DIGITAL SOURCES IN EUROPE FOR AFRICAN HISTORY

MARION WALLACE

Summary

This article gives an introduction to online sources for the writing of African history provided by, or in partnership with, European institutions, collections, and researchers. It offers listings of the major websites, by format (manuscripts and documentary archives; maps; museum collections; newspapers; printed books; picture collections; and sound and moving image) and by region of Africa. In the absence of a comprehensive database of such resources, the article guides the reader to many little-known archival gems, as well as pointing to the major websites and what they hold.

More digitised material is available than ever before, and more is constantly being uploaded to the web. Yet there are also brakes on digitisation, and wide-ranging discussions around its practices and principles. The article discusses the types of resources available and the reasons why, although much has been digitised, much remains in original form only. It briefly analyses the main drivers for digitisation, why certain types of material are being digitised, and discussions around the treatment of heritage material.

Introduction[1]

The process of researching African history has changed out of all recognition in recent years. Source material of all kinds has been digitised and made available on the internet. Yet the process is very far from complete: there is still much more held in boxes on archive shelves than in bits and bytes in digital stores. Much of the digitisation that has taken place to date has been concentrated on a limited range of formats. Photographs have often been a first choice for digitisation, with the result that there are many rich picture archives on the web relating to Africa; meanwhile, archival documents have not had the same degree of attention and resource devoted to them.

This article provides a guide to European web resources for historians of Africa. The existence of these resources springs from Europe's historical engagement with Africa, first, through the slave trade and colonialism. Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal and Spain were all, to a greater or lesser extent, colonial and/or slaving powers in Africa from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries. Individuals, companies and governments in these and other European countries, including Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland, have also long been engaged with the continent through, for example, trading relationships, solidarity with independence struggles, development aid work, and post-colonial diplomatic and economic relationships.

These long, entangled histories of engagement with Africa have produced very extensive and diverse library, archive and museum collections. Many European countries now also have long-standing and active centres of scholarship on Africa, which in their turn are generating archival material. This article surveys this landscape, taking into account archives of material held in Europe and made available online (wherever the home of the web platform), as well as archives of material housed in Africa and made available through partnership with European bodies (or sometimes individuals in Europe). It should be read

together with [other articles in the encyclopedia on digital sources elsewhere – editor please insert links].

While the focus here is on digitised primary unpublished sources, the article also indicates the wealth of older printed books now available on an open access basis, as well as pointing to some resources and reference sources for newer and current scholarship. The major online bibliographic sources of reference for African Studies in Europe are also listed.

The article concentrates on what is already available at the time of writing, and also signals some resources of especial interest which are in development. It focuses on open access material, which is available to anyone with an internet connection, but indicates selected significant items that are behind a paywall.

This article thus gives a solid grounding in digital sources for African history, listing both the most important and the more 'niche' sites which are often less well-known, as well as giving pointers on how to find further resources in this field. It cannot, however, claim to be comprehensive, given the number of European countries – currently 28 member states in the EU alone – and the difficulties of locating and listing an ever-expanding number of relevant websites. Inevitably, the author's own UK expertise and linguistic specialisms – English, French, and German – have informed her selections. The article also focuses on Africa south of the Sahara, although North Africa is not excluded.

Digital Sources for African History in Europe – The Current State of Play

Every field of knowledge has been profoundly affected by the advent of digital technology. The arts and humanities have in some respects been slower to move than the natural and social sciences, but they, too, have seen huge changes since the mid-1990s, and it is now far easier to find and use material than it has ever been in the past.[2]

With respect to historical sources, all kinds of material – documents, manuscripts, photographs, illustrations, printed books, maps, and museum objects – have been digitised and made freely available on the internet. As the technology develops, digitisation becomes easier and quicker, and thus cheaper. For example, it is now possible to digitise entire books on a scanner that automatically turns the pages, rather than requiring a human to do this task. Digitisation often includes the application of optical character recognition software (OCR), radically increasing the searchability of digitised objects: OCR is currently highly efficient (although not perfect) for printed books. While handwritten text recognition (TCR) – the equivalent for manuscripts – is not a reality at the time of writing, it seems to be very close to being available.

These and other developments have changed not only the availability of digitised historical source material, which historians are increasingly noting and making use of,[3] but also the ability of these sources to answer different kinds of questions. For example, the vastly increased searchability of digitised newspapers through OCR is facilitating quantitative research approaches – such as the mapping of meetings held by Black abolitionists in nineteenth-century Britain[4] – while the Livingstone Online project has, through the use of spectral imaging technology, made visible multiple and/or illegible versions of some of the manuscripts of the missionary David Livingstone.

At the same time, public participation in scholarship is increasing,[5] and crowdsourcing has been particularly effective in instances such as contributing cartographic or photographic data and fundraising.[6] A wide range of web resources are created by individuals outside what might be called the academy: see, for example, the Nigerian Nostalgia project, which facilitates upload of historical images from Nigeria and across the diaspora.

Maja Kominko makes the argument for democracy through digitised records when she writes that 'access to archival records has been increasingly recognised as a civic right…This right should not be limited to citizens of western countries, and digitisation gives an unparalleled opportunity to allow fully democratic open access.'[7] The historian Enrique Martino, creator of www.opensourceguinea.org, goes further in declaring a Derridean challenge to archival hierarchies: digitised archives have the potential 'to circulate in democratic digital spaces', becoming 'productive of new audiences and destructive of neo-colonial writing and research practices'.[8]

This widening of the audience – potential and actual – for archival, library, and museum resources is a development explicitly acknowledged in the sector. Europeana, the European digital library, describes its purpose as enabling 'anyone anywhere [to] explore and learn from' its collections, so that 'you can find, use and share them: for research, for learning, for creating new things'.[9] Europeana's mission is linked to very broad societal aims: 'free, democratic access to cultural heritage must be guaranteed for everyone so that the opportunities that go hand in hand with digitisation can be used for the development of our society'.[10] In the UK, the Wellcome collections declare their intention to 'design and build a free and unrestricted digital space where more people than ever can engage, be inspired and explore the connections between science, medicine, life and art'.[11]

As this might suggest, the current information revolution has fundamentally changed practices and policies within archives, libraries and museums. Gone are the days when historical research was universally a matter of visiting archives and libraries, burrowing through hard-copy catalogues and card indexes, and consulting material on-site. Archivists today might not want to admit it, but it was *supposed* to be difficult: hard labour would bring rewards. Today, archive and library professionals in Europe largely see their role as making their collections as widely available as possible. Imaginative strategies are needed to alert the

public to what is held,[12] and managing or enabling digitisation projects has become important for career development.

This emphasis on a wide audience has had an influence on selection policies,[13] as libraries and archives, large and small, have made the digitisation of visually interesting objects – often photographs – a first priority in their digital strategies. Photographs of museum objects form another large component of the digital resources available for African history. In addition to selection for visual appeal, this digitisation has developed naturally from pre-existing museum practices, since in the pre-digital age a photograph (or even a sketch) of an object was usually provided as part of a catalogue record in order to be able to identify each unique object.

