

EDWARD A. ALPERS
University of California, Los Angeles.

The French Slave Trade in East Africa (1721-1810)*

The historian who wishes to come to an understanding of the East African slave trade will soon be struck by the paucity of reliable, detailed studies bearing on the subject. Indeed, there is scarcely any aspect of the trade which has received adequate scholarly attention. In the existing literature the only studies which begin to satisfy are those dealing with the Sultanate of Zanzibar, although on the African side the future promises more substantial considerations of the effect of the slave trade on various East African societies.¹ All attempts at synthesis, then, including my own recent effort, must be read with this caveat firmly in mind.² This situation contrasts sharply with that for West Africa and the Atlantic slave trade, where a recent revival of interest among historians has already produced a number of important new quantitative and interpretative studies focusing on the basic questions of how and why the trade was generated and sustained, and

* An earlier version of this paper was presented in February 1969 to the research seminar in African History at the University of California, Los Angeles. I am grateful to Professor Robert R. Griffith and the members of the seminar for their comments on that draft. The greater part of the material in this essay was originally included in my doctoral dissertation, "The role of the Yao in the development of trade in East-Central Africa, 1698-c.1850" (University of London, 1966), and the research was partly financed by a travel grant from the Central Research Fund of that institution.

1. See, e.g., Reginald COUPLAND, *East Africa and its Invaders, from the Earliest Times to the Death of Seyyid Said in 1856*, Oxford, 1938; and *The Exploitation of East Africa, 1856-1890*, London, 1939; John M. GRAY, *History of Zanzibar from the Middle Ages to 1856*, London, 1962. However, neither historian deals extensively with the crucially important Banian trading community at Zanzibar. For two contrasting examples of the impact of the slave trade on East African societies, see Edward A. ALPERS, "Trade, State, and Society among the Yao in the Nineteenth Century", *The Journal of African History* (hereafter *JAH*), X, 3, 1969, pp. 405-420; and Isaria N. KIMAMBO, *A Political History of the Pare of North-Eastern Tanzania, c. 1500-1900*, Nairobi, 1969.

2. E. A. ALPERS, *The East African Slave Trade*, Nairobi, 1967 (« Historical Association of Tanzania », Paper No. 3).

on its impact on African society.¹ The present essay explores these very same questions in the context of East Africa and the French slave trade in the Indian Ocean during the eighteenth century.

Given the largely unsatisfactory state of Indian Ocean historical studies, however, it is more than a little difficult to define precisely the wider context of this subject. The admirable confidence with which Philip Curtin, for example, can discuss the components of the South Atlantic System, in which the slave trade was a key institution, cannot be aspired to here.² Yet in looking at the broad patterns of Indian Ocean history, the historian can discern certain entities which constitute systems such as Curtin describes for the South Atlantic. And although the East African littoral clearly was an integral part of the entire Indian Ocean complex, especially in the pre-Portuguese period,³ it is equally clear that the main world setting for pre-colonial East Africa, both coast and, after 1500, interior, can be characterized as the Western Indian Ocean System.

The economic staples of this system were African ivory, on the one hand, and Indian trading cloths and beads, on the other. Among Hindus there was, and still is, a constant demand for ivory to be fashioned into bridal jewelry, as well as the less pressing demand for luxury goods by wealthy Asian potentates and merchants. The tusks of African elephants are both larger and more malleable than the brittle ivory of Indian elephants.⁴ The earliest records of Western Indian Ocean trade indicate that ivory was the primary item being sought from East Africa by foreign merchants from the beginning of

1. See, e.g., Jan VANSINA, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, Madison, 1966 (especially Ch. 7); Walter RODNEY, "African Slavery and Other Forms of Social Oppression in the Context of the Atlantic Slave Trade", *JAH*, VII, 3, 1966, pp. 431-443; Karl POLANYI and Abraham ROTSTEIN, *Dahomey and the Slave Trade: An Analysis of an Archaic Economy*, Seattle, 1966; Pierre VERGER, *Flux et reflux de la traite des nègres entre le golfe de Bénin et Bahia de Todos os Santos du XVII^e au XIX^e siècle*, Paris-La Haye, 1968; Philip D. CURTIN, "Epidemiology and the Slave Trade", *The Political Science Quarterly*, LXXXIII, 2, 1968, pp. 190-216; *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*, Madison, 1969, published after this article was written; and J. D. FAGE, "Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Context of West African History", *JAH*, X, 3, 1969, pp. 393-404.

2. P. D. CURTIN, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850*, Madison, 1964, pp. 4-6 and 432-440.

Outstanding among several studies which convey a sense of the vital flow of Indian Ocean history is Charles R. BOXER, "The Portuguese in the East, 1500-1800", in H. E. LIVERMORE, ed., *Portugal and Brazil: An Introduction*, Oxford, 1953, pp. 185-247.

3. Gervase MATHEW, "The East African Coast until the Coming of the Portuguese", in Roland OLIVER and Gervase MATHEW, eds., *History of East Africa*, Oxford, I, 1963, pp. 94-127; Neville CHITTICK, "The Coast before the Arrival of the Portuguese", in B. A. OGOT and J. A. KIERAN, eds., *Zamani: A Survey of East African History*, Nairobi, 1968, pp. 100-118.

