The region between the Senegal River and Sierra Leone saw the onset of the first trans-Atlantic slave trade in the sixteenth century. Drawing on many new sources, Toby Green challenges current quantitative approaches to the history of the slave trade. New data on slave origins can show how and why Western African societies responded to Atlantic pressures. Green argues that answering these questions requires a cultural framework and uses the idea of creolisation – the formation of mixed cultural communities in the era of plantation societies – to argue that preceding social patterns in both Africa and Europe were crucial. Major impacts of the sixteenth-century slave trade included political fragmentation, changes in identity, and the reorganisation of ritual and social patterns. The book shows which peoples were enslaved, why they were vulnerable and the consequences in Africa and beyond.

Toby Green is currently a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at King’s College London. He has published several books, the most recent of which is *Inquisition: The Reign of Fear* (2007). His books have been translated into ten languages. He is a director of the Amilcar Cabral Institute for Economic and Political Research. His articles have appeared in *History in Africa*, *The Journal of Atlantic Studies*, *Journal of Mande Studies*, and *Slavery and Abolition*. Green has also written widely for the British press, including book reviews for the *Independent* and features for *Financial Times*, the *Observer*, and the *Times*. He has given lectures at various institutes, including the Universities of Cambridge, Lisbon, Oxford, and Paris-Sorbonne as well as Duke University and the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.
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The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa, 1300–1589

TOBY GREEN
King’s College London
For Emily, Flora and Lily, whose love and support made this book possible, and for Paulo, without whose generosity of spirit it would not exist.

In memory of those whose suffering is the subject of this book.
Since God created this world, wherever prosperity is found, people will follow it, and in turn they will have relations.

Sayo Mane

---

1 NCAC/OHAD, Cassette 550A: an elder from Kolda, Casamance; interview and translation by Bakary Sidibe.
Contents

List of Maps
Acknowledgements
Abbreviations
Glossary
Introduction: Rethinking the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade from a Cultural Perspective

PART ONE     THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ATLANTIC CREOLE CULTURE IN WESTERN AFRICA, CIRCA 1300–1550

1.     Culture, Trade and Diaspora in Pre-Atlantic Western Africa     31
2.     The Formation of Early Atlantic Societies in Senegambia and Upper Guinea     69
3.     The Settlement of Cabo Verde and Early Signs of Creolisation in Western Africa     95
4.     The New Christian Diaspora in Cabo Verde and the Rise of a Creole Culture in Western Africa     120
5.     The New Christian/Kassanké Alliance and the Consolidation of Creolisation     149

PART TWO   CREOLISATION AND SLAVERY: WESTERN AFRICA AND THE PAN-ATLANTIC, CIRCA 1492–1589

6.     The Early Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade from Western Africa     177
7.     Trading Ideas and Trading People: The Boom in Contraband Trade from Western Africa, circa 1550–1580     208
8. Cycles of War and Trade in the African Atlantic, circa 1550–1580 231
9. Creole Societies and the Pan-Atlantic in Late-Sixteenth-Century Western Africa and America 260
Conclusion: Lineages, Societies and the Slave Trade in Western Africa to 1589 278

Bibliography 287
Index 325
Maps

1. Map of Western Africa: Rivers of Guinea and Cabo Verde Islands  page 6
2. Map of Peoples and Cultures in Upper Guinea, and the Zones of Their Territories  32
3. Map of Extent of Kaabu Federation  47
4. Atlantic World Circa 1550  190
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This book would not have been possible without the consistent support of many institutions and people. Over the years I have been overwhelmed by the generosity of intellect and belief, which so many friends have shown in this work as it has evolved. It is my hope simply that I may in the future be able to respond in kind.

I would never have written this book if I had not first researched and written a travel book called *Meeting the Invisible Man*, which was published in 2001. My thanks to Ion Trewin for commissioning that book and giving me the chance to think properly for the first time about West African peoples and histories; to Ian Rakoff, who helped me greatly on that book, and whose own decades-long engagement and work on pre-colonial Africa certainly influenced me; and, as always, to my friend in Guinea-Bissau, El Hadji Mamadou Kabir Ndiaye.