On the other hand, documentary and manuscript sources have not been so extensively digitised, although there are a few notable exceptions, particularly the material hosted by the Endangered Archives Programme (EAP), which, in partnership with local archives and local and international grant-holders, has funded the digitisation of copious collections from across Africa.[14] Documentary sources are often less visually appealing, may be more likely to have narrow user groups, and generally require a large investment of time and resources: it may take several hundred photographs to digitise one book or manuscript, in contrast to a very limited number for a historical photograph or museum object.

[**Fig. 1** Illuminations from 'Gädlä qeddus Giyorgis' (Life of Saint George) 17th or 18th century, from the Monastic Archives of Däbrä Abbay (Shire region, Tigray Province, Ethiopia). Digitised under the Endangered Archives Programme.

British Library, EAP704/1/43, https://eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP704-1-43]

Digitising historical source material has proved in some cases to be a good way of connecting with African audiences.[15] Indeed, the new possibilities offered by digitisation have had an impact on arguments around cultural property and the ownership of African resources by Western cultural institutions, allowing archivists and curators to provide much wider access to their collections in the context of debates over cultural heritage and demands for repatriation. It is now possible to make manuscripts and other items digitally available, even while they remain housed in Western institutions, and to 'digitally reunify' scattered collections, as well returning sound recordings (transferred to digital media) to their place of origin. This widening of access is illustrated by the release on the web of the Guinean Syliphone music recordings by the Endangered Archives Programme in 2016, which had 30,000 page views in March 2016.[16]

There is, of course, plenty of debate about how satisfactory such a strategy is; there is also resistance in some circumstances to the digitisation of African heritage held in Africa.[17] The range of responses to the new technology is nevertheless wide, with African commentators also variously recognising the potential contribution of digital material to openness and democratic debate, and the ability of digitisation to preserve endangered material. As access to the internet grows in Africa, more and more people become able to access a huge range of digital heritage content.

Obstacles to Digitisation

Overall, the digitised archives for African history considered here can be described as rich and extensive in some areas, but quite thin and patchy in others. Such archives are very fragmented, and there is no comprehensive aggregator or search tool (the best such resources are described in more detail below).

Why are digital archives for African history on the internet not more comprehensive?[18] The short answer is two factors: cost and copyright. On the one hand, digitising material and making it available is expensive. It is a complex process involving selection of material; checks on its fragility and copyright status; decision-making on, for example, how to photograph non-standard items and whether to carry out OCR so that the material may be searched by keyword; control and generation of metadata (catalogue records); scanning and/or photographing large numbers of items; and quality-checking. The images must then be uploaded to a digital platform which provides users with a means of searching and viewing them, and the long-term preservation of these digital images must be assured through providing secure digital storage and the periodic migration of data.

Digitisation projects, then, particularly large-scale ones built to last, are expensive. A further set of restrictions is provided by copyright law. This is extremely complex, but one key fact is that published written works are in copyright under EU law for seventy years from the date of death of the author. This has meant that older books have been digitised *en masse*, because rights-checking for individual items is not necessary in these cases, but more modern works usually remain unavailable. In the case of the UK, copyright in archives and manuscripts is even more tricky: all such works not published before 1989 remain in copyright until 2039, regardless of date of origin.

Approaches to this thorny subject – in addition to bulk digitisation of older works – include rights-checking; agreements with publishers; the implementation of EU rules relating to 'orphan works' (where the copyright-holder cannot be located);[19] and the development of take-down policies in case of accidental breach of copyright. Nevertheless, and despite the advent of the open access movement, copyright rules play a major role in limiting the number of freely available works on European websites.

A further set of restrictions comes with data protection legislation, which prevents the publication of details relating to individuals in records of less than a hundred years old – so, for example, hospital records containing patient details from the period between the two world wars could not currently go online.

If It's So Difficult, How Has Anything Been Digitised?

In outline, the bulk of open access heritage digital material on the web has been produced by public bodies – libraries, archives, museums – which have both significant resources in terms of political leverage and access to finance, and a duty or mission to make their holdings available. Private funders also play a significant role, while university research projects and smaller non-governmental bodies are also involved in creating digitised resources, often in the context of particular research projects or significant moments in public history. Commercial companies looking to create packages for sale to libraries are also a significant player, particularly for manuscript and archive digitisation.

With respect to institutions, very extensive resources have been produced at the national and European levels. The most important website in this respect is Europeana, a digital archive, library, museum and art gallery, which contains very rich collections of relevance to African history. Europeana, which developed from The European Library (a pan-European library catalogue), went live in 2008, after a 2005 call for more funding from six European heads of state. 'The heritage of European libraries is unequaled in richness and diversity,' they wrote. 'But if it is not digitalized and made accessible online, this heritage could, tomorrow, not fill its just place in the future geography of knowledge.'[20] Europeana is thus formally backed and funded by the European Commission, and aggregates content from across the continent: at the time of writing, the site included content from over 170

contributors – national aggregators, pan-European or thematic aggregators, and individual cultural heritage institutions.[21]

This huge partnership project demonstrates both the possibilities and limits of cross-European cooperation by heritage institutions. With regard to the latter, Europeana by no means includes all European digitised heritage content: barriers to upload include lack of resources and funding, incompatible metadata (catalogue information) and rights restrictions. Many individual European countries have their own national aggregators, some of which give access to significant resources on and from Africa and may be more comprehensive, and perhaps easier to navigate, than Europeana. At the time of writing, for example, the German Digital Library held over nine million records with digital objects, but only 1.3 million of these were in Europeana.[22] Conversely, Europeana provides a platform for many records unavailable elsewhere.

There are fully established national aggregators in both France (Gallica; Moteur Collections on culture.fr) and Germany (German Digital Library). On the other hand, the UK's Culture Grid, which focuses on museum collections, is no longer adding content.[23] National aggregators with African content also include Kulturpool (Austria); Finna (Finland); Cultura Italia; Hispana (Spain); and Kringla (Sweden).

Across Europe, heritage institutions large and small, whether or not they contribute to Europeana, are the leaders in providing digitised material free online, some of it financed from core funding, and much from funds raised for this purpose. Partnership working is common, whether with other institutions and/or with stakeholders in the country of origin of the resources.

A small number of private funders, NGOs and independent or semi-independent research and other institutions also play a significant role. For example, the Endangered Archives Programme is funded by the Arcadia Trust, and Fundação Mário Soares, a

Portuguese presidential foundation, has funded the digitisation of several major collections relating to former Portuguese colonies in Africa. Some of the most interesting websites, like the Legacies of British Slave-ownership based at UCL, London, arise from academic research projects that have received government funding, while significant moments in public history in Europe – specifically, the anti-apartheid struggle in southern Africa, and the bicentenary of the abolition of the British transatlantic slave trade in 2007 – have generated notable web content. Last, but by no means least, extensive manuscript and archival collections held in Europe have been digitised for teaching and research by US commercial providers including Adam Matthew, Gale Cengage and Readex, and audiovisual content by Alexander Street. These resources are usually acquired through subscription or purchase by academic libraries, and in some cases are also available free, or at reduced cost, to African institutions.

Tips for Research and Searching

This section looks at strategies, and key online tools, for finding resources for African history, whether that research involves locating digitised primary sources, library resources (whether or not digital, and whether or not behind a paywall), other bibliographies, and non-digital archives. The job of the historian continues to be a matter of chasing down a variety of online and offline sources, and in this hybrid world web-based reference tools are key.