4. G. S. P. FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, *The Medieval History of the Coast of Tanganyika*, Oxford, 1962, pp. 25-26 and n. 16.

the Christian era. Indian textiles remained a staple of trade well into the nineteenth century, when first American and then British cottons challenged and overwhelmed their hold on the African market. The so-called Trade Wind beads of Indian manufacture were completely replaced by Venetian glass beads by the eighteenth century, at the very latest, and may have been losing ground to them over a number of centuries. But whatever the provenance, exotic cloths and beads for African ivory, and to a much lesser extent, gold, formed the base line of the international economic order in the Western Indian Ocean System.

Although slaves were exported from Africa to the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, and the Indian sub-continent from the earliest times, they did not generally become a factor of major economic significance until well into the eighteenth century. And for all their participation in the South Atlantic System, the Portuguese in the East never were major maritime carriers of slaves until the nineteenth century extension of that system to Moçambique. In the first place, the Portuguese primarily sought gold in East Africa ; and despite their disappointment in the proportions of that trade, they continued to seek it into the nineteenth century. In the second place, and more importantly, the Portuguese never established a major plantation economy in the East which required African slave labor to oil the wheels of production. There simply was no great Portuguese demand for slaves from East Africa within the context of the Western Indian Ocean System.

Herein lies the great importance of the French role in the East African slave trade. For the earliest body of traders in the Western Indian Ocean who came to East Africa in search of slaves, above all else, were French merchants from the Mascarene Islands, Ile de France (modern Mauritius) and Bourbon (modern Réunion). Never seeking ivory, they directed all their efforts to securing a regular and growing supply of slave labor for the colonial plantation economy, based on coffee and sugar, which mushroomed on the twin islands during the course of the eighteenth century. Indeed, the French were significant economically not only for their early concentration on exporting slaves from East Africa, but also for their innovation of importing firearms and coinage as part of their main stock in trade.

Two other aspects of the French slave trade deserve mention in this introduction. First, the French were more than a simple economic threat to the Portuguese in East Africa ; they were equally a potential imperial rival of the first order throughout the eighteenth century. Second, and somewhat paradoxically, the operation of the French slave trade at the Portuguese controlled ports of Moçambique stands as a notable exception to the rule that European powers established

on the coast of Africa excluded the nationals of other Western nations from trafficking at each other's coastal entrepôts. In some respects, during the eighteenth century Portuguese commercial policy at Moçambique Island and Ibo seems more typical of a small indigenous coastal state striving to maintain itself as a 'port of trade', in Polanyi's sense, than that of a monopolistically minded European nation.¹ That such a comparison can be suggested is indicative of the weakness of Portugal's presence in East Africa during this period and right through the nineteenth century.

The importance of French slave traders in East Africa was first recognized by G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville and Alison Smith in their chapters for the first volume of the Oxford *History of East Africa*.² Sir Reginald Coupland devoted considerable space to the activities of the French in Western Indian Ocean waters in his first volume on East Africa, but his opinions regarding the major proportions of the ancient slave trade from East Africa prevented him from appreciating the importance of French involvement in that commerce. The best known episode in the history of French activity in East Africa centers on the business of Jean-Vincent Morice at Zanzibar and Kilwa from 1775 to 1779. Although it was Coupland who first described Morice's exploits, the most ambitious previous attempt to place Morice in a general context is Freeman-Grenville's introduction to the documentation concerning the Frenchman. But as remarkable an individual as Morice appears to have been, he was neither the first nor the only French adventurer to ply his trade on the coast.³ His story stands as only one in a series of historical developments, some chance and others decidedly calculated, which date to 1721.

The first period (1721-1734) of French slaving in East Africa was one of chance encounters and abortive plans hatched before the establishment of a viable plantation economy on the Mascarene Islands. The second (1735-1770) was marked by the rapid growth of that economy and by an erratic Portuguese policy towards French traders in East Africa. The third (1771-1784) was dominated by a new singleness of purpose by all concerned parties and by the beginnings of serious French activity north of Cape Delgado, which was the northern limit of Portuguese influence. The fourth (1785-1794) marked the heyday of French slaving in East Africa, when its impact on the history of the region was felt most intensely and when it momen-

1. K. POLANYI, "Ports of Trade in Early Societies", *The Journal of Economic History*, XXIII, 1, 1963, pp. 30-45; POLANYI and ROTSTEIN, pp. 99-130.

2. G. S. P. FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, "The Coast, 1498-1840", and ALISON SMITH, "The Southern Section of the Interior, 1840-1884", in OLIVER and MATHEW, I, pp. 129-168 and 253-296.