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My research first took shape during my PhD at the Centre of West African Studies (CWAS), University of Birmingham. It would never have begun had it not been for my doctoral supervisor, Paulo Farias. I well remember our first meeting, one autumn’s afternoon in 2001, in Birmingham; we spoke for over two hours, and it was I who had to leave in order to catch my train. This was just a foretaste of the immense generosity of spirit and intellect which it has been my lasting privilege to receive from Paulo. Subsequently, it was Paulo who also provided the key recommendation that I focus this manuscript on the formative sixteenth century and leave the seventeenth for a subsequent work. In every way, this book could not and would not now exist without his input: I can only hope that it in some way measures up to the extraordinary confidence and belief which he has always shown in me.

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...saddening process in the history of the world. They have always reminded me of the essential humanity which I try to bring to my work, and which I hope manages to emerge along with the many emotions which surround, and have surrounded, the subject of this book.

Cambridge, May 2011
Abbreviations

AG As Gavetas da Torre do Tombo (1960–1975)
AGI Archivo General de las Indias
AGN Archivo General de la Nación, Bogotá
AHCVC Arquivo Histórico Nacional de Cabo Verde
AHP Arquivo Histórico Português (Freire, Anselmo Braancamp et al. (eds.))
AHU Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino
ANS/NP Archivo Notarial de Santander, Notaria Primera de Pamplona (documentary resource in the AGN)
ASV Archivio Segreto Vaticano
BA Biblioteca da Ajuda
CEA Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History (Hopkins/Levtzion eds.)
CGSO Conselho Geral do Santo Ofício (documentary resource in IAN/TT)
CN Coleção de Noticias para a Historia e Geografia das Nações Ultramarinas, que Vivem nos Dominios Portuguezes, ou lhes são Visinhas.
CRP Crónicas de Rui de Pina (Almeida ed.)
HGCV: CD História Geral de Cabo Verde: Corpo Documental
IAN/TT Instituto dos Arquivos Nacionais da Torre do Tombo
MMAI Monumenta Misonária Africana: Primeira Série.
   (Brásio, António ed.)
MMAII Monumenta Misonária Africana: Segunda Série.
   (Brásio, António ed.)
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NCAC/OHAD</td>
<td>National Council for Arts and Culture, Oral History and Antiquities Division, Banjul</td>
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<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Negros y Esclavos (documentary resource in the AGN)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGC</td>
<td><em>A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels: Consisting of The Most Esteemed Relations, Which Have Hitherto Been Published in any Language: Comprehending Every Thing Remarkable in its Kind, in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America.</em></td>
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<td>NPB</td>
<td>Notaría Primera de Bogotá (documentary resource in the AGN)</td>
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<td>NT</td>
<td>Archivo Histórico de Boyacá, Notaría Primera de Tunja (documentary resource in the AGN)</td>
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<td>PV</td>
<td><em>Primeira Visitação do Santo Offício Às Partes do Brasil: Denunciações da Bahia, 1591–1593.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>RD</td>
<td><em>Raccolta di Documenti e Studi Publiccati Dalla R. Commissione Colombiana del Quarto Centenario della Scoperta dell'America</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>SG</td>
<td>Sociedade da Geografia</td>
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(Note: AHU documents are usually without folio numbers, so it is only possible to refer to the document in the reference).
Glossary

Alcalde  Mayor (in Portuguese: *alcaide*).

Alforria  Act by which masters freed slaves in their wills.

Almadía  Word of Arabic origin used by Portuguese to refer to canoes in West Africa in the fifteenth century and by Columbus when he first reached the New World.

Almoravid  North African warriors, many of them Berbers, who swept into Spain in the late eleventh century and took over control of the affairs of the land, which had formerly been controlled by the Caliphate of Córdoba.