As noted above, digital sources offered by European institutions are very fragmented, and there is no comprehensive portal, search engine or directory – although Europeana is, of course, an essential starting point. Much can be found through the major search engines, although Google, for all its advantages, will not pick up everything relevant. In addition to the lists given below, there are existing websites that offer important listings and databases. For example, the Guide to Africa on the Internet provided by the Nordic Africa Institute has a good selection of historical resources and links to African websites. For Francophone

material, the Institut des mondes africains offers listings, while it is also worth noting the Afrique francophone directory provided by Columbia University, New York.

In terms of locating secondary publications for African history, a number of European institutions offer key tools. These include:

- the catalogue of the library of the African Studies, Centre, University of Leiden, Netherlands

- the Catalogue collectif de France, which includes material digitised by the BNF;

- COPAC, the UK joint academic libraries' catalogue

- and resources linking directly to digital material beyond the providers' own collections:

  - AfricaLitPlus (from the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI))

  - Connecting-Africa (offered by Leiden) and

  - ilissAfrica (from university libraries in Frankfurt and Hamburg, Germany).

For journals, see the List of African Studies Journals on Wikipedia, put together by members of ELIAS (the European Librarians in African Studies network).

Leiden and the NAI both offer web dossiers on varied subjects of study, which include some historical themes. Leiden is particularly strong in the bibliographic resources it supports, which include the AfricaBib collection of bibliographies as well as African Studies Abstracts Online. The NAI offers Studying Africa: A Guide to the Sources, which includes some historical material.

With the rise of the open access movement, more and more current publications are becoming available free online. In addition to scholarly articles, this applies in particular to reports and other publications of research agencies and NGOs. These collections are worth being aware of, even if they are weighted more towards contemporary than historical studies. Large-scale resources in this category include Bibliothèques électroniques en partenariat

(BEEP), OpenDocs: Sharing Global Knowledge for Global Change and Eldis. It is also worth noting that some national and many university libraries include PhD dissertations in their open repositories: to access these items from the British Library, for example, go to Ethos. The International African Institute, based at SOAS, University of London, also hosts a directory of African Digital Research Repositories.

Web tools to find original material held in physical archives are relatively well developed. Archives Portal Europe aims to provide an overview of European archives by publishing finding aids, and linking these to digitised material where possible. As of December 2017, it held information on almost 7,000 archival institutions in over 30 European countries, and was providing access over 260 million digital records.[24]

In the UK, the catalogue of the National Archives enables archival holdings throughout the country to be located, while Archives Hub and Mundus (the latter for missionary records) also aggregate data from a wide range of archives. The finding aids of the French national overseas archives are online, and the main catalogue of the French national archives is here. Argus, the catalogue of the Bundesarchiv (German federal archives) offers online finding aids.[25]

As the introduction to Archives Portal Europe rather endearingly states, 'People get lost on our portal sometimes, but it is not their fault.'[26] Searching finding aids to archival collections involves particular challenges, as many series of correspondence are not catalogued by subject, and are thus not searchable by keyword. A series of letters to London from the governor of a particular colony held at the UK National Archives, for example, may simply be catalogued by name of colony, 'despatches' (this means governor's despatches), and the date range. Correspondence covering many different subjects and people sits behind this broad designation. It thus remains important, when researching archival records, to try to understand how they have been catalogued and how they are arranged, and to make use of

published guides to the records. The '[five tips for your search](#)' provided by the [Danish West-Indies](#) site are relevant to all archival researchers, not only those using this large-scale digital collection.[27]

The fifth tip provided by this website is 'be patient – and persist', advice which is absolutely key to getting the most out of all digital archives. Collections are catalogued in different ways, and in different languages, so flexible research strategies are essential. It is often productive to translate search terms into relevant languages, for example. Although most northern European websites offer interfaces in English (this is less the case for France and southern European countries), metadata is still, at the moment, likely to be in the language of the country.

In some sites – [Europeana](#) being the principal, but by no means the only, example – the amount of data available can be almost overwhelming. Faceted search tools (usually on the left-hand side) usually offer an effective way of narrow results down, and most websites also offer an 'advanced search' facility. Another point to be aware of is that, while digitisation often incorporates optical character recognition, it often does not; in the latter case, keyword searches will not search the full text of a book or newspaper, so the researcher may need to spend more time going through individual items.

Listings for African Historical Research

The listings below begin with a general section, followed by websites by particular format – manuscripts and documentary archives; maps; museum collections; newspapers; printed books; picture collections; and sound and moving image – and then by region of Africa. Most websites are only listed once, so readers will find it useful to consult more than one section of the list.

Essential General Websites

- [Europeana](#)
  - This is the pan-European digital aggregator of archive, library, museum and art gallery content. Although not comprehensive, Europeana is by far the largest unified database of digitised European heritage content and an essential 'go to' site for research. It holds extensive collections from and relating to Africa.

- [British Library](#)
  - The British Library's Africa-related digitised content can be found through its [Africa pages](#) and includes [sound recordings](#) and historic [maps of East Africa](#). Ethiopic and West African manuscripts are due to come online from 2018, and the [Qatar Digital Library](#) hosts extensive India Office records, held at the British Library, relating to Egypt, British Somaliland and Abyssinia. The BL hosts the [Endangered Archives Programme](#), which digitises endangered archives in order to preserve them, and makes them freely available online. The BL's [Flickr photostream](#) includes images relating to Africa extracted from older books as well as maps.

- [Gallica](#)
  - The digital library of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (National Library of France; BNF), Gallica offers navigation to its African content from its front page. Digital resources offered include an extensive photograph collection, maps, government and other publications, and black and white digital copies of West African manuscripts in Arabic and *ajami* (African languages in Arabic script). Some digitised material under copyright is available via [Gallica intra muros](#) (Gallica within walls), on-site at the BNF in Paris.

- [German Digital Library](#)

- o Contains significant amounts of material on Africa.

- [Moteur Collections](#) on culture.fr

  - o France's official digital aggregator.

Other Websites of General Interest

This section lists websites of general interest to historians of Africa. It includes information resources such as dossiers and blogs, as well as digitised resources that cover more than one region of Africa.

- [Africa4: Regards croisés sur l'Afrique](#)

  - o Very rich blog on historical subjects, edited by Vincent Hiribarren and Jean-Pierre Bat and hosted on the website of the newspaper *Libération*.

- [Archives Portal Europe](#)

  - o This very extensive online catalogue to Europe's archives includes links to digitised content where available.

- [British Documents on the End of Empire](#)

  - o The book series of this name (London, 1992-) consists of multiple volumes of selected source material from the UK National Archives dealing with British decolonisation. This site, hosted by the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, offers full-text pdfs of these books. Individual volumes on Africa deal with Ghana; Egypt and the defence of the Middle East; Nigeria; Sudan; and Central Africa.

- [Commonwealth Oral Histories](#)

  - o This project, the result of a three-year research programme at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, offers searchable transcripts of

interviews with about sixty major figures in the recent history of the Commonwealth.