3. G. S. P. FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, *The French at Kilwa Island: An Episode in Eighteenth-Century East African History*, Oxford, 1965.

tarily extended itself to the Caribbean, thus establishing an important link between the Western Indian Ocean and the South Atlantic Systems. The fifth, and final, period (1795-1810) dates from the first repercussions of the Napoleonic Wars in the Indian Ocean and closes with the British seizure of Ile de France. Thereafter, while it was by no means defunct, French slaving in the Western Indian Ocean had to adjust itself to a completely new situation of increased British interference, which gave rise to such subterfuges as the process of slave 'Frenchification' in the Seychelles Archipelago before their introduction into the Mascarenes and the notorious 'free labor emigration' scheme, which operated from 1843 into 1864. These new departures, together with the fact that, except at Ibo, French slave trading was now completely overshadowed numerically by that of both the Arabs and the Brazilians, delineate the end of one era and the beginning of another for the French in East Africa.¹

When examining the details of the French slave trade in eighteenth century East Africa, however, it is imperative to recognize that a parallel growth in the Omani Arab slave trade was taking place in the northern waters of the Western Indian Ocean. A completely satisfactory historical explanation for this process has not yet been suggested by anyone. But this does not negate the fact of its existence, even if our quantitative knowledge of, and ability to understand the growth of this trade is woefully inadequate. For this Omani slave trade had, in the long run, a far greater effect on the history of East Africa. Moreover, by virtue of their equal interest in ivory, these Arab traders were themselves more typical representatives than were the French of the traditional patterns of trade in the Western Indian Ocean System. The present contribution, then, analyzes no more than one aspect of a complex system of supply and demand which determined the historical pattern of the East African slave trade.

I. — FIRST CONTACTS (1721-1734)

Before the appointment of Bertrand-François Mahé de La Bourdonnais as Governor-General of the Mascarene Islands in 1734, the islands were essentially a burden to the struggling Compagnie des Indes, which had charge of them. Bourbon was first colonized by a handful of French settlers from Madagascar in 1665, the same year in which Colbert reconstituted the Compagnie. The island was intend-

1. For French activities after 1810, see Norman R. BENNETT, "France and Zanzibar", in Daniel F. McCall, N. R. BENNETT and Jeffrey BUTLER, eds., *Eastern African History*, Boston, U. Papers on Afr., New York, III, 1969, pp. 148-175.

ed to serve as a provisioning station and place of respite for French ships plying the arduous route between France and India, as Moçambique Island and Cape Town already were for the Portuguese and Dutch, respectively.¹ Unlike these two, however, Bourbon was uniquely unsuited for its purpose, as its coast is totally devoid of natural harbors. A half-century later the island and its European population of perhaps 800 individuals were still living "as though lost in an inaccessible region of the ocean," according to Saintoyant, who also compared the society to that of a primitive tribe, subsisting on their efforts as hunters and fishermen, there being no crops cultivated on the island.² By 1712 the Dutch totally abandoned their unsuccessful attempt to colonize Mauritius, which had begun in 1598, and three years later Guillaume Dufresne, a captain in the French Royal Navy, stopped there long enough to claim it for the French Crown and to rename it Ile de France, although it was not until 1721 that colonists from Bourbon first settled it.

In 1715 six coffee plants were introduced to Bourbon from Moka and in 1718 one of the plants reached fruition. By 1723 the Compagnie, which had again been reorganized in 1717, established a monopoly on the coffee trade, and the growth of plantations dates from this time. It was obvious to the Compagnie that for the trade to prove profitable it was necessary that the crop be cultivated extensively and that this, in turn, required a larger labor force than was then available on the island.³ In 1717 there were only 1,100 slaves on Bourbon, according to the estimate of the traveller Le Gentil de La Barbinnais.⁴ Although the French had abandoned Madagascar in 1764, almost all of these slaves were from there, as it was the most convenient source of supply.⁵ For this reason, many slaves continued to come from Madagascar, but they were never wholly satisfactory as laborers for the French islanders. Grant, representing a contemporary colonial viewpoint, wrote in 1749 that slaves, especially those from Madagascar, were "insolent and idle, and consequently of little reliance," and that the latter constituted the majority of the maroons, runaway slaves who inhabited the forests in the interior of the islands.⁶ So while in 1724 an official

1. See C. R. BOXER, "Moçambique Island and the 'carreira da India'", *Studia*, 8, 1961, pp. 95-132.

2. J. SAINTOYANT, *La colonisation française sous l'Ancien Régime (du XV^e siècle à 1789)*, Paris, I, 1929, p. 391.

3. See Albert LOUGNON, *L'Ile Bourbon pendant la Régence. Desforges Bourcher. Les débuts du café*, Paris, 1956.

4. Quoted in Georges AZÉMA, *Histoire de l'Ile Bourbon depuis 1643 jusqu'au 20 décembre 1846*, Paris, 1862, p. 144.

5. For the French establishments on Madagascar in the 17th century, see Hubert DESCHAMPS, *Histoire de Madagascar*, Paris, 2nd ed., 1961, pp. 67-76.

