

THE BRITISH ACADEMY:
FONTES HISTORIAE AFRICANAE /
SOURCES OF AFRICAN HISTORY
A GUIDE FOR SCHOLARS SUBMITTING
PROPOSALS TO THE BRITISH COMMITTEE

Background

1. Fontes Historiae Africanae / Sources of African History is an international editing and publication project, initiated in 1962 to organise a series of critical editions of the sources for the history of 'sub-Saharan Africa' (i.e., Africa south of the Mediterranean lands), under the general auspices of the Union Académique Internationale. In 1973 the British Academy established a British Committee to publish volumes in the series. To date, ten volumes have been prepared and published via this Committee and the Academy, representing about half of the total output of the international project.

2. The British Committee has now established a New Series, in which all its volumes will be published: five editions are currently in press or in preparation.

3. The Committee is representative of working scholars in this field of history within Britain, and it aims to be responsive to the interests and requirements of all those concerned with African history. Its present membership is as follows:

David Anderson, L. Brenner, P.E.H. Hair (General Editor), Dick Hayward, Murray Last, Robin Law (Chair), Tom McCaskie, Shula Marks, H.T. Norris and J.D.Y. Peel.

Scope of the New Series, and guidance on eligible projects

4. The range of material appropriate for the New Series is

as follows:

- historical texts
- collections of documents assembled to address historical topics
- reissues of classic texts hitherto only available in print in inadequate editions.

Sources may therefore be, as relevant, printed, manuscript, oral or mixed.

5. The series concentrates on sources of the earlier periods. The Committee will consider later sources — though not collections of merely colonial or post-colonial administrative material.

6. Editions are published in English, and therefore non-English sources appear in translation. For reasons of expense, the original language texts of non-English sources are not normally included; the Committee will consider their inclusion if they are of special interest for their language and are not available elsewhere.

7. Editions include all necessary scholarly apparatus.

8. Provided that proposed editions meet the above requirements, applications will be considered from scholars of any nationality.

9. In advising on the appropriate length of a volume, the Committee will bear in mind publication costs and the consequent affordability of the edition to those institutions to whom the series and the edition are directed. Indeed, the Academy encourages all editors to consider applying for an outside subsidy towards the cost of publication.

Procedure for submitting a proposal

10. If work has not yet begun on the edition, the proposer should send a brief (i.e., not more than one sheet of A4) statement of the proposal to any member of the Committee, or to the Chairman (address below). It may be possible to give an immediate response or to invite the applicant to discuss the matter further.

11. If the proposer decides to proceed, or if he/she has

already begun work on the edition, the Committee will require a fuller statement, giving details of the character and length of the text, the intended treatment, the approximate length of the introduction and of the whole work, what maps and illustrations are envisaged, and a provisional date for completion. This should be accompanied by a sample of the edition, say, one chapter or some 20 pages, containing text and full apparatus. The Committee will ask a referee to report on this and will probably be able to make a decision at its next meeting. (It meets three times a year, normally in January, May and September. Please submit proposals well before a meeting to allow papers to be circulated and reports prepared.)

12. If the Committee approves the proposal it will recommend its adoption by the Academy's Publications Committee, which may be able to offer advice on publication problems, may accept the title as a commitment, and, where appropriate, may issue a contract to the editor. In exceptional circumstances, the Publications Committee may require the final text to be submitted as camera-ready copy, prepared to a given specification. (Note where it has been agreed that the original language text should be included in the edition, the Publications Committee requires that texts in non-Roman scripts should always be submitted as camera-ready copy.)

The Committee invites suggestions from historians of Africa as to sources which they would like to see available in critical editions. Comments may be made to any member of the Committee, or to the Chairman:

email: r.c.c.law@stir.ac.uk, or
c/o The British Academy,
10 Carlton House Terrace,
London SW1Y 5AH,
England.

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