# Christian-Muslim Relations A Bibliographical History

Volume 12. Asia, Africa and the Americas (1700-1800)

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LEIDEN • BOSTON 2018

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# Francis Moore

DATE OF BIRTH	Approximately 1708
PLACE OF BIRTH	Worcester, England
DATE OF DEATH	May 1770
PLACE OF DEATH	Feckenham, Worcestershire

## BIOGRAPHY

Francis Moore was the son of William and Elizabeth Moore. His exact date of birth is unknown, but a record of his baptism on 11 July 1708 in Worcester, England, makes it likely that he was born in that year.

Few details of Moore's life are known. His employment history suggests that he received some kind of formal education. He worked as a clerk in London, and in 1730 was employed by the Royal African Company to serve at their headquarters at James Island in the Gambia Estuary.

Moore arrived at James Island in November 1730, and by 1732 had been promoted to factor. Between 1732 and his return to England in 1735, he was stationed at various factories along the Gambia River, most notably Joar and Yamyamakunda. It was in his capacity as factor that he travelled widely into 'the inland parts of Africa'. During the four-and-a-half years that Moore worked in West Africa, he kept a private journal, which formed the basis for his book about the Senegambia, *Travels to the inland parts of Africa* (1738). The book was well-received and was reprinted and translated several times.

Only months after his return to England in May 1735, Moore left for Georgia, North America, together with the politician, philanthropist and social reformer General James Oglethorpe (1696-1785). Oglethorpe had founded the Georgia colony in 1733 with a view to resettling some of Britain's paupers. Some 200 prospective colonists accompanied Oglethorpe on his 1735 journey.

Moore served in Georgia as Oglethorpe's personal secretary and as storekeeper of Fort Frederica for a period of eight months, after which he returned to England. In 1738, he departed once more for Georgia and worked there until 1743. In 1744, Moore published an account of his sojourn in Georgia, entitled *A voyage to Georgia*.

On his return to England, Moore settled in Feckenham, Worcestershire, and on 27 January 1756 married Elizabeth Chillingworth. They had eight children together, of whom only four survived to adulthood.

Francis Moore died in May 1770 in Feckenham and was buried on 30 May.

#### MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### Primary

Francis Moore, *Travels into the inland parts of Africa*, London, 1738 Francis Moore, *A voyage to Georgia*, London, 1744

#### Secondary

A. Hughes and D. Perfect, art. 'Francis Moore', in *Historical dictionary of The Gambia*, Plymouth, 2008, 148-9

C. Fyfe, art. 'Francis Moore', in ODNB

Family ancestry: http://www.jacombs.co.uk/familyhistory/fhweb/fam97.html (provides details of his marriage and burial in Feckenham)

#### WORKS ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

## Travels into the inland parts of Africa

DATE 1738 ORIGINAL LANGUAGE English

#### DESCRIPTION

Travels into the inland parts of Africa is an 18<sup>th</sup>-century travelogue collection. The main part of the book (some 234 pages) consists of a text written by Francis Moore, who worked for the Royal African Company along the Gambia River between 1730 and 1735. Also included are an account of the voyage of Captain Bartholomew Stibbs to the Gambia in 1723 (70 pages) and translations (possibly by Moore) of older travelogues on West Africa (86 pages), among them descriptions of West Africa by Leo Africanus and al-Idrīsī. The full title of the work is *Travels into the inland parts of Africa: containing a description of the several nations for the space of Six Hundred Miles up the River Gambia; their Trade, Habits, Customs, Languages, Manners, Religion and Government; the Power, Disposition and Characters of some Negro Princes; with a particular Account of Job Ben Solomon, a Pholey, who was in England in the Year 1733, and known by the Name of the African. To which is added, Capt. Stibbs's voyage up the Gambia in the Year 1723, to make Discoveries; with an accurate*  map of that River taken on the Spot: And many other Copper Plates. Also extracts from the Nubian's Geography, Leo the African, and other authors antient and modern, concerning the Niger Nile, or Gambia, and Observations thereon. By Francis Moore, Factor several Years to the Royal African Company of England.

The work was first published by Cave in London in 1738. There is some discussion as to whether in that same year another, possibly pirated, edition with variant page-numbers appeared with Stagg in London, or whether this was in essence a reprint of the Cave edition (Hill, 'Towards a chronology', p. 355). The Cave edition was reprinted several times in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and parts of the text were reproduced in travelogue collections, such as Thomas Astley's *A new general collection of voyages and travels* (1745-7) and Christopher Smart, Oliver Goldsmith, and Samuel Johnson's *The world displayed, or a curious collection of voyages and travels* (1759-61). The book (or part of it) was also translated into French, Dutch and German.

Francis Moore's text is an edited version of the journal he kept when working as a clerk and factor along the Gambia River. Unlike most European sources from the early modern period that describe the West African coast and its peoples, Moore's work detailed 'the inland parts of Africa', *terra incognita* for Europeans. As a factor, he lived for some time in Joar (Ballanghar) and later in Yamyamakunda (Banatenda), some 150 and 250 kilometres upstream, respectively.