6. Charles GRANT, *The History of Mauritius or the Isle of France and the Neighbouring Islands . . .*, London, 1801, p. 297; see also A. LOUGNON, *Corres-*

envoy was sent to certain ports on the east coast of Madagascar to explore the possibilities of expanding the slave trade between them and the French islands, the first notices of the French trading for slaves along the Moçambique coast also appear in the same period.¹

The initiation of the slave trade between the Mascarenes and Moçambique came about as a matter of chance. As a result of an assault by pirates and rough seas, in 1721 the Count of Ericeira, returning to Lisbon from Goa, had to take port at Saint-Denis, the capital of Bourbon, where he had a cordial reception. He learned there that French slavers at Madagascar were also threatened by pirates. In exchange for a promise of transportation to Europe, Ericeira agreed to write to the Governor of Moçambique and to request that he cooperate with the French with whom this arrangement had been made. Accordingly, two vessels sailed from Bourbon to Moçambique in 1721. Only one cargo of slaves was assembled, but this was the result of disagreements between the French officials in charge of the venture. In spite of doubts which arose in the next few years, the Compagnie was anxious to secure a fruitful commerce with Moçambique, which it believed could satisfactorily fulfill the islands' requirements for slaves.²

By virtue of the Portuguese royal decrees of 8 February 1711 and 5 October 1715, foreign trade was strictly forbidden in the dominions of Portuguese Africa.³ News of the French at Moçambique consequently produced great concern at Lisbon, where the commercial competition of another European power in East Africa was greatly feared. In 1723 the King of Portugal called upon the Viceroy of the State of India to investigate charges he had received that foreign ships were being allowed to trade at Moçambique, which remained under the jurisdiction of Goa until 1752.⁴ In fact, until 1733 there was apparently no trade between Moçambique and the Mascarenes, notwithstanding a continued need for slaves at Bourbon.⁵ In July of that

pondance du Conseil Supérieur de Bourbon et de la Compagnie des Indes (1724-1731), Paris, 1934, pp. xxxv, liii, 63; British Museum, London, Additional Manuscripts (hereafter Add. MSS.), 33, 765, fl. 10.

1. DESCHAMPS, p. 79.

2. LOUGNON, *L'Île Bourbon . . .*, pp. 174-179, 311, 326, 339, 342; also pp. 79, n. 5, and 105-106; A. LOUGNON, *Recueil trimestriel de documents et travaux inédits pour servir à l'histoire des Mascareignes françaises*, Tananarive, IV, 1939, pp. 317-326; A. LOUGNON, *Classement et inventaire du fonds de la Compagnie des Indes des Archives départementales de la Réunion (Série C)*, Nérac, 1956, pp. 24-25.

3. George MCCALL THEAL, *Records of South-Eastern Africa*, London, V, 1901, pp. 195-197; Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisboa, Moçambique, Caixa 60 (hereafter AHU, CM 60, etc.) and Códice 1307, fl. 293-295.

4. MCCALL THEAL, V, pp. 122-124, 151-155.

5. See LOUGNON, *Correspondance . . . (1724-1731)*, pp. xxxvi, xxxviii; and *Correspondance (1732-1736)*, Paris, 1933, pp. xvii and xxi-xxii.

Portuguese officials were forbidden to trade privately by virtue of a law

year the authorities of Bourbon dispatched the *Vierge de Grâce* for Moçambique and Madagascar to trade for slaves. The instructions issued on this occasion reveal that the object of going to Moçambique was secondary to the business of slaving with the Sakalava, who inhabit northwest Madagascar. Indeed, it was only to be a commercial reconnaissance of the entire Portuguese coast, with Sofala as the most particular port of interest. But the *Vierge de Grâce* reached Moçambique in August and, as a result of the skillful dealings of Gabriel Dejean, commercial agent for the expedition, departed with a cargo of 368 slaves. The journal kept by Dejean during this voyage vividly reveals the manner in which the French had to conduct their trade. Everything had to be done secretly; one could not trade openly. Virtually every important Portuguese official realized what was happening, however, as Dejean was careful to bribe everyone of any importance. In this category were included the Governor, the Chief Justice, the Commander of the fort, the Factor, the former Chief Justice, the Jesuit Rector, the Dominican Superior, the Hospitalers of São João de Deus, and the local Vicar. Trade progressed slowly and with some difficulty as long as the Indian fleet was still in the harbor, but when they departed for Goa the French were quickly able to complete their cargo. If the French were to trade at Moçambique, the Portuguese there did not want this news to reach the Court.

Dejean was impressed with the number and quality of slaves available at Moçambique. There was clearly room for expansion, as probably no more than 800 to 1,000 slaves were annually shipped to India; thousands were needed at the Mascarenes. Despite the many petty annoyances of trading in the manner, Dejean was sanguine over the prospects of slave trading at Moçambique. Prices were reasonable, with the top price for a male slave being about 80 to 100 *cruzados* of 400 *reis*. At the prevailing rate of exchange of 2 1/2 *cruzados* to each *piastre*, this was then equivalent to only 32 to 40 *piastres*, or *patacas*, as the French and Portuguese respectively called the Austrian Maria Theresa and Spanish dollars which were the most prevalent form of coinage in the Western Indian Ocean.¹ The total amount spent on presents to the Portuguese was less than 400 *piastres*, and the

dated 3 September 1720 and a royal decree dated 31 March 1721; for the latter, see AHU, Índia, Maço 18.