- [Inventaire des recensements et des enquêtes démographiques en Afrique](#)
    - This site provides a bibliography and access to digitised population censuses and related studies, 1946–2009. The focus is on Francophone resources, with some reference to Anglophone sources. The home page offers an English translation.
- [Political Archives](#) from the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London
    - This site offers selected digitised ephemera, including pamphlets and posters, from a number of African countries, as well as a more extensive catalogue of this material. South Africa is especially well represented.
- [Présence africaine: une tribune, un movement, un réseau](#)
    - Dossier based on an exhibition about Présence africaine, the famous publishing house and campaigning organisation, at the Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, 2009–10.
- [SOAS Digital Collections](#)
    - The strengths of these digitised resources selected from the collections of SOAS, University of London, include manuscripts (especially from Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, Niger and Chad) and digitised older books, especially works in African languages. There are also some maps, photographs and artworks. At the time of writing, the resource covered nineteen African countries.

Websites by Format

This section lists major websites by type of digitised resource. More detailed lists are given by region below.

Documentary Archives and Manuscripts

This section lists the major sites for manuscripts, as well as cross-continental collections of documentary archives. For archives relating to specific regions, see the relevant geographical section below.

- Archives nationales d'outre-mer
    - The website of the French national overseas archives offers extensive digitised 'état civil' and military service records via its IREL ('Instruments de recherche en ligne'; tools for online research) pages; these concern births, marriages and deaths in French colonies. Finding aids to the entire holdings are also online.[28]
- Archives Portal Europe
    - This very extensive online catalogue to Europe's archives includes links to digitised content where available.
- British Library
    - A large number of Ethiopic manuscripts from the British Library's collections, and a smaller number of West African manuscripts, are due to start coming online in 2018.
- Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, University of Hamburg.
    - This is an important resource for expertise in manuscripts, although it does not currently display large digitised collections.
- Counting Colonial Populations: Demography and the Use of Statistics in the Portuguese Empire 1776–1890

- Searchable database of records relating to population statistics, provided by a research project based at the Universidade Nova in Lisbon. Interface in Portuguese and English.

- Endangered Archives Programme

  - This major programme, hosted by the British Library and funded by the Arcadia Trust, digitises endangered archives in order to preserve them. By the end of 2017, the Programme had funded approximately 80 projects in partnership with African institutions and individuals. The original documents remain *in situ,* while the digitised copies form an extensive archive which is freely available online. These items range from manuscripts in Arabic, and Ge'ez and other African languages, to colonial-era records and photographs. Sound recordings include the Syliphone record label collection from Guinea. The records can be searched and accessed through the EAP website and the British Library's Archives and Manuscripts catalogue.

- Gallica

  - The digital library of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BNF; National Library of France) offers digital copies of over one hundred Arabic-script manuscripts from Africa, including many from Timbuktu. The metadata is detailed and informative; the reproduction is black and white.

- Oriental Manuscript Resource (OMAR), University of Freiburg

  - Digitised copies of 2,500 Arabic manuscripts from Mauritania. The originals are held at the Institute Mauritanien de Recherche Scientifique in Nouakchott, Mauritania; digitisation was carried out from microfilm copies made between 1979 and 1997 and held at the University of Freiburg, Germany. For expertise in

manuscripts see also the website of the [Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, University of Hamburg](#).

- [SOAS Digital Collections](#)

  o The digital library of SOAS, University of London, includes manuscripts from numerous countries, especially Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, Niger and Chad.

- [UK National Archives](#)

  o The National Archives' website offers many relevant record series free on '[digital microfilm](#)' (i.e. digitised microfilm) as large pdfs available for download (these are not searchable by keyword). They include selected records of the Board of Trade, Cabinet Office, Colonial Office and War Office. The collection offers the very extensive (and mainly nineteenth-century) series of [records concerning the slave trade](#) in FO 84. It also includes records from South Africa (on the [Cape Colony](#), [Griqualand West](#), and the [South African Air Force](#)), as well as [Anthony Eden's private office papers](#), which include material on Sudan and Egypt. (The National Archives also offers numerous records targeted at family historians on a 'pay to use' basis.)

- Material from commercial publishers (behind a paywall) includes the following:

  o [Adam Matthew](#)

    ▪ *Confidential Print: Africa, 1834–1966* – significant correspondence printed for internal circulation by the British government.

  o *Empire Online* – covers five centuries, with a focus on the British empire, and includes material from several UK libraries and archives.

- [Aluka](#) on [JSTOR](#)

- o World Heritage Sites: Africa is a collection initially put together by the Aluka

  project, and now available on JSTOR. It includes input from several European

  countries. Although it is behind a paywall, thumbnail images and metadata are

  freely searchable. Aluka also offers Struggles for Freedom Southern Africa.

- o Gale Cengage Learning

  - ▪ *Europe and Africa: Commerce, Christianity, Civilization and Conquest*.

    This is part of *Nineteenth Century Collections Online* (covering the 'long

    nineteenth century') and includes records from European archives and

    libraries.

[**Fig. 2** 'Lawtanug barke' (The flourishing of baraka (blessing)), a genealogy of Cheikh

Ahmadou Bamba, an 18th-century religious leader in Senegal. Digitised under the

Endangered Archives Programme.

British Library, EAP334/12/1, https://eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP334-12-1]

Maps

- The British Library has digitised numerous historic maps of Africa, including a collection

  of maps of East Africa from the War Office archive (also on Wikimedia Commons).

- On Gallica, digitised maps are available through L'Afrique en cartes. These include much

  of a map of Africa by Lannoy de Bissy, completed in 1888, along with De Bissy's

  extensive archive.

- The Old Maps Online resource brings together the cartographic collections of a wide

  variety of European and American institutions in an easily navigable arrangement.

Museum Collections

Museum collections (which often include both picture and object collections, and sometimes audiovisual material) are particularly well represented in Europeana. They can also be found on the websites of individual museums as well as national aggregators. The most significant museums for Africa with extensive online collections include:

- Belgium: Royal Museum for Central Africa

- France: Musée du Quai Branly

- Germany: Ethnologisches Museum, Berlin

- UK: in addition to the British Museum, other collections of interest include those of the Horniman Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum. Museum collections are aggregated on Culture Grid.

- The online Musical Instruments Museum has extensive African content.

Picture Collections

The majority of digitised resources on the web consist of photographs and other visual illustrations. This section lists collections relating to more than one region of Africa; collections relating to only one region of the continent are given in the regional listings below. It is necessary to consult both to gain a full picture of what is available for any geographic area.

- Africa Through a Lens
  - This collection consists of digitised photographs from over one hundred years of African history, beginning in the 1860s. They are taken from the Foreign and

Commonwealth Office photographic collection (CO 1069) held at the UK National Archives.[29]

- African Independence Days, University of Mainz, Germany

  - This is an extensive digital archive of material in a number of formats, including photographs, ephemera and newspapers. Many of the items deal with anniversaries of independence. The countries covered are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria and Tanzania.

- African Rock Art Image Project

  - This project, run by the British Museum and funded by Arcadia, is making available the photograph holdings of the Trust for African Rock Art. The website includes essays on rock art and a gateway to the photograph database, which forms part of the British Museum's collections database.

