom, and they trace disputes among European and Dahomean merchants and political figures over privileges in trade.⁵

From the viewpoint of the Dahomean historian, two types of work are needed to break out of this stereotyped historiography: first, a complete review of the historical record of the Bight of Benin beginning at least with the seventeenth century (and that historical record, as I attempt to indicate in the following, is more ample than is generally acknowledged); and second, a far more rigorous approach to the concepts used in interpreting history. An excellent way to begin an improvement of the concepts used in Dahomean history would be to make explicit those that have been used in the past. Thus, a thorough historiography of published works on the Bight of Benin from before Dapper to the present would be most illuminating.⁶

One aspect of the review of Bight of Benin history will be to study the slave trade, to confront questions of its nature, its magnitude, and its role in politics and society. Responses to these questions will also be of interest to students of slavery and the slave trade, not only because of the famous image of Dahomey, but also because some 1.9 million slaves from the Bight of Benin appear to have landed in the New World during the course of the trade.

The present study, after a few words on sources and geography, concentrates on a preliminary estimate of the number of slaves shipped from the Bight of Benin, some investigation of their ethnic origin, and a comparison of the slave trade estimates with interpretations given in several historical works.

RESOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF DAHOMEAN HISTORY

Since historians of Dahomey are to be faulted for failure to use all available resources, and since a wide range of resources is available, a review of the source materials may help indicate the degree to which the role of

⁵ The biggest step toward the development of an adequate interpretation of the history of the area is the publication of Pierre Verger's *Flux et reflux de la traite des nègres entre le golfe de Bénin et Babia de Todos os Santos du 17^e et 18^e siècles* (The Hague, 1968). Two recent and important studies are Robin Law, *The Oyo Empire, c. 1600–c. 1836* (Oxford, 1977), and Werner Peukert, *Der Atlantische Sklavenhandel von Dahomey* (Wiesbaden, 1978). In addition, David Ross's study of the Fon kingdom in the nineteenth century will be published soon.

⁶ Beninois have unfortunately been left out of many discussions of Dahomean history. Several Beninois scholars are now preparing theses that will correct this imbalance. Past contributions of Dahomean authors may be found in *Etudes dahoméennes* (both the old series and new series). See also, for example Honorat Aguessy, "Le Dan-Homè du XIX^e siècle, était-il une société esclavagiste?" *Revue française d'études politiques africaines*, no. 50, February 1970, pp. 71–91.

slavery and slave trade in Dahomean history may eventually be elucidated. These are discussed in the following five categories.

The first category consists of a few well-known reports on Dahomey. These have been widely read and have often been the sole basis for studies of Dahomey which have become quite influential. Among the major reports are those of Dapper (based on observations from roughly 1600 to the 1660s), Barbot (based on observations up to 1682), Bosman (based on observations up to 1702), Labat (based on observations in 1725–1726), Snelgrave (based on observations up to 1732), Norris (based on observations up to 1772), Dalzel (1793), Duncan (1847), Forbes (1851), Burton (1864), and Skertchly (1874).⁷

Second, there are an immense number of additional reports, especially for the nineteenth century, which are less well known and less accessible than the preceding. Some of them, such as those of Pruneau de Pomme-gerge and Pires, are as extensive as the better-known reports.⁸ Many others are useful in a variety of particulars. In the aggregate, they ought not to be ignored. A good start in the location of these works may be obtained by consulting the bibliography in Cornevin and that prepared by Da Silva.⁹

The third category is archival holdings. A great variety of archives have material on the history of Dahomey, and some of these holdings are extensive. What follows is a brief listing showing which authors have consulted which archives. None of these archives has been studied so thoroughly that it does not merit much more work. Reference to the works cited in this listing may, however, indicate what sort of information is to be found in each set of archives.

⁷ O. Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique* (Amsterdam, 1682)—published in Dutch in 1668, also published in English as John Ogilby, *Africa: Being an Accurate Description* . . . (London, 1670); John Barbot, *A Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea*, in Awnsham Churchill, ed., *A Collection of Voyages and Travels* (London, 1732), vol. 5, pp. 1–668; William Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea* (London, 1697); Jean Baptiste Labat, *Voyage du Chevalier des Marchais en Guinée, isles voisines et à Cayenne fait en 1725, 1726 & 1727*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1730); Capt. William Snelgrave, *A New Account of Guinea and the Slave Trade* (London, 1754); Robert Norris, *Memoirs of the Reign of Bossa Abadee, King of Dahomy* (London, 1698); Archibald Dalzel, *The History of Dahomey* (London, 1697); John Duncan, *Travels in Western Africa in 1845 and 1846*, 2 vols. (London, 1847); Frederick E. Forbes, *Dahomey and the Dahomans*, 2 vols. (London, 1851); Richard Burton, *A Mission to Gelele, King of Dahome*, 2 vols. (London, 1864); J. A. Skertchly, *Dahomey as It Is* (London, 1874).

⁸ Pruneau de Pomme-gerge, *Description de la Nigritie* (Paris, 1789); Vincente Ferreira Pires, *Crônica de uma embarcação luso-brasileira à Costa d'Africa* (São Paulo, 1957).

⁹ Robert Cornevin, *Histoire du Dahomey* (Paris 1962); Guillaume da Silva, "Contribution à la bibliographie du Dahomey," *Etudes dahoméennes*, n.s., vol. 2, no. 12, June 1968, pp. 9–129, and vol. 3, no. 12, January 1969, pp. 9–162.

Lisbon: Pierre Verger has consulted these archives on Dahomey, mostly for the eighteenth century.¹⁰

The Hague: Johannes Postma has studied the Dutch slave trade, mostly for the period 1675–1794. Verger has dipped into these archives for the same period.¹¹

Madrid: Labouret and Rivet retrieved documents on Ardra in the seventeenth century.¹²

Rome: David Ross has looked at missionary work in the nineteenth century. Earlier missionary records may await discovery.¹³

London: Davies, Akinjogbin, and Verger have studied the records of the Royal African Company. Records of the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have been studied by Newbury, Akinjogbin, Coquery-Vidrovitch, Verger, and Ross.¹⁴

Paris: For the eighteenth century, Berbain, Akinjogbin, and Verger have studied archives of the Ministry of Marine and Colonies. For the nineteenth century, Schnapper, Coquery-Vidrovitch, Newbury, and Ross have studied archives of the Ministry of Marine and Colonies, and the latter three have also studied archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁵

French Departments: These archives have been studied to a degree, especially the municipal archives of eighteenth-century Nantes, which have been studied by Martin, Berbain, and Akinjogbin. Other departmental archives studied include La Rochelle, Gironde, Loire-Atlantique, Seine-Maritime, Charente-Maritime, and Bouches-

¹⁰ Verger, *Flux et reflux*.

¹¹ Johannes Postma, "The Dimension of the Dutch Slave Trade from Western Africa," *Journal of African History*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1972, pp. 237–248; Verger, *Flux et reflux*.

¹² Henri Labouret and Paul Rivet, *Le royaume d'Ardra et son évangélisation au XVII^e siècle* (Paris, 1929).

¹³ David Ross, "The Autonomous Kingdom of Dahomey, 1818–1894," doctoral dissertation (University of London, 1967).

¹⁴ K. G. Davies, *The Royal African Company* (London, 1967); Akinjogbin, *Dahomey*; Verger, *Flux et reflux*; C. W. Newbury, *The Western Slave Coast and Its Rulers* (Oxford, 1961); Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, "Le blocus de Whydah (1876–1877) et la rivalité franco-anglaise au Dahomey," *Cahiers d'études africaines*, no. 77, 1962, pp. 373–419; Ross, "Autonomous Kingdom."

¹⁵ Simone Berbain, *Le comptoir français de Juda au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1942); Akinjogbin, *Dahomey*; Verger, *Flux et reflux*; Bernard Schnapper, *La politique et le commerce français dans le Golfe de Guinée de 1838 à 1871* (Paris, 1961); Coquery-Vidrovitch, "Le blocus"; Newbury, *Slave Coast*; Ross, "Autonomous Kingdom."

¹⁶ Gaston Martin, *L'Ere des Négriers* (Paris, 1931); Berbain, *Le comptoir*; Akinjogbin, *Dahomey*; Schnapper, *La politique*.

du-Rhône.¹⁶ The late Jean Mettas undertook a monumental study of the French slave trade based on local and provincial archives; his work is being edited by Serge Daget.

Bahia: Verger has studied these archives in depth for the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, and has reproduced many documents.¹⁷

Rio: Goulart has worked on the slave trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Verger has also looked at these archives.¹⁸

French West Africa: Schnapper, Newbury, and Ross have worked on the last half of the nineteenth century.¹⁹

Porto-Novo: Newbury and Verger have studied the late nineteenth century.²⁰

Ibadan: Newbury and Verger have studied the late nineteenth century.²¹

Missionary archives: Akinjogbin looked at the Church Missionary Society archives; he, Newbury, and Ross looked at the Methodist archives; and Schnapper looked at the archives of the Pères du Saint-Esprit.²²

Marseille: Schnapper looked at the archives of the Marseille Chamber of Commerce.²³

The fourth major group of sources consists of oral traditions. These have been collected by a wide variety of authors since the beginning of the colonial period, but most significantly by Le Herissé, Johnson, Herskovits, Dunglas, and Akindélé and Aguessy.²⁴ Although these traditions provide, to a large degree, an independent source on the history of the Aja and Yoruba peoples, none of them have been collected scientifically. That is, one cannot distinguish the tradition itself from modifications given to it by the researcher, nor can one separate the tradition from material and ideas gathered by the researcher from published materials such as Dalzel's his-

¹⁷ Verger, *Flux et reflux*.

¹⁸ Mauricio Goulart, *Escravidão Africana no Brasil* (São Paulo, 1950); Verger, *Flux et reflux*.

¹⁹ Schnapper, *La politique*; Newbury, *Slave Coast*; Ross, "Autonomous Kingdom."

²⁰ Newbury, *Slave Coast*; Verger, *Flux et reflux*.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Akinjogbin, *Dahomey*; Newbury, *Slave Coast*; Ross, "Autonomous Kingdom"; Schnapper, *La politique*.