1. The Spanish *piastre* was also the principal coinage used by the French in the Americas, where it was valued at 5 *livres* 10 *sous* (*livre tournois*) or 8 *livres* 5 *sous* (*livre coloniale*). See D. RINCHON, *Pierre-Ignace-Lévin van Alstein, capitaine négrier: Gand 1733-Nantes 1793*, Dakar, 1964, p. 19. For details of the problems of coinage at Moçambique, see Alexandre LOBATO, "Em torno do problema das moedas carimbadas em Moçambique", and "Porque se marcavam as moedas de Moçambique", in his *Colonização senhorial da Zambézia e outros estudos*, Lisboa, 1962, pp. 211-223.

charge of 2 *tostões* (half a *cruzado*) for the baptism of each slave exported was no great expense. Although nearly a third of the Moçambique slaves died en route to the Mascarenes, the sale of those who were safely disembarked gave the Compagnie a handsome profit.¹ The *Vierge de Grâce* expedition was, however, exceptional. French trade at Moçambique was still a novel occurrence. Indeed, one cannot really dispute Grant's statement that "as for commerce, there was no idea of it when M. de La Bourdonnais arrived in the islands."²

II. — LA BOURDONNAIS' HERITAGE (1735-1770)

There can be no doubt that La Bourdonnais was the most influential European personality in the history of East Africa in the eighteenth century. Born in 1699, at the age of eighteen he entered the service of the Compagnie des Indes, and by 1724 he had achieved the rank of second captain. About 1728 he began to seek his fortune as a private merchant in the Indies, amassing a considerable fortune within a few years. On a voyage to Arabia in 1729, he saved two foundering vessels sent by the Portuguese Viceroy to collect tribute from the Imam of the Yemen. La Bourdonnais conducted the two Portuguese officers to their destination and then, when it appeared that the Arabs were about to seize them, personally intervened and set matters right by negotiating with the Arabs. In gratitude for his unusual succor, the Portuguese Viceroy offered him a place as a naval captain in the service of the *Estado da India* (State of India) and added the attractive inducements of the Cross of the Order of Christ and letters of nobility, with the title of "Agent of His Portuguese Majesty on the Coast of Coromandel."³ La Bourdonnais accepted the offer, entering the Portuguese service on 20 December 1729, but later confided that "what had tempted me the most in the propositions of the Viceroy was the disclosure that he made to me of a project concerning Mombaze."⁴ Thus it was the attraction of involvement in East Africa, and in particular in Mombasa (which the Portuguese had lost forever to Oman in 1729) which motivated La Bourdonnais to abandon the Compagnie

1. LOUGNON, *Recueil . . .*, IV, pp. 327-370, 385, 389; and *Correspondance (1732-1736)*, pp. 139-140, 146-147, 153, 156.

2. GRANT, p. 199.

3. Pierre CRÉPIN, *Mahé de La Bourdonnais, Gouverneur-général des isles de France et de Bourbon, 1699-1753*, Paris, 1922, pp. 11-17; Jacques F. THOMAZI, *Un millionnaire au service du roi: La Bourdonnais*, Paris, 1963, pp. 87-89.

4. Alberto C. GERMANO DA SILVA CORREIA ("Os Francezes na colonização da India", *Studia*, 4, 1959, pp. 35-36) while noting that Silva Correia divides La Bourdonnais into two individuals; Bertrand-François MAHÉ DE LA BOURDONNAIS, *Mémoires historiques de . . . , Gouverneur des îles de France et de Bourbon*, Paris, 1827, p. 7.

des Indes. He served Portugal into 1732, but the proposed expedition to recapture Mombasa never materialized. When the authorities in Lisbon let it be known that they opposed the plan, he quit the Portuguese service. La Bourdonnais returned to France in 1733 and began to formulate ideas to improve the state of Ile de France and Bourbon.¹ He was especially intrigued with the possibilities of the former, which was naturally equipped with two excellent harbors, a great advantage over Bourbon. That he was fully aware of Portugal's weakness in the Indian Ocean is obvious, as was his great interest in East Africa. By 1734 his plans for developing the French islands had resulted in his appointment as Governor-General for both, thus marking the first time that the administration of both islands had been united under one head.

Although La Bourdonnais was to continue as Governor-General for twelve years, during the last seven of these his attention was preoccupied with the wider interests of the French establishment in India, especially after the extension of the War of the Austrian Succession to the East in 1744. Essentially, the truly remarkable transformation wrought by La Bourdonnais in the two colonies took place in less than five years, from his arrival in 1735 to 1740.

Touching first at Bourbon, La Bourdonnais immediately moved on to Ile de France and established his headquarters at the vast, safe harbor of Port Louis (then known as Saint-Louis), where he found only one substantial house and a few ramshackle huts. In the following years he introduced the cultivation of cotton and indigo, and resurrected that of sugar, which had been started on both islands by the Dutch in the seventeenth century, but which had subsequently not been pursued to any meaningful extent. To improve and increase the pasturage for cattle brought from Madagascar, he introduced the hardy fescue-grass. Furthermore, he personally offered financial backing to individual colonists to cover up to fifty per cent of their operating expenses, including the procurement of an adequate supply of slaves. On Bourbon, where the colonists were more firmly entrenched and consequently more resistant to innovation, La Bourdonnais compelled them to extend the cultivation of cereals in order to increase the food supply of the burgeoning population, both free and slave, of the two islands. The production of coffee, over which the inhabitants of Bourbon were so concerned, did not suffer as a result of his precept.