- AfricanPhotography.org

  - Photographs of West, Central and Southern Africa, 1840 to the present, many by African photographers. See also African Photography Initiatives.

- Cambridge Digital Library

  - The archives of the Royal Commonwealth Society are held by the University of Cambridge, and much has been made available digitally. The content is particularly rich for West Africa, and also includes many other countries. There are nineteenth-century water-colours of South Africa and early twentieth-century photographs of Maputo, Mozambique.

- DEVA

  - The DEVA database (Digitalisierung Edition Vernetzung in den Akrikawissenschaften – digitisation, publishing and connecting in African

Studies) is a combined catalogue and digital archive based at the University of Bayreuth in Germany. The collections include East African photographs; early twentieth-century postcards from North Africa; photographs and sound recordings of Hausa and Tuareg in Nigeria, Niger and Algeria in the 2000s; and images of the art collections of the Nigeria-based Ulli Beier, held by the university.

- [Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft photograph collection](#)
  - This very extensive collection of photographs, covering the period 1887–1943, from the German Colonial Association is made available on the website of the University of Frankfurt. The African countries covered are Burundi, Cameroon, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania and Togo. In German only.

- [Frits Eisenloeffel Photograph Collection](#)
  - A selection of the photographs of a Dutch journalist on African independence struggles and liberation. The collection is held at the International Institute of Social History in the Netherlands, and relates to Angola, Cape Verde, Eritrea, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal, and Sudan.

- [Frobenius Institute](#)
  - This extensive picture archive from a German cultural anthropology research institute covers the period 1830–1964. At its core are the expeditions of the traveller Leo Frobenius to various parts of Africa. The collections include copies of rock art from West and Southern Africa.

- [German Federal Archives – Digital Picture Archive](#)
  - This extensive online archive from the Bundesarchiv includes photographs from a wide range of African countries and relates to recent as well as colonial history.

- [Indigo – IRD Picture Library](#)

  - Extensive photograph database from the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, France. The focus is on contemporary photographs, but there is some older material.

- [International Mission Photography Archive](#)

  - The IMPA, available through the website of the University of Southern California, makes available missionary photographs from across Africa; these offer much information about African societies as well as missionary work. Collections incorporated into this database include those of mission societies from Denmark, France, Germany, Norway, Switzerland and the UK. They include photographs from Congo-Brazzaville, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Madagascar, and Tanzania, and from across southern and West Africa.

- [O Portal das Memórias de África e do Oriente](#)

  - A collection of digitised books and journals relating to Portugal's colonial history, as well as photographs and postcards. Hosted by Aveiro University, Portugal.

- [Royal Geographical Society](#)

  - The RGS offers a commercial picture library with extensive African items.

- [Science & Society Picture Library](#)

  - This commercial picture library, a partnership of four UK museums, includes numerous photographs of Africa.

- [Société de géographie photographs](#)

  - Held at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, this very extensive collection of photographs dates from approximately 1850 to 1950 has been partly digitised and made available on [Gallica](#), with further content to follow.

- Ulysse
  - This database from the Archives nationale d'outre-mer (French national overseas archives) includes a sizeable collection of digitised photographs, as well as other visual items and maps.

Printed Books

Older published source material relevant to Africa, particularly books published in Europe, is relatively easy to find on the internet since, being out of copyright, such items have been digitised *en masse*. See below for some of the major sources. (More ephemeral material such as pamphlets is covered below under the relevant section.)

- Explore the British Library
  - Search the British Library's main catalogue to find freely available older digitised books. These items can be viewed via the BL's website or Google Books.
- Gallica
  - The digital library of the Bibliothèque nationale de France offers digitised books relating to Africa, collections of research and cultural publications, and historic government publications relating to French Equatorial Africa, French West Africa, Madagascar, Comoros Islands, French Somaliland (now Djibouti), Tunisia and Algeria.
- Goussen Library Collection, University of Bonn, Germany
  - Offers forty Ethiopic printed books, with predominantly Biblical content.
- O Portal das Memórias de África e do Oriente
  - A collection of digitised books and journals relating to Portugal's colonial history. Hosted by Aveiro University, Portugal.

- SOAS Digital Collections

    o These digitised resources selected from the collections of SOAS, University of London, include digitised older books, especially works in African languages. At the time of writing, the resource covers nineteen African countries.

- Sudan Open Archive

    o Hosted by the Rift Valley Institute (which is based in Kenya and the UK), this site gives access to published and grey literature from the Sudans, including a range of historical material.

Newspapers

- IFRA Nairobi Press Archive

    o More than 50,000 digitised press cuttings from the late 1970s, made available through the Institut français de recherche en Afrique in Nairobi. In English.

- Retronews

    o Very extensive site of digitised French newspapers, focused on the period 1881–1914, including a colonies theme with explanatory text.

- British Newspaper Archive

    o Available behind a paywall (or free onsite at the British Library), this very extensive resource, developed by Findmypast and the British Library, consists of mainly nineteenth-century newspapers from the UK and Ireland and includes copious coverage of African news.

- Readex

    o This US commercial company publishes African Newspapers series 1 and 2 (1800–1925) (behind a paywall).

Sound and Moving Image

- 40 anos de 25 de Abril – 40 anos de independência

  - Provided by the German radio station Deutsche Welle, this site provides resources (including newspaper cuttings, interviews and photographs) on the recent history of Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Portugal, Cape Verde, and Sao Tome and Principe.

- Archives d'Afrique – Radio France Internationale

  - An extensive series of programmes on recent African history, including contemporary sound recordings.

- BL Sounds

  - This website provides access to very extensive African sound collections held by the British Library, including music, literature and drama, and early ethnographic recordings. Many are freely available to stream (to find them, tick the box marked 'only recordings everyone can play'), while others can be heard onsite at the British Library or in UK universities.

- British Film Institute

  - BFI Player offers a selection of films from or relating to Africa for streaming (a mixture of free and charged resources).

- Colonial Film: Moving Images of the British Empire

  - This website brings together three historic UK film collections, with around 150 films (from across the British empire) available to view online. The site provides information on about 6,000 films in total.

- Dismarc

- o This site, which aggregates content for Europeana, brings together music collections from across Europe and beyond. Many of the records link to playable content.

- European Film Gateway

  - o This resource, which contributes content to Europeana, brings together the collections of thirty-eight film archives from across Europe.

- EUscreen

  - o The site includes a portal giving access to audiovisual clips giving insight into the social, cultural and political history of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It offers a variety of footage on Africa.

- Institut National de l'Audiovisual, France

  - o Large online collections of film relating to Africa; online viewing may be charged. Search the holdings though Europeana.

- Royal Museum for Central Africa

  - o Belgian museum whose collections centre on what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo. The website gives access to the partially digitised Ethnological Sound Archive.

- World Oral Literature Project

  - o Based at the Universities of Cambridge and Yale, this website offers selected African material from Zambia, Egypt, Nigeria, and other countries, and includes a selection of the recordings of Ruth Finnegan, author of the classic *Oral Literature in Africa* (1970); a revised (open access) edition of the book is available here.

- Alexander Street

- This commercial publisher provides extensive audio-visual content (behind a paywall), including anthropological material (partly sourced from the collections of the Royal Anthropological Institute, London).