²³ Schnapper, *La politique*.

²⁴ Auguste Le Herissé, *L'ancien royaume du Dahomey* (Paris, 1911); Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas* (Lagos, 1921); Melville J. Herskovits, *Dahomey, an Ancient West African Kingdom*, 2 vols. (New York, 1938); Edouard Dunglas, "Contribution à l'histoire du Moyen-Dahomey," *Etudes dahoméennes*, nos. 19–20, 1957; A. Akindélé and C. Aguessy, *Contribution à l'étude de l'histoire de l'ancien royaume de Porto-Novo* (Dakar, 1953).

tory. It remains possible to do a more scientific job of collecting the traditions, which have not disappeared, though they have surely been distorted with the passage of time.²⁵

The fifth and final group of sources is the information that may become available through the study of social anthropology, linguistics, and archaeology. A great deal of work has been done on Dahomey by anthropologists, especially on religion and divination, but including some on social structure.²⁶ This type of work could be applied to historical enquiry. The languages of the area have been well studied, though the research is dispersed in a variety of small publications; it would be possible to study aspects of the economic history of the Bight of Benin through linguistics. Virtually no iron-age archaeology has been done in Dahomey. Such work could be quite useful for an understanding of the last few centuries, as in reconstructing the ethnic and political map, trade patterns, and systems of production. The European forts and factories could be excavated.

In sum, the sources on Dahomey since 1600 are relatively rich, although digging out the material, assembling it, and interpreting it will be a laborious task. The point, however, of this emphasis on the wealth of sources is to urge that, henceforth, historians desist from interpreting and reinterpreting the history of Dahomey through the same few sources only, as, for example, Karl Polanyi has done.²⁷

PLACE NAMES

The literature on the seventeenth, eighteenth, and even nineteenth century in Dahomey contains much confusion on the names of towns and ethnic groups. This geographical confusion has led in turn to confusion of the political and economic history of the area. Virtually every author writing on the Bight of Benin has included a section locating the towns. Yet in virtually every case significant errors remain, and insufficient attention has

²⁵ For some recent work with oral traditions, see Peter Morton-Williams, "The Oyo Yoruba and the Atlantic Trade, 1670–1830," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, vol. 3, no. 1, December 1964, pp. 25–46; and Jacques Lombard, "Contribution à l'histoire d'une ancienne société politique au Dahomey: La royauté d'Allada," *Bulletin de l'IFAN*, vol. 29, 1967, pp. 40–66.

²⁶ For example, Herskovits, *Dahomey*; Bernard Maupoil, *La géomancie à l'ancienne Côte des Esclaves* (Paris, 1943); Pierre Verger, *Notes sur le culte des Orisa et Vodun* (Dakar, 1957); Paul Hazoumé, *Le pacte du sang au Dahomey* (Paris, 1937).

²⁷ Polanyi, *Dahomey*. Some of the studies based on limited sources are sophisticated and informative. For example, W. J. Argyle, *The Fon of Dahomey* (Oxford, 1966) and Jacques Lombard, "The Kingdom of Dahomey," in D. Forde and P. M. Kaberry, eds., *West African Kingdoms in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1967). Nonetheless, they tend to reinforce the stereotyped themes in Dahomean history.

been called to the discrepancies among various authorities.²⁸ My own impression is that there has been great stability in the towns and, to a lesser degree, in the location of ethnic groups. Unquestionably, however, the names given to towns and peoples by Europeans changed radically with passage of time. Rather than attempt to unravel the errors in the literature step by step, I will present an interpretation of the location of coastal towns in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries (see Figure 4.1).²⁹

Going from west to east, Keta, Little Popo (Anecho) and Grand Popo have been identifiable since 1600. At some points, authors confused Little Popo and Grand Popo or assumed that they had a single king. Grand Popo is also often reported to have been an island, but probably it was always the long peninsula it is today, perhaps with a marshy area in the peninsula. Allegations by seventeenth-century writers that Little Popo, Grand Popo, and Ouidah were ruled earlier by Ardra are backed by no specifics and may just as well be disbelieved.

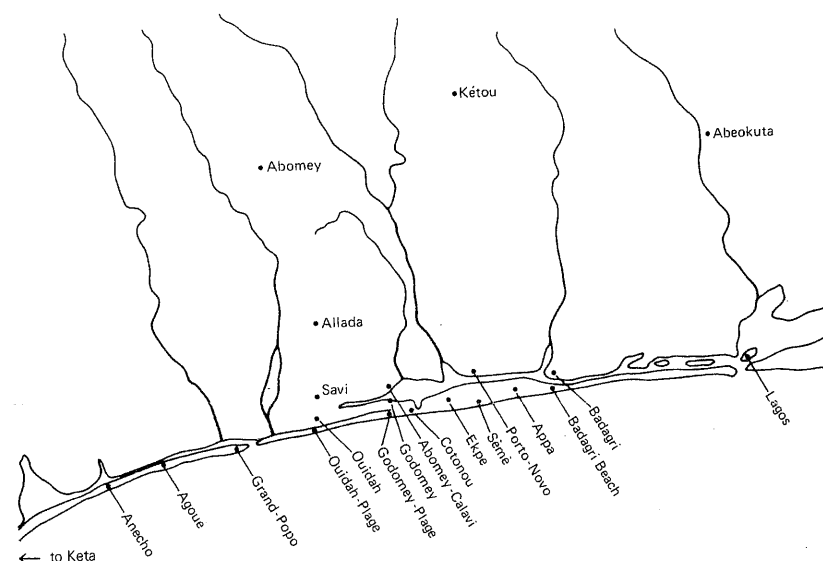
In the Hueda kingdom, the capital was at Savi, 10 kilometers inland, and so too were the European factories from the 1680s to the 1720s. Ouidah (Whydah to the English, Glehoue to the Hueda) was known to the Dutch of the 1650s as Foulaan and later as Fida. The town, 4 kilometers from the beach, was the site of the forts built beginning 1701. Akinjogbin gives the Yoruba name of Igelefe to Ouidah town.

Three main towns have been identified by European writers in the kingdom of Ardra, all known since the early seventeenth century. Ardra itself (Great Ardra) is the modern town of Allada. Jakin, the port town, is the modern Godomey. It is distant from the beach by 5 kilometers. Offra, the town where the Dutch and English factories were first set up, is the modern town of Abomey-Calavi, 7 kilometers inland from Godomey. Writers and mapmakers often confused Offra and Jakin. The name of Little Ardra was given at various times to Godomey, to Godomey beach, and to Abomey-Calavi, in the period during which the kingdom of Ardra existed.

Cotonou did not become a port or a town until the 1840s, when it became an entrepôt in the palm oil trade.

²⁸ A significant clarification of place names for the seventeenth century, at least, has been achieved through two recent articles: Pierre Verger, "Les côtes d'Afrique occidentale entre Rio Volta et Rio Lagos, 1535-1773," *Journal de la société des africanistes*, vol. 38, no. 1, 1968, pp. 35-58; and Yves Person, "Dauma et Danhome," *Journal of African History*, vol. 15, no. 4, 1974, pp. 547-561. See also Yves Person, "La toponymie ancienne de la côte entre la Volta et Lagos," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, vol. 15, no. 60, 1974, pp. 715-722.

²⁹ A complete review and correction of names of towns and ethnic groups will ultimately have to be done. Since I could find no halfway point, I have not cited references for the statements in the rest of this section. This section and the accompanying map are intended primarily as a guide to those wishing to read the sources and authorities on the history of the Dahomean coast.



Key

Current name	Other names given (century)
Keta	Coto (17th-18th), Quittah (18th-19th)
Anecho	Petit Popo (Little Popo), Popo (17th-18th)
Agoué	Founded 19th
Grand Popo	Popo (17th-18th)
Ouidah-Plage	
Ouidah	Foulaan (17th), Fida (17th-18th), Whydah (17th-20th), Glehoue (in Hueda and Fon), Igelefe (in Yoruba)
Savi	(Mostly destroyed 1727)
Allada	Ardres (17th-18th), Ardra (17th-18th), Great Ardra (17th-18th)
Godomey-Plage	Little Ardra (17th-18th)
Godomey	Jakin (17th-18th), Little Ardra (17th-18th)
Abomey-Calavi	Offra (17th-18th), Jakin (17th-18th)
Cotonou	Founded 19th
Ekpe	Epe (17th-19th), Apa (18th-19th), Appi (17th-19th)
Sèmè	Porto-Novo (18th), Little Ardra (18th), Porto-Novo-Plage (19th)
Porto-Novo	Little Ardra (18th), Great Ardra (18th), Porto-Novo (19th)
Appa	
Badagri Beach	
Badagri	
Lagos	Onim (18th-19th)

Figure 4.1 Map of the Bight of Benin in the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, locating coastal towns.

Ekpe was the next port east. It, too, is 4 kilometers inland. This port seems rarely, if ever, to have been under the control of any but its own king, and it was known from the seventeenth century. Because of the many ways in which the town's name was spelled (often Epe or Appi), it can easily be confused with Appa, to the east.

The ports east of Ekpe seem to have gone virtually without visits from merchant ships until at least the 1730s. Badagri and Lagos began to be noted as ports for the slave trade in the 1730s and 1740s, and Porto-Novo in the 1750s.

Porto-Novo traded sometimes by communication through the lagoon to Lagos, to Ekpe, or to Porto-Novo beach (now Sèmè), 12 kilometers south of Porto-Novo. In the mid-eighteenth century some writers called Porto-Novo Little Ardra, in contrast to Great Ardra (Allada). Later in the century, Porto-Novo came to be called Ardra or Great Ardra, and Sèmè was called Little Ardra or, more frequently, Porto-Novo. Modern Porto-Novo itself (Hogbonou in Gun, Ajashe in Yoruba) has been the capital and the main town of the kingdom since it was founded. Akinjogbin's assertion that the capital was 25 miles inland at a place called Ajashe-Ipo is without foundation.

Appa entered the trade in the late eighteenth century and was never very important. It can easily be confused with Ekpe.