Moore's journal includes observations about geography, natural history and the various ethnic groups living along the river, as well as about social and economic life in Senegambia. Of particular interest are his notes concerning his interactions with Fulani Muslims, whom he praised for their literacy and assiduous religious observance: 'In every Kingdom and Country on each Side of the River, there are some people of a tawny Colour, call'd Pholeys, much like the Arabs; which language they most of them speak, being to them as the Latin is in Europe, for it is taught in Schools, and their Law, the Alcoran, is in that language. They are more generally learned in the Arabick, than the people of Europe are in Latin, for most of them speak it, tho' they have a vulgar Tongue besides, call'd Pholey' (p. 30). Unlike many of his contemporaries, Moore's portraval of West Africans in general, and West African Muslims in particular are sympathetic and without bias. He calls the Fulani Muslims 'very industrious and frugal', 'very rarely angry' and 'very hospitable and kind to all', adding: 'As their Humanity extends to all, they are doubly kind to People of their own Race, insomuch that if they know one of them being made a

Slave, all the *Pholeys* will redeem him. And as they have plenty of Food, they never suffer any of their own Nation to want but support the Old, the Blind and Lame, equally with the others' (pp. 32-3).

*Travels into the inland part of Africa* also documents the widespread slave trade in the Gambia River basin. Of particular interest is the story of Ayuba Suleiman Diallo (known in European sources as Job ben Solomon), the son of a Fulani Muslim cleric from Bundu, who was abducted by slavers. Attempts by his kinsmen to ransom him came too late; Diallo had already been taken to Maryland and sold as a slave. There, his writing skills and strict religious observance drew the attention of Thomas Bluett of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Through Bluett's mediation Diallo was ransomed by London philanthropists, who facilitated his return to Africa via England.

While in England, Diallo was received by the royal family and other members of society; he returned to Africa in July 1734. Moore became acquainted with Diallo upon his return to West Africa and accompanied him to Bundu; it seems the two men kept in touch for business purposes for a while.

Diallo's narrative, recorded by Bluett and published as *Some memoirs* of the life of Job, the son of Solomon, the high priest of Boonda in Africa (1734), is one of the better known 18<sup>th</sup>-century Muslim slave-narratives. The inclusion of this enslavement story in *Travels into the inland part of Africa* (pp. 69 and 202) is one of the indications that Moore edited his journal upon his return to England and that he expanded his personal observations with other sources, such as Bluett's narrative. It is unclear whether, and if so to what extent, the public appreciation of Diallo influenced Moore's descriptions of the Fulani Muslims.

#### SIGNIFICANCE

Moore's *Travels into the inland part of Africa* documents the extent of Muslim literary culture in 18<sup>th</sup>-century West Africa. It is considered to be one of the most important sources on 18<sup>th</sup>-century Senegambia. Moreover, his sympathetic depictions of Fulani Muslims and his appreciation of their religious practice and literacy, their fierce stance against the enslavement of their kinfolk, their high ethical standards and their treatment of vulnerable groups such as the elderly, visitors and people with disabilities, challenged European perceptions of both Muslims and Africans.

The fact that Moore's observations did not pertain to just any West African people, but concerned kinsmen of the renowned and much

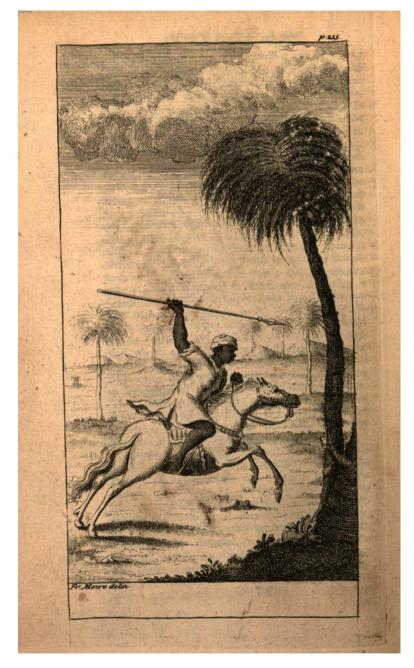


Illustration 18. Page from Francis Moore, *Travels into the inland parts of Africa*, 1738, p. 263, depicting Bur Wolof, Muslim king of the Saloum area, in battledress

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celebrated highborn Muslim Ayuba Suleiman Diallo, whose tragic enslavement had captivated British imaginations, no doubt reinforced their impact. Moore's extensive documentation of the slave trade on the Gambia River, his account of Diallo's slave narrative and its happy ending in Diallo's homecoming to Bundu, as well as his portrayal of the honourable and morally upright Fulani, may all have contributed to the sensitisation of British opinion regarding the legitimacy of the slave trade.

#### PUBLICATIONS

- The publishing history of *Travels into the inland parts of Africa* is complex, with several translations taken from an abridged 1746 edition. These are detailed in M.H. Hill, 'Towards a chronology of the publications of Francis Moore's *Travels into the inland parts of Africa'*, *History in Africa* 19 (1992) 353-68, pp. 358-67.
- Francis Moore, *Travels into the inland parts of Africa*, London: J. Cave, 1738; ESTC T131766 (digitised version available through *ECCO*)
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  D. Henry and R. Cave, 1740, 1755<sup>2</sup> (pagination differs from the 1738 Cave edition); ESTC T147986 1755 edition (digitised version available through *ECCO*)
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## Martha Frederiks