Websites by Region

Central Africa

This section deals with websites focusing specifically on Central Africa. For a more complete picture of resources relevant to this region, please see also the lists of key websites, and websites by format, above.

[Archives de l'Afrique Equatoriale Française (Brazzaville)](#)

- This website mainly consists of finding aids to the holdings of the National Archives of Congo-Brazzaville. It is the work of Vincent Hirribarren (Kings College London) and Jean-Pierre Bat (French National Archives), in partnership with the Congo Archives.

- [Basel Mission Archives](#)
  - This site brings together digitised photographs and maps with detailed finding aids to the rest of the Basel Mission's collections. The mission's fields of interest in Africa were Ghana (from 1828) and Cameroon (from 1886). The integration of these resources and the level of detail with which they are described makes this site particularly valuable.

- Congo Antislavery
  - A large collection of digitised photographs on this subject is due to come online in 2018 as part of the [Antislavery Usable Past](#) research project, based at the University of Nottingham, UK.

- [In the Footsteps of the 1946 Ougooué-Congo Mission](#)

  - This web exhibition featured on [Europeana](#) deals with an expedition to Congo-Brazzaville and Gabon. It consists mainly of text and photographs, and is in English and French.

- [Livingstone Online](#)

  - Digital archives and scholarly content concerning the nineteenth-century British missionary and traveller David Livingstone.

- [Royal Museum for Central Africa](#)

  - Belgian museum whose collections centre on what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo. The website gives access to featured collections as well as the inventory of the Stanley archive and [sound recordings](#).

Horn of Africa and East Africa

This section deals with websites focusing specifically on the Horn and East Africa. For a more complete picture of resources relevant to this region, please see also the lists of key websites, and websites by format, above.

- [Cultura Italia](#)

  - The Italian national aggregator is especially useful for material on Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia.

- [Livingstone Online](#)

  - Digital archives and scholarly content concerning the nineteenth-century British missionary and traveller David Livingstone.

- [Maji Maji Bibliography Project](#)

- Useful website giving references to published primary sources on the Maji Maji uprising in Tanganyika. Its authorship is not made clear, and it has not been updated since 2004.

- [Eridadi M. K. Mulira Papers](#)

  - These papers of one of Uganda's prominent politicians in the second half of the twentieth century are digitised and made available through the University of Cambridge website.

- [Qatar Digital Library](#)

  - This very extensive collection of manuscripts in Arabic and archival records in English is the result of a major partnership between the British Library and the Qatar Museums Authority. The site makes available large numbers of records (including documents, photographs and drawings, and maps) from the India Office Records held at the British Library. This online archive contains material relating to many African countries, especially Egypt, British Somaliland and Abyssinia, since the British interest in these parts of Africa was pursued through the British government of India. In English and Arabic.

- [Rwanda: De la guerre au génocide](#)

  - The website of a book of this title by André Guichaoua, this resource offers open access material relating to the 1994 genocide in French, English and Kinyarwanda.

Southern Africa (including the Indian Ocean Islands)

This section deals with websites focusing specifically on Southern Africa. For a more complete picture of resources relevant to this region, please see also the lists of key websites, and websites by format, above.

- Basler Afrika Bibliographien

  - The digital collections of the Basel Africa Library are described here. They include photographs, which are incorporated into the archive catalogue. A large collection of digitised posters, as well as online publications, can be found in the library catalogue. The focus is on southern Africa, with a particular emphasis on Namibia.

- Diamang Digital

  - Digitised documents from the archives of an Angolan diamond company, held at the University of Coimbra in Portugal.

- Fundação Mário Soares: Casa Comum

  - This site gives access to collections digitised under the aegis of this non-profit foundation (Mário Soares was a Prime Minister and President who headed Portugal's first democratically elected government in 1976). The digitised records include archives relating to the Angolan poet and politician Mario Pinto de Andrade and copies of the works of Mozambican artist Malangatana Valente Ngwenya.

- Legacies of British Slave-ownership

  - Large-scale scholarly project making available extensive data on British slave-owners in the Caribbean, South Africa and Mauritius in the 1830s (based on records held at the UK National Archives). At the time of writing, there were plans to extend the project's scope to include the (much more restricted) records on enslaved people.

- Livingstone Online

- Digital archives and scholarly content concerning the nineteenth-century British missionary and traveller David Livingstone.

- The Olive Schreiner Letters Online

  - This ambitious research project consists of transcripts of approximately 5,000 letters by the South African feminist and socialist writer Olive Schreiner (1855–1920), held at a number of repositories internationally, with some contextual material. It is well indexed and fully searchable (The resource does not include digitised images of the correspondence.)[30]

- Windhoek Old Location photographs

  - 57 photographs, part of a thematic collection offered by the Nordic Africa Institute.

- Rand Daily Mail

  - This important newspaper, which often took an anti-apartheid editorial stance, is provided by Readex (behind a paywall) and has been digitised partly from the British Library's holdings. When digitisation is complete, the dates covered will be 1902–1985.

- **Digital collections dealing with liberation struggles in Southern Africa:**

  - Anti-Apartheid and Southern Africa Collection Guide

    - This guide to an important collection held at the Institute for International History in Amsterdam provides substantial information (but not digitised content).

  - *Apartheid South Africa, 1948–1980*

    - From commercial publisher Adam Matthew (behind a paywall), this resource consists of correspondence held at the UK National Archives.

  - Basler Afrika Bibliographien

- - The Basel Africa Library's digitised poster collection is available through the [library catalogue](#).

  - o [Ruth First Papers](#)

    - Selected papers from the Ruth First collections held by the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, digitised in collaboration with partners in South Africa and Mozambique. Ruth First was a journalist and anti-apartheid campaigner who was assassinated in Maputo in 1982.

  - o [Forward to Freedom](#)

    - This site presents an extensive selection of the records of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement (held in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, UK), covering the period 1959–1994. Online resources include narrative text, posters, leaflets, newsletters and other ephemera, photographs, interview transcripts, and a few video clips.

  - o [Liberation Africa](#)

    - This is the website of the Nordic Documentation on the Liberation Struggle in Southern Africa Project, covering the involvement of the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden). Much of the content consists of finding aids to archives which have not been digitised, but digitised resources include interview transcripts in English, a fairly extensive picture archive, and solidarity posters, especially from Mozambique.

  - o [Peter MacKay Archive](#)

    - This substantial archive, held at the University of Stirling, UK, largely concerns the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe. As of late 2017, the

papers are being digitised through crowdfunding and are to be made available on JSTOR (behind a paywall).

- Political Archives from the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London

  - This site offers selected digitised ephemera, including pamphlets and posters, from a number of African countries, as well as a more extensive catalogue of this material. South Africa is especially well represented.

- Struggles for Freedom Southern Africa

  - This digital collection, originally created through the Aluka project and now behind a paywall on JSTOR, includes content from a variety of sources including southern African and European countries. The collection can be freely searched and thumbnails viewed online; to view and download larger images, a subscription to JSTOR is necessary. The Southern African content of this site is also freely available via DISA (Digital Innovation South Africa).

- African Activist Archive

  - This US site, provided by Michigan State University, will also be of interest to researchers in this field.