Badagri traded either by communication through the lagoon to Lagos, or at the beach 5 kilometers south of the town.

Lagos, known as Onim to the Brazilians, was known to navigators from the earliest days but did not become a place of significant trade until the late eighteenth century.

HOW MANY SLAVES?

Table 4.1 gives estimates of the number of slaves exported, by decade and by exporting nation, for the coast from Little Popo through Lagos. It is based on the approach and the estimates of Curtin, but it includes figures revised from or in addition to Curtin's estimates, and it includes some guesses I have concocted in order to fill in the table.³⁰

In addition to the normal error that might be expected from such estimates ($\pm 20\%$, according to Curtin), the factor of mortality introduces a

³⁰ Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, 1969). A major updating of the figures in this work is given in Curtin, "Measuring the Atlantic Slave Trade," in Stanley L. Engerman and Eugene D. Genovese, eds., *Race and Slavery in the Western Hemisphere: Quantitative Studies* (Princeton, 1975), pp. 107–128.

TABLE 4.1
Estimated Slave Exports from the Bight of Benin

Decade	Brazil ^a	English ^b	French ^c	Dutch ^d	Spanish and American ^e	Total
1641–1650	3000	—	—	9000	—	12,000
1651–1660	3000	—	—	6000	—	9000
1661–1670	5000	—	—	12,000	—	17,000
1671–1680	10,000	5000	5000	12,000	—	32,000
1681–1690	17,200	22,800	5000	10,200	—	55,200
1691–1700	60,800	18,500	10,000	15,600	—	104,900
1701–1710	86,400	47,400	15,000	12,500	—	161,300
1711–1720	67,200	55,800	16,700	13,700	—	153,400
1721–1730	63,400	30,200	18,200	8400	—	120,200
1731–1740	49,000	27,300	32,100	9600	—	118,000
1741–1750	39,200	26,800	4100	—	—	70,100
1751–1760	34,400	12,000	23,600	500	—	70,500
1761–1770	36,000	26,700	40,000	—	—	102,700
1771–1780	30,000	24,800	35,300	600	—	90,700
1781–1790	32,700	54,700	65,700	—	—	153,100
1791–1800	53,100	7300	8600	—	5000	74,000
1801–1810	72,400	3900	—	—	5000	81,800
1811–1820	59,000	—	—	—	24,800	83,800
1821–1830	51,800	—	—	—	25,700	77,500
1831–1840	54,800	—	—	—	50,900	105,700
1841–1850	63,000	—	—	—	18,000	81,000
1851–1860	10,000	—	—	—	38,200	48,200
1861–1870	5000	—	—	—	19,100	24,100
1871–1880	—	—	—	—	—	—
1881–1890	—	—	—	—	—	5000 ^f
1641–1700	99,000	46,300	20,000	64,800	—	230,100
1701–1800	491,400	313,000	259,300	45,300	5000	1,114,000
1801–1890	316,500	3900	—	—	181,700	507,500
1641–1890	906,900	363,200	279,300	110,100	186,700	1,851,200

^a See Appendix 4.2 for details.

^b See Appendix 4.3 for details.

^c For 1711–1800, estimates of Curtin, pp. 170, 200. For 1671–1710, my guesses.

^d See Appendix 4.4 for details.

^e See Appendix 4.5 for details.

^f My guess, based on Newbury, *Slave Coast*, p. 130, and Archives nationales du Bénin (Porto-Novo), Registres de Correspondance, 1880–1893.

significant ambiguity into these calculations. Most of the studies on which Table 4.1 is based are estimates of the number of slaves disembarked in the New World. A few studies, such as Postma's on the Dutch trade, are estimates of the number of slaves embarked in Africa. Other studies are ambiguous and include elements of both approaches. The difference between the two approaches is the slave mortality during the crossing from the Bight of Benin to the New World, which ranged generally from 10% to 20%. Table 4.1, which includes elements of both approaches, is therefore best seen as a low estimate of the number of slaves embarked in Africa.

The estimates for exports to Brazil are based on shipping data given by Verger, and follow assumptions Verger has laid down (see details in Appendix 4.2).³¹ For the eighteenth century, these estimates are slightly smaller than those of Goulart, which Curtin has used.³²

The English estimates for 1681–1700 are based on data given by Davies for the value of imports by the Royal African Company to Ardra and Whydah (see Appendix 4.3).³³ The English estimates for 1701–1810 are those of Curtin, as he revised them based on Anstey's work. It should be noted that Curtin's estimates are derived by estimating a total amount for the English trade to the West Indies, and then apportioning it among regions in Africa according to relative percentages given by various authorities. These are, of course, subject to a margin of error. In particular, it may be that to apply the percentage for 1711–1720 to the period 1701–1710 results in too high an estimate of the English trade on the coast of Dahomey in that period.³⁴

The French estimates from 1711 are those of Curtin, based on shipping data from Martin and Rinchon.³⁵ These figures may be expected to be superseded in the near future by data provided by the late Jean Mettas and Serge Daget. Estimates for the period before 1710 are my own guesses, based on the knowledge that the French were there, and the belief that the volume of their trade was well below that of the English.³⁶

The Dutch trade has been studied in some detail by Postma. The preliminary estimates given in Appendix 4.4 are based on his two summary articles.³⁷

³¹ Verger, *Flux et reflux*, pp. 651–669.

³² Goulart, *Escravidão*, pp. 203–209; Curtin, *Census*, p. 207.

³³ Davies, *Royal African Company*, pp. 233, 236–237, 357.

³⁴ Curtin, "Measuring," p. 123; Roger Anstey, "The Volume and Profitability of the British Slave Trade, 1761–1807," in Engerman and Genovese, *Race and Slavery*, pp. 3–31.

³⁵ Curtin, *Census*, pp. 170, 200.

³⁶ For nineteenth-century French trade see Chapter 11 in this volume.

³⁷ Postma, "Dimension," and "The Origin of African Slaves: The Dutch Activities on the Guinea Coast, 1675–1795," in Engerman and Genovese, *Race and Slavery*, pp. 33–49.

The American and Spanish trade, notably to Cuba but also to the Gulf Coast and Puerto Rico, is known to have taken place from the Napoleonic Wars to the abolition of slavery. David Eltis's revision of the 1845 Parliamentary Paper clarifies this trade for the period 1821–1843; otherwise I have relied on Curtin's estimates.³⁸ Details of these estimates are given in Appendix 4.5.

In addition, other elements of this region's slave trade surely await discovery. For example, several hundred slaves are known to have been purchased by the Danes at Grand Popo in the 1770s.³⁹

A second sort of information on the volume of slave trade consists of many isolated estimates recorded by observers on the African coast. These estimates seem to be far less dependable than the shipping and import data cited previously. Especially in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, they are much higher than the figures in Table 4.1.

The earliest published estimate of the volume of the slave trade from the Bight of Benin is d'Elbée's assertion in 1670 that 3000 slaves were sold each year at Offra to the Dutch and English.⁴⁰ The implied figure of 30,000 per decade is well above the 17,000 I have estimated for 1661–1670, especially when it is considered that d'Elbée included only one port and only two of the three slave-trading nations. In 1678 the Royal African Company factor at Offra reported that 6000–7000 slaves per year were available there.⁴¹ That would imply up to 70,000 slaves per decade, again from one port, as opposed to my estimate of 32,000 for the whole coast, 1671–1680.

Shipping records for the Portuguese, English, and Dutch become much more reliable than previously in the 1680s, and they indicate a total export of some 5000 slaves per year. Barbot, however, reported, based on observations in 1682, that the Dutch bought 3000 slaves per year at Offra, and that Ouidah could provide another 1000 slaves per month—an implied total of at least 15,000 slaves per year for the whole coast.⁴² The figure of 1000 slaves per month from Ouidah was repeated by two other observers in the 1690s, Bosman and D'Amon.⁴³ Ducasse gave fairly comprehensive estimates for the year 1687: 300 per year total from Little Popo and Grand

³⁸ Curtin, *Census*, pp. 234, 237.

³⁹ See Svend E. Green-Pedersen, "The History of the Danish Negro Slave Trade, 1733–1807," *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer*, vol. 62, nos. 226–227, 1975, pp. 196–220.

⁴⁰ D'Elbée, as quoted in Labat, *Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 321.

⁴¹ Davies, *Royal African Company*, p. 228.

⁴² Barbot, *Description*, pp. 326–327, 350. Barbot also claimed that 40–50 ships per year came to Ouidah (p. 335).

⁴³ Bosman, *Description*, p. 343; Le Chevalier D'Amon, "Relation du voyage de Guynée fait en 1698," in Paul Roussier, *L'Etablissement d'Issiny, 1687–1702* (Paris, 1935), pp. 82–83.

Popo to the English and Dutch, 4000–5000 per year from Offra to the Dutch, 14,000–15,000 per year from Ouidah to the English, and 600–700 per year from Ouidah to the French.⁴⁴ This estimate means, at maximum, 21,000 slaves per year and cannot be supported by shipping evidence. It may be noted that all the preceding observers have ignored the Portuguese trade, although it was perhaps the largest. It is a puzzling omission.

For the period after 1700, Berbain retrieved a document from the French archives dividing up the Ouidah trade in 1716 as follows: 5000–6000 per year to the French, 6000–7000 per year to the English, 1000–1500 per year to the Dutch, and 6000–7000 per year to the Portuguese, a total of 18,000–21,500.⁴⁵ According to Table 4.1, however, the trade for the whole coast averaged 15,000 per year in that decade, and Ouidah was not the only port. Labat gives figures of 16,000–18,000 per year for Ouidah in the period 1725–1726.⁴⁶ Perhaps a more dependable observer was the slave ship captain Atkins, who estimated that the trade of Ouidah had been about half that of the whole Guinea coast for the period roughly from 1710 to 1727, that the figure had hit 20,000 exports in certain years, and that 40–50 ships per year visited the port.⁴⁷

Akinjogbin has noted several fragmentary estimates of the slave trade. He cites a 1744 statement that Little Popo, Ekpe, and Badagri each exported more slaves than Ouidah.⁴⁸ For 1750 he cites a statement that 9000 slaves were sold annually at Ouidah, 4000 to the Portuguese and 5000 to the French.⁴⁹ Patterson has cited a French document showing 10,900 exports from the whole coast in 1765, 5000 from Ouidah.⁵⁰ Norris gives a figure of 5000–6000 slaves per year from Ouidah in 1772.⁵¹ Labarthe gives figures of 10,150 slaves from Ouidah in 1776, and a decrease to 3605 slaves from Ouidah in 1787.⁵² Donnan gives estimates for 1789 for the whole coast: 100 from Grand Popo, 4500 from Ouidah, 3500 from Porto-Novo and Badagri, and 3500 from Lagos and Benin, for a total of 11,600.⁵³ Each

⁴⁴ Jean-Baptiste Ducasse, "Relation du voyage de Guynée fait en 1687. . .," in Roussier, *Issiny*, pp. 14–15.