For a while, the slave population continued to subsist almost exclusively on maize, a crop which was highly vulnerable to depredations by rats and grasshoppers, as well as violent storms, which plagued the islands. In addition, it did not seem to La Bourdonnais that the

1. CRÉPIN, pp. 19-20.

slaves were doing well on this diet. Recalling that he had observed slaves in Brazil flourishing on a staple diet of manioc, he ordered tubers to be brought to the colonies from São Tiago, one of the Cape Verde Islands. He required all settlers to plant 500 square feet of manioc for each slave they possessed. This innovation, which was a great success, enabled the twin colonies to support a much larger slave population than was previously possible.¹

Turning from agriculture, La Bourdonnais established the first sugar factories and iron foundries on Ile de France, where deposits of high grade ore were located. He reorganized the entire administration and judicial structure of the colonies, and greatly minimized the threat of raids by the maroons. In 1737 he inaugurated the ship building industry on Ile de France with the completion of a small brigantine, and by 1740 Port Louis was a small city of stone buildings, its harbor well defended by a new system of fortifications. At the same time the younger colony began to export cotton and indigo to the Persian Gulf. When La Bourdonnais returned temporarily to France in 1740, the effects of his signal activity had already extended to Moçambique.

La Bourdonnais' instructions of 1734 granted him independent power to organize the trade of the islands. No doubt there was already some enthusiasm at the islands for trading with Moçambique, in view of the recent success of the *Vierge de Grâce*, but La Bourdonnais had more specific reasons for hoping that French slavers would be well received there. His appointment as Governor-General of the Mascarenes coincided with the imminent accession of Nicolau Tolentino de Almeida as Governor of Moçambique. Almeida was one of the officers bound for the Yemen whom La Bourdonnais had so exceptionally assisted in 1729. As a result of this encounter, a friendship was struck between the men and apparently strengthened during the period of the Frenchman's Portuguese service.² According to a letter from the King of Portugal, D. João V (1706-1750), before Almeida went to Moçambique, "he had arranged with the foreigner Labordine, who was at Mauritius, that he should send ships to Moçambique to trade with him." Indeed, in July 1736, by which date Almeida was due to have taken over his new office, La Bourdonnais sent two vessels to Moçambique to trade for slaves. On their arrival there, however, they found that Almeida had not arrived that year, and that José Barbosa Leal was in his fourth year as Governor. Nevertheless, owing to

1. CRÉPIN, pp. 72-74.

2. LOUGNON, *Correspondance (1736-1741)*, Paris, 1935, pp. xxvii and xxxii; LOUGNON, *Recueil. . .*, IV, p. 376. See AHU, India, Maço 37, for a synopsis of Almeida's services in the State of India, 16 September 1712 to 7 December 1730, enclosed in *parecer* of the Conselho Ultramarino, Lisboa, 17 March 1732.

the persuasions of the Jesuits, the French were allowed to trade there and they returned to Ile de France with at least one hundred Moçambique slaves.¹

Matters were greatly facilitated with the eventual installation of Almeida as Governor in 1737, whose intentions were revealed by a present of ten slaves to La Bourdonnais.² By the end of his three-year term of office, the French were well established traders at Moçambique. Almeida apparently transgressed every instruction he had received in regard to trade. All his efforts were directed towards wooing French trade and enriching himself and his associates. He allowed the French to establish a factory at Moçambique in order to facilitate the conduct of their business and condoned the trading of firearms and munitions to the Africans, as this was the basic French stock in trade. He sold the French cowry shells, which came from the Kerimba Islands and were valued as currency in Bengal, where the French traded extensively. In addition to these and many other related charges, Almeida did not tax the trade of the French.³ According to the estimate made by a clerk in the court of criminal justice at Goa, Almeida and certain other inhabitants of Moçambique sold between 1,000 and 2,000 slaves to French merchants. The clerk reckoned that the lost duties on the French trade amounted to 50,800 *cruzados*, although others figured them to be only 40,000 *cruzados*.⁴ As La Bourdonnais wrote in 1740 that during his first five years in office only 2,615 slaves, "partie Mozambique, partie Madagascar," had entered the islands, the Portuguese estimate seems quite reasonable.⁵

1. Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, Lisboa, Microfilm Collection, Livro das Monções (hereafter CEHU, MF, LM) 111-A, fl. 3; and BM, Add. MSS. 20, 890, fl. 38v.-39, Crown to Lourçal, Lisboa, 28 April 1740; LOUGNON, *Correspondance (1732-1736)*, p. 322; *Correspondance (1736-1741)*, pp. 48-49 and 66; *Recueil . . .*, IV, pp. 377-396; and *Recueil . . .*, Saint-Denis, VII, 1945, pp. 270-272 and 278-280.