[**Figure 3.** Medical consultation in Campada college, Guinea-Bissau. PAIGC soldiers having tea, 1973–4.

By Roel Coutinho. CC-BY-SA-4.0. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ASC_Leiden_-_Coutinho_Collection_-_2_23_-_PAIGC_soldiers_in_Guinea-Bissau_-_PAIGC_soldiers_having_tea_-_1973.tif]

West Africa and Transatlantic Studies

This section deals with websites focusing specifically on West Africa. For a more complete picture of resources relevant to this region, please see also the lists of key websites, and websites by format, above.

- [Fonds Emile-Louis Abbat sur le Soudan français](#)
  - Photographs, letters and reports from Mali, Senegal and Burkina Faso, 1894–98. Abbat was an army lieutenant in French Sudan during that period, and this website is provided by his great-granddaughter.
- [Archives coloniales d'Abidjan](#)
  - This website mainly consists of finding aids to the holdings of the National Archives of Côte d'Ivoire, as well as a small selection of digitised documents. It is the work of Vincent Hirribarren (Kings College London) and Jean-Pierre Bat (French National Archives), in partnership with the archives in Abidjan.
- [Basel Mission Archives](#)
- This site brings together digitised photographs and maps with detailed finding aids to the rest of the Basel Mission's collections. The mission's fields of interest in Africa were Ghana (from 1828) and Cameroon (from 1886). The integration of these resources and the level of detail with which they are described makes this site particularly valuable.
- [Cartes postales de l'Afrique Occidentale Française (1900–60)](#)
  - This website displays a collection of about 1,400 postcards of French West Africa, together with detailed metadata.

- Roel Coetinho photograph collection

  - Approximately 750 photographs taken by Professor Coetinho during his medical work in Guinea Bissau and Senegal in 1973–4 and made available on Wikimedia Commons. The photographs, which were taken during the final period of the independence struggle in Guinea Bissau, cover a broad range of themes. The full digital archive is available here and the physical collection is at the Library of the African Studies Centre, University of Leiden.

- Centre Edmond Fortier

  - Samples of postcards showing photographs by Edmond Fortier, a photographer active in Senegal and other parts of West Africa in the early twentieth century.[31]

- Fundação Mário Soares: Casa Comum

  - This site gives access to collections digitised under the aegis of this non-profit foundation: Mário Soares was a Prime Minister and President who headed Portugal's first democratically elected government in 1976. The digitised records include archives relating to the nationalist Amilcar Cabral and record series from Guinea Bissau.

- Gold Coast DataBase

  - This site offers an extensive database of biographical information concerning Euro-African and Dutch individuals and families in West Africa, as well as some picture collections. It is the website of Michel R. Doortmont; access is free but registration is necessary.

- Luís Graça. Subsídios para a história da guerra colonial

  - A selection of photographs and maps relating to Guinea Bissau in the 1950s.

- Sjoerd Hofstra photograph collection

- Over one hundred photographs showing Sierra Leone in the period 1934–1936, available on Wikimedia Commons under a Creative Commons licence (allowing reuse under certain conditions). Sjoerd Hofstra was a Dutch professor of anthropology, whose collection is deposited in the Library of the African Studies Centre, University of Leiden.

[**Figure 4.** Panguma, Sierra Leone, 1935

By Sjoerd Hofstra - African Studies Centre (Leiden), CC BY-SA 3.0,

https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=31456012]

- Liberation Africa
  - The website of the Nordic Documentation on the Liberation Struggle in Southern Africa Project includes photographs taken by Knut Andreasson in the liberated areas of Guinea Bissau in 1970.
- opensourceguinea.org
  - Enrique Martino has assembled on this site the sources he used for his Berlin PhD, at least 1,500 items from several European countries as well as Nigeria. He sees the website as a new way of opening the archive.[32]
- Cahiers de terrain de Raymond Mauny
  - Raymond Mauny (1912–94) was a French archaeologist and historian. This website is the product of a continuing programme, using a blog-type interface, to digitise his journals for the period 1942–1962, when he was employed at the Institut français de l'Afrique noire in Dakar, Senegal.

- Sierra Leone 1930s photographs
  - 115 anonymous photographs of Sierra Leone in the 1930s on Wikimedia Commons.

- Sierra Leone Heritage
  - This imaginative website includes digitised items from a number of museums, including the Sierra Leone National Museum, and ethnographic recordings held by the British Library.

- West Africa: Word, Symbol, Song
  - Digitised collection items and expert content from the 2015–2016 exhibition of the same title at the British Library.

- West African Settlement History Archive
  - This site mainly consists of finding aids to an archival collection (including interviews and documentary material) held at Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz, Germany, concerning the people of north-western Ghana and south-western Burkina Faso.

- **Digital collections dealing with enslavement and transatlantic studies**
  - The Atlantic: Slavery, Trade and Empire
    - This website accompanies a permanent gallery at the National Maritime Museum, London, opened in 2007 to commemorate the bicentenary of the abolition of the British transatlantic slave trade. It contains 220 digitised objects.
  - The Danish West Indies – Sources of History
    - On 1 March 2017 the Danish National Archives made all its colonial records relating to the Danish Virgin Islands freely available online; creation of transcripts and tagging of records by volunteers continued

through 2017. This massive project, carried out with the support of the Danish National Archives and the Danish government, is unusual in its scope; although it deals with the Caribbean rather than Africa, the records will be of interest to transatlantic scholars.

- [Legacies of British Slave-ownership](#)
  - Large-scale scholarly project, based at UCL, London, making available extensive data on British slave-owners in the Caribbean, South Africa and Mauritius in the 1830s (based on records held at the UK National Archives). At the time of writing, there were plans to extend the project's scope to include the much more restricted records on enslaved people.

- [Recovered Histories: Reawakening the Narratives of Enslavement, Resistance and the Fight for Freedom](#)
  - Extensive digitised eighteenth- and nineteenth-century collections of the UK-based Anti-Slavery International, including a large number of pamphlets. It is unfortunate that lack of metadata makes the identification of some items difficult, but most can be identified through their digitised title pages.

- [Remembering 1807](#)
  - Digitised collections recording the commemorations of the bicentenary of the abolition of the British transatlantic slave trade in 2007. This digitised collection has been made available online as part of the [Antislavery Usable Past](#) research project, based at the University of Nottingham, UK.

- [Traite des noirs et esclavage](#)

- Digitised records relating to five slave ships (1772–1791) held in the municipal archives in La Rochelle, France. There is further information [here](#).

- [Understanding Slavery Initiative](#)

  - Built to commemorate the 2007 bicentenary of the abolition of the British transatlantic slave trade, by 2017 this website was still live, but no longer being updated. It was a national learning project supported by several UK partners, and offers essays and a selection of digitised objects.

- *Slavery, Abolition and Social Justice*

  - The earliest material in this extensive collection, which includes material from European libraries and archives, dates from 1490. It is provided by commercial publisher [Adam Matthew](#) (behind a paywall).

- *Slavery and Anti-Slavery: A Transnational Archive*

  - Extensive collection of historical documentation, including some content from European libraries and archives, from [Gale Cengage Learning](#) (behind a paywall).