⁴⁵ Berbain, *Le comptoir*, p. 52.

⁴⁶ Labat, *Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 103.

⁴⁷ John Atkins, *A Voyage to Guinea, Brasil, and the West-Indies* (London, 1737), pp. 111, 157, 172. Snelgrave (*New Account*, p. 2) asserted that over 20,000 slaves were exported yearly from Ouidah "and the neighbouring Places."

⁴⁸ Akinjogbin, *Dahomey*, p. 115.

⁴⁹ Akinjogbin, *Dahomey*, p. 134.

⁵⁰ K. David Patterson, "A Note on Slave Exports from the Costa da Mina, 1760–1770," *Bulletin de l'IFAN*, vol. 33, no. 2, 1971, p. 255.

⁵¹ Norris, *Memoirs*, pp. 62, 147.

⁵² As cited in Newbury, *Slave Coast*, p. 26.

⁵³ E. Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade*, vol. 2 (Washington, 1931), p. 598.

of these estimates is conceivably valid for the given year, but they are generally too large by some 50% to be consistent with the figures in Table 4.1.

For the nineteenth century, few global estimates of the slave trade of the Bight of Benin have been published. Cruickshank estimated that Dahomey exported 8000 slaves in 1848, and the British navy in the 1840s estimated 10,000 slaves per year for the Bight of Benin.⁵⁴ The 1848 British Foreign Office estimates of the nineteenth-century slave trade, which became quite influential, have been shown by Curtin to be exaggerated.⁵⁵ On the other hand, Eltis has used Foreign Office records to reconstruct detailed estimates, slightly higher than Curtin's, of African exports and New World imports for 1821–1843.⁵⁶

All in all, the makers of isolated estimates on the African coast, especially in the early years, overstated the volume of the slave trade. As Curtin has suggested, they tended to see a "normal" year as one in which the trade was at a high level.⁵⁷ They also confused the actual volume of trade with the volume of trade they thought attainable. Or, as seems to be the case for Ducasse in 1687, they would exaggerate the trade of other nations in order to get more support for the trade from within their own nation.

Information on the relative contribution of various ports to the slave trade is of great interest to historians. Unfortunately, it is hard to come by, especially since the most systematic estimates of the volume of the trade come from New World shipping and import data. Nevertheless, some estimates of the volume of trade by port have survived, and it is possible to fill them out, to a degree, with qualitative impressions from the literature.

By the 1650s the Dutch and Portuguese knew and visited the ports of Keta, Little Popo, Grand Popo, Ouidah, Jakin, and Ekpe. The Portuguese gained passports from the Dutch at Elmina to visit Grand Popo, Ouidah, Jakin, and Ekpe. Jakin was apparently the most significant slave port. English merchants had come to Jakin and Offra by the 1670s, and French merchants followed them to the coast. During the 1680s, Ouidah surpassed Jakin as the principal slave port of the coast. Whereas writers of the 1670s and before had given most of their attention to the kingdom of Ardra, writers of the 1680s and after gave more attention to the Hueda kingdom.⁵⁸ Slave trade continued, meanwhile, at Grand Popo and Ekpe; it has been poorly recorded partly because it was of a smaller volume, and partly

⁵⁴ Newbury, *Slave Coast*, pp. 10, 51.

⁵⁵ Curtin, *Census*, pp. 233–235.

⁵⁶ See Chapter 11 in this volume.

⁵⁷ Curtin, *Census*, p. 17.

⁵⁸ Compare the emphasis of Dapper and d'Elbée on Ardra with the emphasis of Barbot, Bosman, and Labat on the Hueda kingdom.

because the weaker political authorities there did not merit much diplomatic attention.

From the 1690s through the 1720s, Ouidah continued to be the principal port, and Jakin presumably was in second place, perhaps a distant second. With the Dahomean conquest of Ardra in 1724, the town and factories of Offra were destroyed. Dahomey traded in slaves through Jakin, which it did not at first rule directly. In 1727 Dahomey conquered the Hueda kingdom and destroyed the town and factories of Savi. The slave trade henceforth was organized around the European forts at Ouidah. In 1732–1734 Dahomey conquered Jakin and destroyed the Dutch and other factories there. Trade at Jakin then ceased, and virtually all trade of Dahomey went through Ouidah.⁵⁹

Slave traders complained of the decline in the slave trade following the Dahomean conquest to the coast, though the figures in Table 4.1 do not suggest a sharp decline for the whole coast. It may be that the slave trade of Grand Popo increased, beginning 1730, as the expelled Hueda dynasty fought for decades to regain its patrimony, from an area north of Grand Popo, and in alliance with the rulers of Grand Popo and Little Popo.⁶⁰ Similarly, it may be that the trade of Ekpe increased at the same time—partly as a result of trade by exiles from Jakin, as well as the Weme to the north across the lagoon, and partly through slaves sent down from Oyo.

In the 1730s and 1740s new ports to the east began to open up. Badagri and Lagos were opened up, apparently, by Brazilian and Dutch merchants. Porto-Novo is mentioned, beginning in the 1750s.⁶¹ This opening of new ports is usually explained through their alliance with Oyo, which apparently sought to market slaves at Porto-Novo since the terms there were better than in Dahomey, where they had previously marketed slaves at Cana and at Offra.⁶²

Three separate estimates of the slave trade in the latter part of the eighteenth century are summarized by port in Table 4.2. The first and third

⁵⁹ Akinjogbin, *Dahomey*, pp. 68–100. Postma ("Origin," p. 48) gives the following list for Dutch West Indies Company "lodges" on the Slave Coast:

Offra	1660s–1724
Ouidah	1670s–1734
Jakin	1726–1734
Appa (Ekpe)	1732–1736; 1742–1749; 1754–1755
Badagri	1737–1744; 1748
Popo	1738–1740; 1744; 1752–1760

⁶⁰ Hueda raids on Ouidah continued into the 1780s and then appear to have ceased.

⁶¹ Verger, *Flux et reflux*, pp. 207–208; Akinjogbin, *Dahomey*, pp. 105–115; and see n. 59 preceding.

⁶² Morton-Williams, "The Oyo Yoruba."

TABLE 4.2

Estimated Slave Exports, by Port

Port	Total trade, 1765 (French estimate) ^a	Brazilian trade 1760–1770 ^b	Total trade, 1789 (British estimate) ^c
Keta	800 (7%)	—	—
Little Popo	100 (1%)	—	—
Grand Popo	2000 (18%)	—	100 (1%)
Ouidah	5000 (46%)	8754 (39%)	4500 (39%)
Ekpe	600 (6%)	3716 (17%)	—
Porto-Novo	1200 (11%)	3756 (17%)	{ 3500 (30%) }
Badagri	800 (7%)	5058 (22%)	{ 3500 (30%) }
Lagos	400 (4%)	984 (4%) ^d	3500 (30%) ^e

^a Paris, Archives nationales (about 1765), as quoted in Patterson, "Slave Exports," p. 255.

^b Lisbon, Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, as quoted in Patterson, "Slave Exports," p. 253.

^c Privy Council, as quoted in Donnan, *Documents*, Vol. 2, p. 598.

^d Includes 285 slaves from "Betam" (Benin?).

^e Lagos and Benin.

are estimates of the entire trade for the coast. The second is a complete record of Brazilian ships that stopped at Principe on the way back to Brazil (Patterson estimates that these account for two-thirds of the Brazilian ships trading to the Costa de Mina).⁶³ The differences among the estimates may be an indication of the reliability of the estimates, the fluctuating nature of the trade, or both. The apparent move of the slave trade to the east in the 1780s is consistent with other evidence. By the 1780s, with the wars in Oyo, more and more slaves came to be exported from Porto-Novo, Badagri, and Lagos. This occasioned a series of wars and raids on the coast as the kings of Dahomey attempted to suppress these ports.⁶⁴ The eastern ports seem, however, to have maintained their new significance.

From the 1790s, all but the trade to Brazil seems to have fallen sharply. The French ceased slave trading in 1794 with the Revolution. Napoleon reinstituted the slave trade in 1804, but this does not seem to have led to significant French slave trading on the coast of Dahomey. The English trade ended definitely in 1808 but had been at a low ebb for years previously. Brazilian traders, however, maintained their trading posts all along the coast.

Under the terms of a special agreement, the Portuguese continued to trade legally in slaves at Whydah until 1815.⁶⁵ Elsewhere after 1808, and

⁶³ Patterson, "Slave Exports," p. 256.

⁶⁴ Akinjogbin, *Dahomey*, pp. 146, 164–170.