Almoxarifado  The institution handling state finances in a particular locale (in Spanish: *Almojarifado*).

Almoxarife  Administrator of royal domains.

Arrobas  Measure of weight equivalent to approximately fifteen kilogrammes.


Auto da Fe  Inquisitorial procession culminating in the reading of sentences and the punishment of the condemned.

Barafula  Measure of cloth made in Cabo Verde used as a measure of exchange in Guiné and known as far away as Cartagena.

Buur  Jolof kings.
Câmara Council, Assembly
Capitanias Captaincies; used to refer to administrative units of the Ultramar apportioned to the supervision of a captain.
Carrera de Indias Spanish system developed in the 1560s of exporting looted goods back from the New World to Europe in convoys of ships rendezvousing in key ports in America and the Caribbean.
Cimarrones Escaped slaves in the New World.
Consejo Council (of state).
Conselho Ultramarino Arm of Portuguese government charged with supervising affairs in Portuguese overseas possessions in this period.
Contratadores Holders of the contract to ship slaves to Spanish America.
Conversos Converted Jews; the term is associated with Spanish converts to Christianity, especially in the fifteenth century.
Convivencia The period of life in the Iberian peninsula when the faiths of Christianity, Islam and Judaism co-existed; the phrase is generally taken to refer to those territories under Christian control.
Corregedor Local governor.
Creole Language of mixed African and European roots developing as a vernacular in Western Africa during the sixteenth century.
Creolisation The cultural and linguistic processes through which Creole developed.
Cristãos Novos The Portuguese term for Jews who had converted to Christianity (in Spanish: cristianos nuevos).
Cristãos Velhos The Portuguese term for Christians who had no Jewish or Moorish ancestry (in Spanish: cristianos viejos).
Cruzados Portuguese currency: a gold coin.
Crypto-Jew Someone who keeps secretly to the Jewish faith while professing to be a Christian.
Glossary

Diaspora  A group of people forming a community in spite of extensive geographical dispersion.

Dyula  Diaspora of Mandinka traders in West Africa.

Encomienda  Parcel of land given to colonists in the New World under Spanish administration.

Escrivão  Scribe or registrar.

Escrivão do Almoxarifado  Registrar of the royal exchequer.

Escrivão da Correição  Registrar of the local governor.

Ethnonym  Literally, “ethnic name”: ethnic designation used for a group in Upper Guinea.

Feitor  Factor.

Feitoria  Depot for the organising of exports (principally slaves) from the African coast.

Fidalgos  Nobles, often minor and in straitened circumstances; also used by Caboverdean authors to describe lineage heads in Upper Guinea.

Fueros  Local charters of rights in towns in Aragón and Castilla.

Griot  Praisesinger in Senegambian and Upper Guinean communities. Thought by some to derive from criado, Portuguese for “retainer”.

Grumetes  Term for servants/shipmates commonly used by Caboverdeans and lançados of African retainers/servants in Upper Guinea.

Ingenio  Sugarcane plantation (Portuguese: Engenho).

Judiaria  Jewry.

Juiz dos Orfãos  Judge responsible for assigning homes to orphans.

Kriolu  Creole language of Cabo Verde and Upper Guinea.
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<td><strong>Ladino</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Manuelline</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Maravedi</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Matrilinear</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Meirinho Mor</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Mestiçagem</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pieza de Esclavo</td>
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<td>Procurador</td>
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<td>Provedor</td>
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<td>Provedor da Fazenda</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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Glossary

“Tierra Firme” Literally “firm land”: phrased used by Spanish to distinguish the American continent from the Caribbean islands in the sixteenth century.

Ultramar Overseas Portuguese possessions.

Vadios Escaped slaves in the highlands of Santiago, Cabo Verde, who forged the nucleus of Caboverdean society in the seventeenth century: the Caboverdean equivalent of cimarrones.

Vintena Tax owed to the Portuguese crown in the early years of the Caboverdean colony, equivalent to one-twentieth of takings.