Selected Resources in Related Disciplines

- [Biblioteca Africana](#)

  - Part of the Miguel de Cervantes Virtual Library, this resource focuses on African authors. In Spanish.

- [Endangered Languages Programme](#)

  - This resource preserves and publishes endangered language documentation materials from around the world. Some of the material is open access, while some is subject to sign-in.

- Espace Afrique-Caraïbe

    o Literary website that includes the digitised manuscripts of the Malagasy writer
       Jean-Jacques Rabearivelo.

- Language and Popular Culture in Africa

    o This site, provided by the academics at the University of Amsterdam, includes a
       small number of historical texts in African languages, with interpretation in
       English or French.

[2] For an introduction to many of the issues discussed in this section, see T. Barringer and M. Wallace (eds), *African Studies in the Digital Age: DisConnects?* (Leiden, 2014).

[3] See, for example, J. E. Phillips, 'The Early Issues of the First Newspaper in Hausa, *Gaskiya ta fi Kwabo*, 1939–1945', *History in Africa* 14 (2014), pp. 425–431. These early issues were digitised by Arewa House in Nigeria with funding from the Endangered Archives Programme. See also M. Kominko (ed.), *From Dust to Digital: Ten Years of the Endangered Archives Programme* (OpenBook Publishers, 2015), available open access at https://www.openbookpublishers.com/product/283. There are chapters on EAP projects and related scholarship in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Guinea, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, and Senegal.

[4] H. Rose-Murray, 'Black Abolitionist Performances and their Presence in Britain', British Library blog (Aug. 12, 2016), http://blogs.bl.uk/digital-scholarship/2016/08/black-abolitionist-performances-and-their-presence-in-britain-progress.html. Accessed Nov. 27, 2017.

[5] For a discussion of how best to elicit and channel public participation in one project see J. Orme, 'Viewing "Africa Through a Lens"' in Barringer and Wallace (eds), *African Studies,* 221–233.

[6] For example, over £8,000 was raised to digitise the Peter Mackay Archive at the University of Stirling in Scotland in 2016–17. See http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/petermackay/, accessed Dec. 4 2017.

[7] M. Kominko, 'Crumb Trails, Threads and Traces: Endangered Archives and History' in *idem* (ed.), *From Dust to Digital,* xlix–lxviii.

[8] E. Martino, 'Open Sourcing the Colonial Archive – A Digital Montage of the History of Fernando Po and the Bight of Biafra', *History in Africa*, 41 (2014), 387–415.

[9] https://pro.europeana.eu/#about, accessed Nov. 13 2017.

[10] Website of the German Digital Library, https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/content/faq#301, accessed Nov. 13 2017.

[11] T. Scott, 'Building a Free and Unrestricted Digital Museum and Library', paper to Museum Training Program for Medical Communities International Lectures and Workshop, Fu Jen Catholic University, Taipei Taiwan (Oct. 2017), https://stacks.wellcomecollection.org/building-a-free-and-unrestricted-digital-museum-and-library-6cdf28784068. Accessed Nov. 27, 2017.

[12] For example, see D.A. Reboussin and L.N. Taylor, 'Improving Digital Collection Access with Simple Search Engine Optimisation Strategies' in Barringer and Wallace (eds), *African Studies*.

[13] For further discussion of digital selection policies see I. Cooke and M. Wallace, 'African Studies in the Digital Age: Challenges for Research and National Libraries' in Barringer and Wallace (eds), *African Studies*, 15–38.

[14] On EAP see Kominko (ed.), *From Dust to Digital.*

[15] The comments page of the Basel Mission Archives's website at http://www.bmarchives.org/my-users/user/comments (accessed 27 Nov. 2017) shows the range of people responding to their online holdings.

16 J. Butterworth, 'Saving Archives through Digitisation: Reflections on Endangered Archives Programme Projects in Africa', unpublished paper to SCOLMA conference, Sept. 11 2017. On these recordings see Graeme Counsel, 'Syliphone Record Label Archive from Guinea', British Library blog (Jan. 25 2016), http://blogs.bl.uk/endangeredarchives/2016/01/syliphone-collection-guinea-sounds.html, accessed 27 Nov. 2017.

[17] For a summary of the debates around Aluka, see Cooke and Wallace, 'African Studies', 28–31.

[18] For a useful perspective on the practicalities of digitisation, see this blog from a Canadian archive: https://peelarchivesblog.com/2017/05/31/why-dont-archivists-digitize-everything/. Accessed Nov. 7 2017.

[19] See http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/copyright/orphan_works/index_en.htm, accessed Dec. 4 2017.

[20] https://pro.europeana.eu/our-mission/history, accessed Nov. 13 2017. See also J. Purday, 'Think Culture: Europeana.eu from Concept to Construction', *The Electronic Library* 27, 6 (2009), 919–937.

[21] https://www.europeana.eu/portal/en/explore/sources.html, accessed Dec. 4 2017.

[22] https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/# and https://www.europeana.eu/portal/en/search?f%5BPROVIDER%5D%5B%5D=Deutsche+Digitale+Bibliothek&per_page=96&q=&view=grid (where a search on the German Digital Library gives 1.3m+ results). Both accessed Nov. 30 2017.

[23] The Collections Trust is funding the maintenance of the current Culture Grid website.

[24] http://www.archivesportaleurope.net/ and http://www.archivesportaleurope.net/about-us (accessed Dec. 4 2017).

[25] For German colonial history see especially the files of the Reichskolonialamt (1832–1945, R 1001), Behörden des Schutzgebietes Deutsch-Südwestafrika (1886–1939, R 1002), Behörden des Schutzgebietes Deutsch-Ostafrika (1893–1916, R 1003), and those of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft (1887–1936, R 8023). Bergenthum, 'Afrika'.

[26] http://wiki.archivesportaleurope.net/index.php/Category:Portal_search_and_find, accessed Nov. 7 2017.

[27] For a broader discussion of the problems of searching digitised content, see Scott, 'Digital Museum and Library'.

[28] For a description of the archives relating to Madagascar (with a summary in English) see E. Camara and J. Villon, 'Centres des Archives d'Outre-Mer à Aix-en-Provence (CAOM): Historique des archives de Madagascar', *African Research and Documentation* 101 (2006), 27–37.

[29] For a discussion of the creation of this resource see Orme, 'Africa Through a Lens'.

[30] See also L. Stanley and H. Dampier, 'Towards the Epistolarium: Issues in Researching and Publishing the Olive Schreiner Letters', *African Research and Documentation*, 113 (2010), 27–32.

[31] See also P. Hickling, 'The Early Photographs of Edmond Fortier: Documenting Postcards from Senegal', *African Research and Documentation*, 102 (2007), 37–54; D. Moreau, *Edmond Fortier, viagem a Timbuktu: fotografias da África do Oeste em 1906* (Sao Paolo, Brazil, 2015).

[32] Enrique Martino, 'Touts and Despots: Recruiting Assemblages of Contract Labour in Fernando Pó and the Gulf of Guinea, 1858-1979' (PhD, Humboldt University of Berlin, 2016), https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6aujx24LYojSS1jVVZuOFIyVTA/view, accessed Dec. 4, 2017; Martino, 'Open Sourcing'.