⁶⁵ Verger, *Flux et reflux*, pp. 294–299.

everywhere after 1815, the illegal and clandestine trade began. Now slaves had to be moved rapidly to chosen points on the coast and loaded before the slave squadron could seize the ships. In this period, the slave trade was dominated by great Brazilian merchants, notably Francisco Felix de Souza and later Domingo Martins. They set up factories at various points on the coast from Agoué to Lagos, and succeeded in exporting large numbers of slaves from the coast as long as there was a demand.⁶⁶

Additionally, slaves were purchased by Spanish and American ships in this period. A number of Spanish had settled on the coast, but no Americans are known to have done so. Few details are known of this trade, but it appears from contemporary accounts to have been quite significant.⁶⁷

In 1851 the slave trade was abolished in Brazil. In the same year, the British established effective control of Lagos. The result was to cut off the main source of demand and one major outlet for supply on the coast. Trade continued to Brazil and Cuba, but on a sporadic basis. The real end to the slave trade in the Bight of Benin came in 1862–1863 with the abolition of slavery in Brazil and the clear turning of the American Civil War.⁶⁸

After that, nonetheless, a few slaves continued to be sold on the coast of Dahomey. The French protectorate of Porto-Novo in the 1860s and the British westward movement from Lagos cut off all ports but Ouidah and Grand Popo. Such slaves as were exported after 1880 seem to have gone to other African colonies, such as São Thomé and Kamerun. In particular, sales of slaves by Dahomey to the Germans have been documented for the years 1889–1892.⁶⁹

As a summary of these estimates of slave exports from the Bight of Benin, Table 4.1 gives totals of the estimates for each importing nation and for the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. The total of nearly 1.9 million slaves exported between 1640 and 1890 from Little Popo to Lagos in certainly a very large number.⁷⁰ Over half of the slaves exported, both overall and in each century, appear to have gone to Brazil. For the

⁶⁶ David A. Ross, "The Career of Domingo Martinez in the Bight of Benin, 1833–64," *Journal of African History*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1965, pp. 79–90.

⁶⁷ For example, Duncan, *Travels*, vol. 1, pp. 110–118. See also Christopher Lloyd, *The Navy and the Slave Trade* (London, 1949), pp. 163–183.

⁶⁸ "The last slave ship appears to have left Dahomey in 1865." Ross, "Autonomous Kingdom," p. 179.

⁶⁹ Newbury, *Slave Coast*, p. 130. A Dahomean shipment of 500 slaves from Avrekete to German Kamerun was noted in 1892, shortly before the Franco–Dahomean war broke out. (Archives nationales du Bénin, Porto-Novo, Q-129-A, Maison Fabre–Montaignnai to Ballay, 7 May 1892).

⁷⁰ If estimates of slave mortality during the Atlantic crossing were included systematically in these calculations, the estimated total of slave exports would probably be somewhat higher. Additional slave deaths occurred while they awaited shipment, etc.

entire eighteenth century, an average of over 11,000 slaves appear to have been exported every year. The high point of the trade was from 1700 to perhaps 1725, with another great peak of exports in the 1780s. The nineteenth-century slave trade was not as great in volume as that of the eighteenth century, though it was greater than for any other region of West Africa.⁷¹

ETHNIC ORIGINS OF THE SLAVES

Beyond the quantity of slaves exported and the point of export, a full assessment of the slave trade and its impact would require information on the ethnic origins of the slaves. Although evidence on this topic is scattered and quite impressionistic, a comparison of observations made on the African coast with records on slaves in the Americas can at least raise some of the major questions about ethnic origins of slaves from the Bight of Benin. At a broad level, an attempt may be made to classify slaves as belonging to the Aja peoples, the Yoruba peoples, or other groups such as the Nupe, the Hausa, or the Voltaic peoples of northern Benin. In some cases, especially within the Aja peoples, more specific identification of ethnic origin is possible.

For the seventeenth century, Dapper remarked that a large quantity of slaves were brought from Ulcami (meaning either Oyo or Yoruba generally), to Jakin, where they were sold to the Dutch and the Portuguese.⁷² D'Elbée stated that some of the slaves sold at Offra in 1670 were prisoners of war, some were contributions of nearby kingdoms dependent on Ardra, and others were criminals from Ardra.⁷³ Barbot noted that among the slaves sold at Ardra and carried to America "there are many of the *Oyeo* and *Benin Blacks*, implacable enemies to those of *Ardra*."⁷⁴ Whereas Dapper and Barbot have emphasized the number of Yoruba and possibly even Benin slaves sold by Ardra, d'Elbée emphasized the sale of Aja slaves.

Evidence from the New World tends to support d'Elbée's view. A sample of 402 slaves in Mexico at the end of the seventeenth century showed 36 from the eastern Guinea Coast.⁷⁵ Of these, 6 were listed as "Arara" and 9 as "Arda," both apparently signifying Aja peoples. The remainder were 6 "Carabali," 14 from São Thomé (meaning that they were transshipped

⁷¹ Eltis has shown slave exports from the Bight of Biafra to have exceeded those of the Bight of Benin for the period 1821–1840, but the Bight of Benin trade went on for another 20 years.

⁷² Dapper, *Description de l'Afrique*, p. 307.

⁷³ D'Elbée, as quoted in Labat, *Voyage*, vol. 2, pp. 321–322.

⁷⁴ Barbot, *Description*, p. 327.

⁷⁵ Curtin, *Census*, p. 113.

there, probably from the Bight of Benin), and 1 from "Terra Nova." No Yoruba slaves can be identified in this group, though they might be hidden under a nomenclature that often confuses point of exit with point of origin. A more detailed sample is Debien's report of the slaves on a French Guiana sugar plantation in 1690. It shows 33 of the 65 slaves to have originated in the Bight of Benin. Their origins are summarized as follows:⁷⁶

"Foin" (Fon)	12
"Arada"	7
"Juda" (Ouidah)	7
Popo	6
"Ayo" (Oyo Yoruba)	1

The slaves in this sample often gave the village of their origin, and Debien has attempted to place them on the map. This evidence shows that the terms "Arada," "Arda," "Popo," "Foin," etc., overlap to a considerable degree, and all refer to Aja peoples of the Bight of Benin. This evidence also shows, incidentally, that the Fon kingdom was well known by 1690, though the name of Dahomey is not used. Finally, only a single slave of Yoruba extraction was found on the plantation. Thus, although Oyo slaves and Oyo traders were clearly involved in the seventeenth-century trade, the number of each appears to have been small. Nor is there any indication as to whether the Oyo traders were acting on behalf of the Alafin.

For the eighteenth century, Labat gives the most complete published account of the ethnic origins of slaves. He remarked that the slave traders of Ardra and the Hueda kingdom sold their countrymen only rarely, as when the king inflicted a punishment. Slaves came from the environs of these kingdoms but also from "400–500 lieues dans les terres"—hence some 500 kilometers.⁷⁷ Labat also gives a classification of slaves by ethnic group, which may be summarized as follows: (a) *Aradas*—these are not to be confused with natives of Ardra. They come to Juda (Ouidah) from 50–100 leagues (50–100 kilometers) to the northeast; (b) *Nago*—these are little different from the Aradas; (c) *Foin*—these make bad slaves, as they tend to kill themselves. They have scars on the temples; (d) *Tebou*—even worse slaves than Foin, they have scars on their cheeks; (e) *Guiamba*—these are so like the preceding two they can almost be seen as one. They have the same marks as the Tebou; (f) *Mallais*—slaves brought by the Mallais (i.e., Hausa), but who are not themselves Mallais. They come from as much as 3 months inland; (g) *Ayois*—these are hard workers. They have lines from their eyes to their ears; (h) *Minois*—from Elmina; (i) *Aqueras*—these make good slaves.

⁷⁶ Curtin, *Census*, p. 189; G. Debien, "Les origines des esclaves des Antilles," *Bulletin de l'IFAN*, vol. 26, 1964, pp. 167–181.

⁷⁷ Labat, *Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 124.

They often have designs on their back and chest in the form of lizards and snakes; (j) *Juda* and *Jakin*—they have scars on their cheeks.⁷⁸

Labat thus demonstrates the variety of ethnic origins of slaves, though considerable confusion remains. Presumably there is clear identification of the Foin (Fon), Ayois (Oyo), Juda (Hueda), and Jakin (Hueda from Godomey). Arada appears to mean Aja peoples outside the major kingdoms. Nago probably means southwestern Yoruba, though it is not clear in what sense Labat meant they were almost like the Arada. Similarly, if Tebou and Guiamba are almost like the Foin, they would be seen as Aja peoples, perhaps the Mahi. More likely they are Voltaic peoples from northern Dahomey. The slaves brought by the Mallais (Hausa) are not described; they might include people from any or all the ethnic groups. Minois presumably means the Gen and Hula peoples of Little Popo and Grand Popo. Aqueras cannot yet be identified.

As a further aside, Labat gives a long description of Mallais merchants that shows them to be Hausa Muslims. They arrived in Ouidah in 1704 but had traded in Ardra before that time. They brought slaves, ivory, and cotton cloth, which they exchanged for liquors and cowries.⁷⁹

Akinjogbin notes that in the early 1750s the slaves sold at Ouidah were Fon, Whydah, Allada, and Anago. The Portuguese, he says, bought Aja slaves but not Yoruba, to a total of 4000 out of 9000 slaves sold.⁸⁰ This may indicate that a large number of Yoruba slaves were being sold on the coast at that early date. It also indicates, however, that a large number of Aja slaves were sold at Ouidah, and does not exclude the possibility that many of these were from the Fon kingdom itself. Adams, speaking of the 1790s, says that the slaves obtained at Lagos came from Ijebu to the northeast and from Porto-Novo and Badagry. The slaves at Porto-Novo came from the Oyo, Hausa, Dahomey, Mahi, and Gun. Slaves from Hausa were brought to Porto-Novo by Oyo traders and sold to European or black traders from Lagos and Badagry.⁸¹

Curtin has summarized the work of Debien, showing ethnic origins of slaves in Saint-Domingue in the last four decades of the eighteenth century. The results, reorganized somewhat, are shown in Table 4.3. The table shows the Aja peoples to have been consistently the predominant group exported from the Bight of Benin by the French, with slaves of the Yoruba and Voltaic peoples approaching them in numbers only in the 1770s. These data may be contrasted with Akinjogbin's implication, noted previously,

⁷⁸ Labat, *Voyage*, vol. 2, pp. 125–130.

⁷⁹ Labat, *Voyage*, vol. 2, pp. 273–283.

⁸⁰ Akinjogbin, *Dahomey*, p. 134.

⁸¹ Captain John Adams, *Remarks on the Country Extending from Cape Palmas to the River Congo*, London, 1966; (originally published London, 1823), pp. 220–222.