2. Between 1736 and 1739, several attempts were made under the direction of Dupleix, La Bourdonnais' great rival, to trade directly between Bengal and Moçambique, but the Compagnie des Indes forbade this commerce. See Alfred MARTINEAU, *Dupleix et l'Inde française, 1722-1741*, Paris, I, 1920, pp. 321-325, 341-342, 505, 525, 527.

3. LOUGNON, *Correspondance (1732-1736)*, p. L; and *Correspondance (1740-1746)*, Saint-Denis-Paris, 1940, p. 12; Archives Nationales de France, Paris (hereafter ANF), Colonies C⁴ 2, "État général des vivres dépensés . . .", certified by La Bourdonnais, Port Louis, 20 March 1738; CEHU, MF, LM, 111-A, fl. 3-5; and BM, Add. MSS. 20,890, fl. 37-40, Crown to Lourçal, Lisboa, 28 April 1740; AHU, CM 3, and CEHU, MF, LM 111-A, fl. 4-7, António da Silva to Viceroy, São Pedro, 22 and 26 December 1741.

4. AHU, CM 3, António de Melo Pereira, "A Justic Autora contra Nicolau Tolentino de Almeida", Goa, 18 October 1743; *ibid.*, Silva to Viceroy, São Pedro, 22 December 1741.

5. LA BOURDONNAIS, *Mémoire des Iles de France et de Bourbon* (ed. A. Lougnon and A. Toussaint), Paris, 1937, p. 37.

That La Bourdonnais and the French were seriously interested in developing their trade with East Africa is evident from the two requests made by the Compagnie des Indes, with the support of the French Court, that Portugal relinquish all or part of her territorial claims north of Cape Delgado. The first was made in 1739; the second in 1744. Both were refused by D. João V, for the Portuguese still had dreams of recapturing Mombasa.¹ Rumors arose in Lisbon that the French had captured Moçambique by surprise, but in 1740 these were discounted as being 'unbelievable' by D. João, whose faith was justified by a report from the Viceroy that these were false.² By now the Portuguese fully appreciated, and frequently exaggerated, the threat posed by the French to their control of the trade of the Moçambique coast; indeed, to their pitifully weak possessions on that coast, as well as to their meaningless claims north of Cape Delgado. Similar rumors, in particular hearsay relating to a French establishment north of the Ruvuma River, plagued the Portuguese for the next half century.

These fears did not prevent Almeida's successor, D. Lourenço de Noronha, from admitting the French to trade at Moçambique, although he himself was not unmoved by rumors of French machinations concerning East Africa.³ Unlike Almeida, however, Noronha apparently sought to control and to extract some profit from this trade for the benefit of the Crown.⁴ The only detailed record of the French slave trade at Moçambique during Noronha's time is a curious report, dated 9 November 1741, which was written by O. L. Hommy, the head clerk in charge of trade aboard the Dutch vessel *De Brack*, which sailed from Cape Town to Madagascar in search of slaves in the same year. At Bombetoka Bay, on the northwest coast of Madagascar, where the ruler of the Sakalava kingdom of Boïna had his residence near

1. Justus STRANDES, *The Portuguese Period in East Africa* (transl. J. F. Wallwork, ed. J. S. Kirkman), Nairobi, 1961, pp. 300-304; José Justino TEIXEIRA BOTELHO, "O sonho de Mombaça", *Arquivo das Colónias* (hereafter *AC*), 26, 1929, pp. 77-80. La Bourdonnais thrice proposed the establishment of a French station in East Africa, and even suggested making Moçambique a French colony. See LOUGNON, *Recueil . . .*, IV, pp. 371-375; LA BOURDONNAIS, pp. 78 and 201, n. 149.

2. Joaquim Heliodoro DA CUNHA RIVARA, ed., *O chronista de Tissuary*, Nova-Goa, II, 1867, p. 156; and Nova-Goa, IV, 1869, p. 79; BM, Add. MSS. 20,890, fl. 48v.-50, Crown to Louriçal, Lisboa, 2 May 1740; LOBATO, *Evolução administrativa e económica de Moçambique, 1752-1763*, Lisboa, 1957, p. 90.

3. CEHU, MF, LM 115, fl. 171-173, Noronha to Viceroy, Moç., 14 August 1742.

4. Library of Professor C. R. Boxer, Castello-Novo Codex, #81, fl. 244; LOUGNON, *Recueil . . .*, Saint-Denis, VIII, 1948-1949, pp. 10-11.

I am grateful to Professor Boxer for granting me access to the documentation in his private collection; his library now forms a special collection in the Library of the University of Indiana, Bloomington.

Maravoay,¹ the Dutch slaver encountered a French merchant named Saveille, who was also there after slaves, as well as rice, meat, and cattle. Of this encounter Hommy wrote :

« The French Captain Saveille informed me that the island of Mozambique furnishes better slaves than the island of Madagascar and that it is from the former that the French take their good slaves. The price there is 40 Spanish *piastres* per head, men and women alike, but it is necessary to act with much circumspection and with prudence, because the South Africans are great thieves and blood-thirsty people. The Portuguese allow no one to trade there without the permission of the King.”²

From this account it would seem that French ships which wished to trade for slaves at Moçambique were now required to purchase some sort of temporary license from Noronha for the right to this privilege.

