

covers the years 1497-1503, and is an admirably presented work of scholarship. It is hoped that the series may be completed by 1984. These volumes will not, however, include the Congo nor any part of western Africa, and the publication of documents on the largest scale concerning these areas is certainly greatly to be desired.

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ARCHIVES DE FRANCE (FRENCH NATIONAL ARCHIVES)

In 1962 I found thirty-five unpublished documents in the French National Archives which complete the information given on East Africa c. A.D. 1773-1779 in the Morice manuscript in Rhodes House, Oxford, and the De Curt manuscript in the Rare Books Library, University of Chicago. From these it has been possible to build up a picture of the negotiations of a French trader, Morice, to set up a slave-trading centre at Kilwa Kisiwani in 1776-1777, and at the same time to obtain a clear picture of the state of Kilwa (on the coast of Tanzania) at this period. The documents have been arranged so that they tell the story almost in diary form. They are accompanied by an introduction, describing the history of the documents, which include a treaty in Arabic and French, and three essays: an account of French activities on the East African coast in the 18th Century, a detailed discussion of the genealogy and history of the royal house of Kilwa from c. 1700 to its eclipse c. 1840, and a narrative account of the history of Kilwa during the same period, including a discussion of its extent, constitution, politics, trade and social organization. This work is now in the press, and will shortly be published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford, as The French at Kilwa Island.

In July, 1964, I was able to spend a further month in the French National Archives and in the archives of the French Ministry of the Navy which, until late in the 19th Century, was concerned with French colonial affairs. A search through the sections of the archives concerning Ile de France (now Mauritius) has brought to light more than fifty documents concerning French relations with the East African coast in the 18th Century, whilst a search in the documents of the French East India Company has yielded more information

concerning the trade pattern during the same period. More than 170 volumes were read for the period A.D. 1608-1804. An important document was found which sustains some of the dates given in the Swahili traditional history of Pate, on the Kenya coast. A further series of documents gives an account of trade with parts of the southern coast of Tanzania, other than Kilwa, and of the beginnings of French trade and association with the Arab state of Muscat, which are important in connection with later Anglo-French rivalry in Zanzibar in the earlier 19th Century. It is clear that much yet remains to be done in this field which can give new and added clarity to the history of the East African coast in the 18th and early 19th Centuries, especially from the point of view of the people themselves rather than from that of foreign interests.

Microfilms of these documents amounting to 400 pages are shortly expected from Paris, and will be deposited in the library.

It may perhaps be useful to add some notes concerning the French National Archives. The Archives de France for the most part contain documents dating before the Revolution of 1789, although in certain cases these go beyond this year, but seldom beyond the beginning of the Empire. Thus the greater part of the 19th Century archives are not in the Archives de France, but remain in the custody of the Ministries concerned, all of which have their own archives. Certain of these, such as the Ministère de la Marine, have been most efficiently catalogued. In other cases, such as the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, there are printed catalogues which simply give the titles and dates of the collections, which generally are bound, but sometimes in boxes.

Entry into any of these archives is obtained generally by a letter of personal recommendation either from one's Embassy or from a University. There are no charges. For entry into the Bibliothèque National it is sufficient to produce a passport, but anyone staying longer than a month is required to produce two photographs and to receive an Identity Card. In the Bibliothèque National there is not only an admirable catalogue but one or more assistants on duty to assist with it.

In addition to these archives, there is an excellent Africana Library at the Centre d'Etudes et de Documentation d'Afrique et d'Outre-Mer, which contains, in addition to printed books, a very comprehensive collection of journals and newspapers from both Francophone and Anglophone Africa.