TABLE 4.3
Ethnic Composition of Saint-Domingue Slaves

	1760s		1770s		1780s		1790s	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Arada	29	15.4	17	9.8	107	18.8	63	11.1
Foeda (Ouidah)	1	.5	2	1.1	5	.9	2	.4
Adia (Aja)	1	.5	6	3.4	10	1.8	12	2.1
Fon	—	—	1	.6	—	—	—	—
Subtotal: Aja peoples	31	16.4	26	14.9	122	21.5	77	13.6
Nago (Oyo Yoruba)	11	5.9	25	14.4	41	7.2	53	9.3
Ada and Atanquois (Otta or southwest Yoruba)	1	.5	1	.6	—	—	—	—
Subtotal: Yoruba	12	6.4	26	15.0	41	7.2	53	9.3
Thiamba (Chamba, Gurma)	6	3.2	14	8.0	15	2.6	17	3.0
Corocoli (Tem)	1	.5	4	2.3	11	1.9	7	1.2
Barba (Bariba, Bargu)	1	.5	3	1.7	3	.5	3	.5
Samba (Somba)	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	.2
Subtotal: Voltaic	8	4.2	21	12.0	29	5.0	28	4.9
Tacoua, Tapa, Taquoa (Nupe)	1	.5	—	—	4	.7	7	1.2
Hausa and Gambary	—	—	—	—	—	—	10	1.8
Total: Bight of Benin	52	27.7	73	42.0	196	34.5	175	30.7
Grand total	188	100	174	100	568	100	570	100

Source: Curtin, pp. 192-197.

that the French bought predominantly Yoruba slaves, and with the common impression that the number of Yoruba slaves increased in the late eighteenth century.⁸² The term *Arada*, as before, appears to be a generic term for Aja peoples. The term Nago, previously and subsequently applied to the southwestern Yoruba only, seems in this period to have been applied to Oyo. The term Gambary was used in Dahomey and elsewhere to refer to the Hausa.

The only comprehensive estimate of the ethnic origins of nineteenth-century slave exports from the Bight of Benin is that which Curtin and Vansina have developed from the 1848 Sierra Leone census and the accompanying work of the linguist Koelle.⁸³ From the census, the following numbers of recaptives from the Bight of Benin were found.

Popos (Fon, Gun, etc.)	1075
Yoruba	7114
Nupe	163
Benin	107
Hausa	657

These came to 68% of the total recaptives enumerated in the census.⁸⁴ Koelle's list of languages shows representatives from each major group among the Aja, Voltaic, and Yoruba peoples. The significance of Yoruba slaves in the nineteenth-century trade is emphasized by the strong Yoruba cultural tradition surviving in Brazil and Cuba—as, indeed, the survivals of Aja culture in Haiti may be traced to the large-scale imports of Aja slaves up to the eve of the Revolution.

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE HISTORY OF THE BIGHT OF BENIN

The history of Dahomey, as seen from the coast, is divided into several clear periods. The history of the Bight of Benin, moreover, with the exception of the wars in nineteenth-century Yoruba, has tended to be organized around the history of Dahomey. The first period, up to 1724, is a period of preconditions. In this period the literature covers the dynastic origins of the Aja states, the arrival of European merchants, and the question of whether political collapse was imminent. The second period,

⁸² Akinjogbin, *Dahomey*, p. 134; Morton-Williams, "Oyo Yoruba."

⁸³ Philip D. Curtin and Jan Vansina, "Sources of the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Slave Trade," *Journal of African History*, vol. 5, 1964, pp. 185-208; Curtin, *Census*, pp. 244-249.

⁸⁴ Curtin and Vansina placed Hausa slaves in the category of exports from the Bight of Biafra. Surely some were exported on either side of the Niger, but I have assumed here that the eighteenth-century pattern persisted.

1724–1735, covers the Dahomean conquest to the coast and the establishment of the new system. The questions considered for this period are why Dahomey wanted to conquer to the coast and what objectives the king set for the new system. The long period from 1735 to the 1830s is treated as one in which Dahomey attempted to maintain the system set up after the conquest. The question for this period is whether that attempt led to success or tragic failure. From the 1830s to the 1860s, historians have concentrated on the change from slave trade to palm oil trade, and on conflicts between those who favored the continuation of slave trade and those who opposed it. The period from the 1860s through the 1880s was another time of maintenance of the established order in Dahomey, now in the face of growing European pressure. Finally, Dahomey fought two losing wars against the French from 1889 to 1894, and the colonial period then began. Descriptions of Dahomean institutions—ministers, war, the Annual Customs, the Amazons—were recorded during each of the periods, though there has been very little study of the way in which these institutions may have changed over time.

The “conquest to the coast” has consistently been the most interesting period to historians.⁸⁵ Did Dahomey conquer to the coast to gain control of this profitable trade (Dalzel), to cut the amount of the slave trade (Atkins), or simply as part of its destiny (Le Herissé)? A wider variety of interpretations is given for the objectives of the new system. Some hold that the objective was to maximize war and the slave trade, which could be turned variously to royal revenue, to guns, or to captives for sacrifice. Others hold that the objective was to limit the slave trade, for the security of the country. Still others hold that the objective was to carry out the critical minimum of slave trade required for royal revenue, guns, or sacrifices.

By choosing various permutations from the positions outlined in the preceding, historians of Dahomey have been able to enjoy considerable controversy without having any basic difference in approach. All assume that slave trade was the key to the policy of the kingdom, and they vary only in their description of the nature of the key. All accept the central role of the king, and they vary only in the way he is combined with the other elements of the interpretation. The canons for the history of Dahomey were firmly set by the time of the appearance of Dalzel's *History of Dahomy* in 1793, and we have yet to venture beyond them.

Dalzel held to the theory that African nations were inherently given to war and slaughter, and that the slave trade provided a means for drawing off prisoners of war and saving them from execution. He explicitly opposed

⁸⁵ An analogous “conquest to the coast” theme also exists for Oyo. See Morton-Williams, “Oyo Yoruba.”

the thesis that the slave trade had induced more wars in Africa. Following Snelgrave, he compared Dahomey to the Aztecs, whom he took to be the epitome of sanguinary barbarism.⁸⁶

Snelgrave, Dalzel's source for 1724–1732, emphasized the bloodshed in the conquest and further emphasized the sharp decline in the slave trade caused by the Dahomean conquests, despite Agaja's initial attempts to establish good terms for the trade. Atkins, another slaver, chose to interpret the Dahomean conquests as a purposeful attempt to limit, if not abolish, the slave trade. He also went to great lengths to contradict Snelgrave's assertion that the Dahomeans were cannibals.⁸⁷

Among the nineteenth-century visitors to Dahomey, Forbes and Burton wrote the most historically oriented accounts, and they followed the general approach laid down by Dalzel.⁸⁸ The difference was that they were opposing the slave trade, but they railed against the excesses of the king of Dahomey much as Dalzel had done. Nevertheless, Forbes and Burton were favorable to Dahomey, in comparison with the Church Missionary Society and Baptist missionaries in Abeokuta who, beginning in the 1840s, sought to protect Egba interests in the face of Fon invasions.⁸⁹

The first pro-Dahomey study of the kingdom was that of Le Herissé.⁹⁰ As administrator in Abomey for several years, he became an admirer of the Fon ruling elite, though he had no doubt that the French were now in charge. His is still perhaps the best collection of the traditions of Abomey. He presents a narrative that emphasizes the inexorable growth of the kingdom, and its objective of uniting all the Aja peoples into a single political unit.

Herskovits arrived in the 1930s to do an ethnological study of an African society from which many slaves were taken to the Americas.⁹¹ He took a pro-Fon position similar to that of Le Herissé. Rather than emphasize a historical narrative, however, he emphasized a cross section of institutions

⁸⁶ Dalzel, *History*; Snelgrave, *New Account*. See also Loren K. Waldman, “An unnoticed aspect of Archibald Dalzel's *The History of Dahomey*,” *Journal of African History*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1965, pp. 185–192; Akinjogbin, “Archibald Dalzel: Slave Trader and Historian of Dahomey,” *Journal of African History*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1966, pp. 67–78; and J. D. Fage, Introduction to the 1967 reprint of Dalzel.

⁸⁷ Snelgrave, *New Account*; Atkins, *Voyage*.

⁸⁸ Forbes, *Dahomey*; Burton, *Mission*. More recent interpretations of this period have followed an approach based heavily on the politics of trade. See Schnapper, *La politique*, and Coquery-Vidrovitch, “De la traite des esclaves à l'exportation de l'huile de palme et des palmistes au Dahomey: XIX^e siècle,” in C. Meillassoux, ed., *The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa* (London, 1971), pp. 107–123.

⁸⁹ Ross, “Indigenous Kingdom,” pp. 55–223.

⁹⁰ Le Herissé, *L'ancien royaume du Dahomey*.

⁹¹ Herskovits, *Dahomey*. Argyle's *The Fon of Dahomey* is intended, in turn, as a corrective to Herskovits.

and thus gave the most detailed description of the powers of the royal hierarchy. At the same time, Herskovits also gave the first thorough description of the lineage structure. His work can thus be used to emphasize either the power of the king or the limits on his influence.

Karl Polanyi's *Dahomey and the Slave Trade* appeared in 1966.⁹² The book is an attempt to apply his concepts of economic history, which spring in turn from his utopian socialist views—a way of working out his reaction against industrial capitalism and his search for a critical social analysis and program different from that of Marxism.⁹³ For all its theoretical pretensions, it conforms faithfully to the canons laid down by Dalzel. Polanyi argues that Dahomey was trapped by its geographic fate, lying in the Benin Gap through which slaves would inevitably be funneled from the interior. The kingdom had no choice but to take up the slave trade. It protected itself, however, from the ill effects of this politico-economic necessity through a special institution, the “port of trade,” in which the slave trade was sealed off from other affairs of the kingdom. Although the book is full of broad assertions, no real attempt is made to prove them.

