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Discovery Of River Gambra (1623), Hakluyt Society Series III, Vol. 2

THE DISCOVERY OF
RIVER GAMBRA, 1623
BY RICHARD JOBSON

David P. Gamble
and P.E.H. Hair

THE HAKLUYT SOCIETY
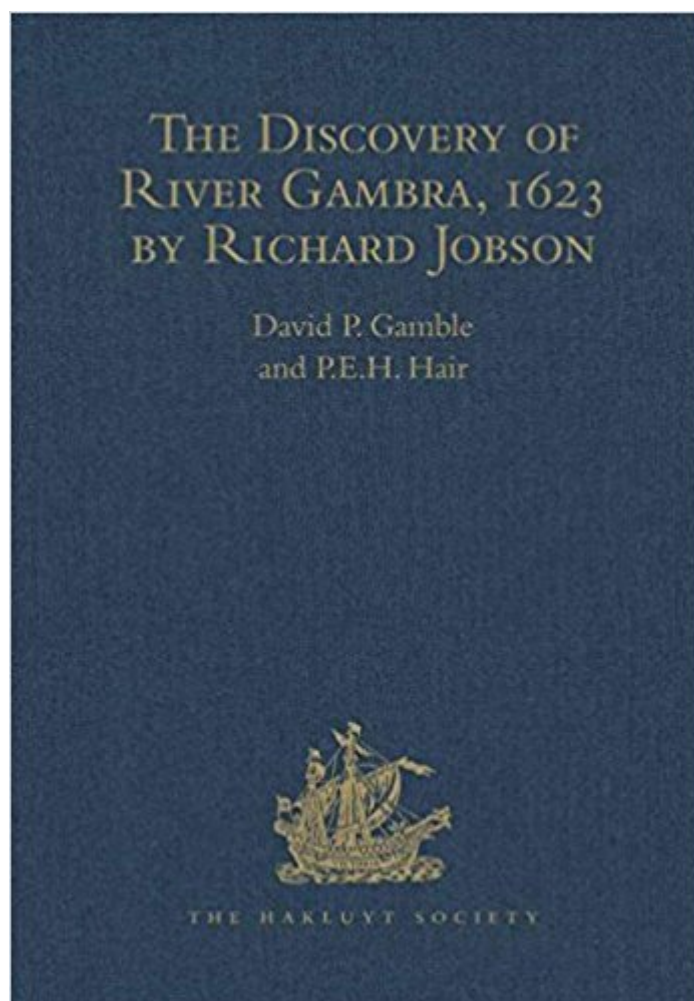
Synopsis

In 1623 Richard Jobson published an account of a 1620-1621 English voyage up River Gambra, during which a party, led by himself, penetrated to a point some 460 miles up-river. The purpose of the voyage was to make contact with the gold trade of the West African interior, but in this there was little success. However, Jobson¢â ¬â„¢s account of the river, its commerce, natural history, peoples, religions and polities, was the earliest to appear in print, in this fullness of detail, in any language. It was also the earliest detailed account of any part of Black Africa, by an Englishman. Jobson¢â ¬â„¢s account, almost entirely original, has special interest in its author¢â ¬â„¢s observations on the African scene, particularly those on the African peoples and individuals encountered. Jobson discusses such topics as local agriculture and trade, the role of Islam, political culture, and the position of women. Despite the limits of his experience, his observations are seemingly accurate and generally perceptive, as well as being (perhaps unexpectedly) often tolerant and even sympathetic.

Book Information

Hardcover: 368 pages

Publisher: Hakluyt Society; 1 edition (September 28, 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0904180646

ISBN-13: 978-0904180640

Product Dimensions: 1.2 x 7 x 9.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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