Akinjogbin's interpretation of eighteenth-century Dahomey may be seen as an attempt to refute Dalzel.⁹⁴ Contesting Dalzel's assertion that Dahomey depended upon and encouraged slave trade, Akinjogbin accepted Atkins' thesis that Dahomey hoped to reduce or eliminate the slave trade. As no alternative means, however, of supporting the state could be found, he argues, Dahomey was drawn into a tragic dependence on the slave trade, compounded by an inability to make the trade flourish. In contrast to the notion that Dahomey was strong, Akinjogbin argues that it was often militarily weak and at times threatened with extinction.

Akinjogbin's interpretation is little more than another permutation of the elements provided by Dalzel, but his work provides advances in two main areas: He investigated English and French archives, and he included the interactions of Dahomey with Oyo. In fact, he has used this as a springboard from which to offer interpretations of Oyo history.⁹⁵

⁹² It appeared posthumously, and in collaboration with Abraham Rotstein.

⁹³ As an economic historian, Polanyi was most concerned with exchange, whereas Marx was most concerned with production. George Dalton, Polanyi's most faithful follower, has written an obsequious but comprehensive presentation of Polanyi's ideas that shows how Dahomey—or Polanyi's contorted conception of it—came to play a key role in his view of the world. George Dalton, ed., *Primitive, Archaic and Modern Economies: Essays of Karl Polanyi* (New York, 1968), pp. ix–xlvii. I hope to present, in another context, some consideration of the fascinating intellectual historical questions raised by Polanyi's work and its reception by other scholars.

⁹⁴ Akinjogbin, *Dahomey*.

⁹⁵ Akinjogbin, “The Oyo Empire in the Eighteenth Century—A Reassessment,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, vol. 3, no. 3, December 1966, pp. 449–461. See the able review of Old Oyo history by J. A. Atanda, *The New Oyo Empire* (London, 1973), pp. 1–44.

Although the interpretations of Dahomean history are built around the slave trade, it is not yet easy to test them against figures for slave exports. If the estimates developed in Table 4.1 were broken down by port and by year, it would be easier to test interpretive statements. The more fundamental problem, however, is that the interpretive statements are not generally in a testable form. Polanyi, for example, simply asserts that Dahomey was dependent on the slave trade. No attempt is made to document the statement, and no way is provided to verify it.⁹⁶ Elsewhere, however, Polanyi asserts that a “rush” of slave trade began on the Dahomean coast in the 1670s.⁹⁷ This does, in fact, seem to coincide with the rapid growth in slave exports indicated in Table 4.1 for the last half of the seventeenth century.

Several sources imply that slave trade in the area reached a peak in the years just before the Dahomean conquest to the coast.⁹⁸ According to Table 4.1, however, a record-high level of slave exports was maintained for a full two decades before the 1720s.

Did the sharp decline in slave trade bemoaned by Snelgrave actually take place after 1727? The 1720s and 1730s each show a decline over the previous decade, but the trade was hardly cut off. Here it would be helpful to have a breakdown of the trade by port.

Akinjogbin gives various ups and downs in the volume of the slave trade for the eighteenth century. These are generally asserted for various individual ports, and there is no reason to expect that a change in the trade of one port should be reflected in the trade of the whole coast, although Ouidah generally exported nearly half of the slaves for the Bight of Benin.

The sharp increase in the slave trade estimated for the 1780s is, however, of interest. It coincides with the wars of the end of the reign of Abiodun in Oyo, and with the pro-slave trade policies of Kpengla in Dahomey.⁹⁹ Akinjogbin's assertion of a long-term decline in the slave trade of Dahomey, beginning in 1767, is not matched by a decline in the estimates of total slave exports from the Bight of Benin.¹⁰⁰ It could, of course, be explained by a shift in trade from Ouidah to other ports, presumably Porto-Novo, Badagry, and Lagos.

Although the estimates of the nineteenth century are less dependable than before, it is interesting to note a fairly steady level of slave exports from the whole coast. This does not correspond to Akinjogbin's assertion

⁹⁶ Polanyi, *Dahomey*, pp. 5–6.

⁹⁷ Polanyi, *Dahomey*, pp. 17–21.

⁹⁸ Snelgrave, *New Account*, pp. 1–2; Atkins, *Voyage*, p. 157; Akinjogbin, *Dahomey*, pp. 39–67.

⁹⁹ Akinjogbin, *Dahomey*, pp. 164–168.

¹⁰⁰ Akinjogbin, *Dahomey*, p. 209.

that Adanzan encouraged little slave trade, whereas Gezo brought a big increase in slave trade beginning with his accession in 1818.¹⁰¹ Ross has contested these assertions, arguing that any decline in the slave trade of Ouidah must have ended at least as early as 1810.¹⁰² Ross argues that Ouidah's slave trade fell sharply in the 1830s, with the collapse of Francisco Felix de Souza's trading empire, but that the slave trade of Lagos was at its zenith in the 1830s and 1840s. The slave trade of Dahomey did not increase until 1846.¹⁰³ These assertions, while plausible, cannot be tested in detail with the figures in Table 4.1.

The development of estimates of slave exports and their comparison to existing historical interpretations is suggested as one step toward breaking out of the stereotypes of Dahomean historiography. Some steps in other directions may also be suggested. First, a critique of the assumptions made by major authors is in order. What, for example, do the authors assume to be the social structure of the Aja and Yoruba peoples? What sort of differences do they assume to exist between the major states and the areas outside such states? Why is trade seen as such an important factor in the policy of kingdoms? What is the reason for concentrating studies on the policies of kings? For that matter, how can one do useful studies of the policies of kings or nations if it is not clear what their fundamental interests are?

As a second step, then, some serious study is in order to determine the nature of the fundamental interests of the Aja and Yoruba peoples. Presumably there were varying and conflicting interests, and presumably many of these were related to people's roles in the process of production. In short, an analysis of the social structure and its economic functions is needed.

A third step is for historians of the Yoruba and Aja peoples to make much more systematic efforts to include the peoples in between the major states as part of their analysis, in hopes of achieving greater analytical and historical validity. Similarly, historians should make a greater effort to consider more than one or two of the conventional periods in Dahomean history.

As an example of a slightly different way to think about the economic history of the area, consider cowries. Cowries, as is generally known, were the money of the Yoruba and Aja peoples, as well as of the Hausa trading area. What is not generally realized is that there was a steady import of cowries to the Bight of Benin since the mid-seventeenth century, at least. In

¹⁰¹ Akinjogbin, *Dahomey*, pp. 193–201.

¹⁰² Ross, "Autonomous Kingdom," pp. 2–3.

¹⁰³ Ross, "Autonomous Kingdom," pp. 50–57.

the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the rule of thumb was that one-third of the value of any purchase of slaves was to be made in cowries. Now, why should anyone want to sell valuable human beings for money? Why exchange slaves for money rather than useful goods? Of course, from the point of view of any individual seller of slaves, the money can be used to buy other goods. The situation is clearly analogous to that of Europe, which sold goods to get gold at the same time. In the aggregate, however, the Bight of Benin gave away thousands upon thousands of productive human beings for cowries. Is this sort of behavior an argument for the existence of a class of some sort, present through the area, which benefited preferentially from the slave trade? That is, can the import of cowries tell us anything about the social structure of the area?

In order to develop a workable interpretation of the economic history of the Bight of Benin, it will be necessary to overcome the stereotypes of the past but also to learn what is valid in them. If Archibald Dalziel's image of Dahomey has been sufficient to raise that kingdom to a position of such infamy then perhaps, with some imagination, that same image can be used to attract to Dahomey the scrutiny necessary to clarify the basic issues in its economic history.

APPENDIX 4.1. CHRONOLOGY OF EUROPEAN TRADE IN THE BIGHT OF BENIN

- Early seventeenth century. Portuguese trade between Ardra and São Thomé.
- 1637. Dutch capture of Elmina, after which Portuguese trade to Grand Popo, Ouidah, Jakin, and Ekpe only with Dutch permission.
- 1640s. Dutch trade begins at Ardra, then extends to Grand Popo and Ekpe.
- 1660s. English merchants come to Ardra.
- 1669. French mission to Ardra, aimed at opening trade.
- 1671. French and English establish factories at Ouidah.
- 1670s. Portuguese trade becomes dominated by ships from Bahia rather than ships from Lisbon.
- 1702. English build Fort William at Ouidah.
- 1704. French build Fort Saint-Louis at Ouidah.
- 1721. Portuguese build Fort São Jorge de Ajuda at Ouidah.
- 1727. Dahomey conquers Ouidah, Dutch are expelled.
- 1732–1734. Jakin destroyed and trade halted there. Dutch remain at Grand Popo and Ekpe.
- 1730s. Badagri begins slave trade.

1750s. Porto-Novo begins slave trade.
 1794. French abandon slave trade.
 1797. French abandon Fort Saint-Louis.
 1805. Portuguese abandon fort. It is taken over by Francisco Felix de Souza.
 1808. British cease slave trade.
 1812. British abandon Fort William.
 1808–1815. Brazilians continue slave trade legally.
 1800–1860s. Spanish and American slave traders frequent Southern Dahomey.
 1838. Thomas Hutton establishes palm oil factories on coast.
 1841. Victor Régis establishes palm oil factory in French fort at Ouidah.
 1851. Brazilian abolition of slave trade. British intervention at Lagos.
 1860s. French protectorate of Porto-Novo.
 1870s. German merchants to the coast.
 1889–1894. French conquest of Dahomey.

APPENDIX 4.2. SLAVE EXPORTS TO BRAZIL

Slave exports from Costa da Mina to Bahia are estimated, based on shipping data given by Verger (pp. 651–667). I have neglected slave exports from Costa da Mina to other areas of Brazil. The outlines of the calculations are presented in Table 4.4.

The estimates in Table 4.4 may be compared with the estimates of Goulart and with estimates gathered by Verger from a variety of sources (see Table 4.5). Eltis (personal communication) has estimated exports from the Bight of Benin to all of Brazil at 50,000 for 1821–1830 and at 41,000 for 1831–1840.

For the period before 1680, Verger concludes (p. 667) that there were an additional 100 vessels (which, at 400 slaves each, means 40,000 slaves) that traveled to Bahia from Costa da Mina before 1678. His reasoning, based on a comparison to Goulart, is faulty, but it might be taken to represent his feeling, based on his reading of the archives, that a sizable trade existed before 1678. It amounts to one ship per year for 40 years. Nevertheless, I have guessed that a smaller number of slaves was exported, beginning in the 1640s.

Both Verger and Goulart cease counting slave exports after 1851, but Verger gives the impression that some clandestine trade continued. David Ross shows that many more slaves were exported in the 1850s than reached their destination. I have guessed that some trade continued until the early 1860s, when slaves were emancipated in Brazil.

TABLE 4.4

Slave Exports from Costa da Mina to Bahia

Years	Ships	Slaves
1681–1690	43	17,200 ^{a,b}
1691–1700	152	60,800
1701–1710	216	86,400
1711–1720	168	67,200 ^c
1721–1730	159	63,400
1731–1740	123	49,000
1741–1750	98	39,200
1751–1760	101	34,400 ^d
1761–1770	120	36,000
1771–1780	100	30,000
1781–1790	109	32,700
1791–1800	177	53,100
1801–1810	243	72,900
1811–1820	192	59,000 ^{e,f}
1821–1830	148	51,800 ^g
1831–1840	218	54,800 ^{h,i}
1841–1850	299	63,000

^a 1678–1815—ships departing Bahia for Costa da Mina, carrying tobacco (Verger, *Flux et reflux*, pp. 653–654). I have assumed that each ship returned with a slave cargo in the same year that it left.

^b Assuming 400 slaves per ship for the years up to 1756 (Verger, *Flux et reflux*, p. 666).

^c Figures for ship departures are missing for the years 1715–1725 and 1734–1738. Verger has suggested a total of 200 ships for those years, or 12.5 ships per year with 400 slaves per ship. I have placed this average amount in each of the years lacking data (Verger, *Flux et reflux*, pp. 653–654, 666).

^d Assuming 300 slaves per ship for the period from 1757 through 1815 (Verger, *Flux et reflux*, p. 666).

^e 1815–1830—ships departing Bahia for Costa da Mina carrying tobacco (Verger, *Flux et reflux*, p. 655).

^f Assuming 350 slaves per ship for the period from 1816 to the end of the trade (Verger, *Flux et reflux*, p. 667).

^g Figures for departures are missing for the years 1828–1837. For 1815–1827, 158 ships departed (12 per year), and for 1838–1851, 377 ships departed (29 per year). Interpolating, I have assumed 20 ships per year for each of the years lacking data (Verger, *Flux et reflux*, pp. 655–657, 666–667).

^h Adding vessels destined for the southern hemisphere which went instead to Costa da Mina, and subtracting vessels engaged in legitimate trade, Verger estimated that 600 vessels traded in slaves between 1815 and 1851, which is 80% of the total estimated departures of 757 from 1815 to 1851 (Verger, *Flux et reflux*, pp. 666–667). One could assume 80% of the departures each year represent slaving vessels, or, as I have done here, assume 100% of the vessels, 1815–1833, were slavers, and 60% of those 1834–1851 were slavers, the rest trading in palm products.

ⁱ 1831–1850—passports to ships departing Bahia for Costa da Mina (Verger, *Flux et reflux*, p. 657). These figures are 50–70% of the equivalent figures given by the British consulate, which are also listed by Verger.

TABLE 4.5

Comparison of Three Estimates of the Bahia Trade

Decade	Goulart (as given by Curtin, p. 207)	Estimates collected by Verger (pp. 664-665)	Estimates based on Verger's shipping data
1681-1690	—	—	17,200
1691-1700	—	—	60,800
1701-1710	83,700	—	86,400
1711-1720	83,700	—	67,200
1721-1730	79,200	—	63,400
1731-1740	56,800	47,500	49,000
1741-1750	55,000	41,468 (9 years)	39,200
1751-1760	45,900	24,615 (6 years)	34,400
1761-1770	38,700	19,267 (6 years)	36,000
1771-1780	29,800	15,554 (6 years)	30,000
1781-1790	24,200	12,234 (6 years)	32,700
1791-1800	53,600	40,842 (8 years)	53,100
1801-1810	54,900	38,339 (8 years)	72,900
1811-1820	—	55,352 (8 years)	59,000
1821-1830	—	72,066	51,800
1831-1840	—	—	54,800
1841-1850	—	—	63,000

APPENDIX 4.3. ENGLISH SLAVE EXPORTS

For the period after 1700, I have followed Curtin's estimates, as he revised them based on Anstey's findings (Curtin, "Measuring the Atlantic Slave Trade," p. 123). For the period from 1681 to 1700 I have estimated slave exports from import values given by Davies, with a guess added for interlopers in the 1690s (see Table 4.6). For the 1670s I have made a guess.

Royal African Company (RAC) cowrie exports (Davies, *Royal African Company*, p. 357) correlate very well with RAC exports to Ardra and Whydah. It may be assumed that most of the cowries exported went to Ardra and Whydah. The low figures for cowrie exports in the 1670s, therefore, indicate very little RAC trade with Ardra and Whydah. This is the basis for my guess of the low figure of 5000 slaves exported by the English in the 1670s.

APPENDIX 4.4. DUTCH SLAVE EXPORTS

Postma ("Dimension," pp. 239-246) gives estimates for the whole Dutch slave trade. These are not broken down by regions, except that he has assumed two-thirds of the trade to be from Guinea, and one-third to be

TABLE 4.6

English Slave Exports, 1681-1700

Year	Royal African Company exports to Ardra and Whydah (pounds) ^a	Price (pounds) ^b	Estimated slave exports
1681	8275	3	2758
1682	10,633	3	3544
1683	14,097	3	4699
1684	6869	3	2290
1685	16,974	3	5658
1686	—	—	— ^c
1687	—	—	—
1688	6607	3	2202
1689	1266	3	422
1690	3550	3	1183 ^d
1691	—	—	—
1692	5940	4	1485
1693	9414	4	2353
1694	3864	4	966
1695	2303	4	576
1696	5126	4	1282
1697	1979	4	495
1698	5231	4	1308
1699	—	—	— ^e
1700	—	—	— ^f

^a From Davies, *Royal African Company*, p. 233.

^b Prices are my guesses, based on Davies, *Royal African Company*, pp. 236-237. If higher prices were used, estimated slave exports would decrease.

^c No returns are available for 1686 and 1687.

^d The total of slave export estimates for 8 years in the 1680s is 22,800. I have used this as the estimate.

^e No returns are available for 1699 and 1700.

^f The total of the slave estimates for 7 years in the 1690s is 8500. I have added a guess of 10,000, partly on the strength of D'Amon's statement (Roussier, p. 106) that English interlopers accounted for 10% (presumably of the entire trade). This gives an overall estimate of the English trade of the 1690s, of 18,500 slaves.

from Angola and Loango. I have assigned to the Bight of Benin portions of Postma's estimated Dutch exports from West Africa, as indicated in Table 4.7.

APPENDIX 4.5. SPANISH AND AMERICAN SLAVE EXPORTS

The estimates in Table 4.8 are based on Eltis's figures for slave exports from the Bight of Benin to Cuba and Puerto Rico for 1821-1843 (personal

TABLE 4.7
Dutch Slave Exports

Years	Total slaves	West Africa (two-thirds of total)	Bight of Benin
1630-1674	70,000	46,200	—
1675-1680	18,302	12,079	—
1630-1680	—	—	39,000 ^a
1681-1690	15,437	10,188	10,188 ^b
1691-1700	23,155	15,282	15,282
1701-1710	23,822	15,723	12,500
1711-1720	23,624	15,592	13,700
1721-1730	32,639	21,542	8400
1731-1740	47,794	31,544	8600 ^c
1741-1750	55,243	36,460	— ^d
1751-1760	51,350	33,891	500
1761-1770	62,921	41,528	—
1771-1780	40,300	26,598	600

^a For the period 1630-1680, I took two-thirds of the total for West Africa and apportioned it arbitrarily, following qualitative indications given by Postma ("Dimension," p. 240), as follows:

1641-1650	9000
1651-1660	6000
1661-1670	12,000
1671-1680	12,000

^b For the period 1681-1730, I have assigned to the Bight of Benin the portions of West African exports indicated by Postma ("Origin," Table 2, p. 43). The portions are, 100% (1681-1690), 100% (1691-1700), 80% (1701-1710), 88% (1711-1720), and 39% (1721-1730).

^c Postma enumerated 7600 slave exports from the Bight of Benin, 1730-1735 ("Origin," p. 43). To this I have added a guess of an additional 2000 for the period 1736-1740.

^d Estimates for the period beginning 1741 are based on Postma's Table 3 ("Origin," pp. 44-47). Recorded Bight of Benin exports are taken as a portion of total recorded West African exports, and this factor is multiplied by estimated total West African exports for the decade.

communication), and on Curtin's estimates for Cuban slave imports, derived from figures on the rate of Cuban slave population growth (Curtin, *Census*, p. 234).

I have assumed that 31% of the Curtin's slave imports to Cuba came from the Bight of Benin: Curtin developed this figure from the 1848 Sierra Leone census and Foreign Office records (Curtin, *Census*, p. 247). Eltis, however, has assumed that the proportion of Cuban and Puerto Rico slave imports from the Bight of Benin ranged from 18.7% to 28.3% in the years 1821-1840.

TABLE 4.8
Slave Trade between Bight of Benin and Cuba

Decade	Benin exports to Cuba (Eltis)	Cuban imports ^a	Benin exports (31% Cuban imports)
1811-1820	—	79,900	24,800
1821-1830	25,679	112,500	34,900
1831-1840	50,912	126,100	39,100
1841-1850	11,020 ^b	47,600	14,800
1851-1860	—	123,300	38,200
1861-1870	—	61,500	19,100

^a From Curtin, *Census*, p. 234. I have chosen Curtin's figures as the preferred estimates for 1811-1820 and 1851-1870, and Eltis's figures as preferred for 1821-1840. For 1841-1850 I added 7000 to Eltis's estimate for 1841-1843. In addition, I have guessed that a trickle of this trade began in the years before 1811.

^b 1841-1843 only.

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