French trading at Moçambique continued to be carried on throughout the next few years. Some officers on a homeward bound ship from India charged that in the first six months of his administration Pedro do Rego Barreto da Gama e Castro “had admitted three French vessels to trade at that fortress [. . .] and that the same Governor had taken from ten to fourteen thousand *patacas* from the French in exchange for Kaffirs which he would give them in the following monsoon.”³ This arrangement probably was a considerable stimulant to the island’s economy, which operated on a system of credit from the merchants of Portuguese India. The introduction of a large amount of *patacas* into Moçambique, even if some of them never left the Governor’s pocket, must have had a beneficial effect on the local economy.

It must be admitted, however, that factors other than greed influenced Almeida’s successors. According to the Marquis of Castello-Novo, who spent over six weeks at Moçambique on his way to Goa as Viceroy in 1744, earlier in that year an epidemic of smallpox had raged along the entire Moçambique coast, taking a great toll in African lives. One result of this epidemic was that the land was left fallow, so that Moçambique Island, which produced no food of its own, was faced with a serious famine. The Viceroy observed that this lack of food

“is the main reason why French from the Islands of Mauricia, and Mascarenhas [Bourbon], haunt this port at times, for as they are nearer they know our negligence, and they watch closely for the opportunity of coming to tempt us

1. DESCHAMPS, p. 101.

2. Alfred GRANDIDIER *et al.*, *Collection des ouvrages anciens concernant Madagascar*, Paris, VI, 1913, p. 195.

3. MCCALL THEAL, V, pp. 192-195.

with provisions, when they are needed most, especially as the Governor is more diligent in executing His Majesty's Orders, which prohibit trading with foreigners. His action raises cries from the People and the Soldiers, who, seeing provisions at hand and not being able to have recourse to them, do not bear up well when they suffer from hunger."¹

Conditions were unusually serious in 1744, but the problem of food shortage was endemic to Moçambique Island, and this method of operation had been tried before by the French. Two years previously, a French ship had arrived there loaded with rice and wheat, and bearing letters for the Governor from La Bourdonnais which declared that the food was for the relief of the fortress. Noronha claimed that he rejected this offer as a blatant attempt to trade for slaves, replying that the Portuguese had no need for the food.² This incident, and the Marquis of Castello-Novo's explanation of the pressures brought to bear on Rego Barreto by the local populace, go a long way towards indicating why even conscientious governors sometimes allowed the French to trade at Moçambique Island.

Portuguese and French sources indicate, however, both explicitly and tacitly, that there was no French slave trading at Moçambique from 1746 through 1749, although Ingrams cites, but does not document, an instance in 1747.³ In response to the Crown's exhortations to take all measures necessary to prevent foreign trade at Moçambique and its subordinate ports, Governor Caetano Correia de Sá reported that not a single foreign ship had entered Moçambique harbor since he had taken office in 1746, despite many futile attempts.⁴

The rise of French trading at Moçambique was paralleled by a similar movement at the Kerimba Islands. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Portuguese at Vamizi or Amiza, as it was then known, and Ibo Islands were threatened by Omani raiders pushing to the south of Cape Delgado. Indeed, later accounts lay the blame for the pitiful decadence of the Kerimba Islands at the time of their

1. AC, 1918, III, pp. 233-234; see LOUGNON, *Correspondance (1724-1731)*, pp. xxix, XLVIII, III, 138; AC, 3, 1918, p. 229.

2. CEHU, MF, LM 115, fl. 193-194, La Bourdonnais to Gov. of Moç., Port Louis, 17 and 29 August 1742; *ibid.*, fl. 195-196, petition of MM. Jouvanié and Sanguinet, Moç., 16 June 1742; *ibid.*, fl. 171, Noronha to Viceroy, Moç., 14 August 1742, also in A. B. DE BRAGANÇA PEREIRA, ed., *Arquivo Português Oriental*, nova edição (hereafter APO, n.e.), IV, 2 (2), Bastorá, 1938, p. 256.

3. LOUGNON, *Correspondance (1746-1750)*, Saint-Denis, 1949, p. xxxvi; W. H. INGRAMS, "Some Points of Contact between Mauritius and East Africa", *Transactions of the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences of Mauritius*, Series C, 1, 1932, p. 55.

4. BM, Add. MSS. 28,163, fl. 772-773, Crown to Chancellor of the *Relação* of Goa, Lisboa, 21 February 1748; cf. McCALL THEAL, V, pp. 195-197; AHU, CM 3, Correia de Sá to Crown, Moç., 12 August 1749; *ibid.*, Francisco Raimundo de Moraes Pereira, "Treslado da residencia de Caetano Correa de Sá . . .", Moç., 15 March-6 April 1752.

writing to numerous Arab invasions, which clearly took place during the turbulent years at the turn of the century.¹ Following these depredations, the islands were rather overbearingly dominated by a certain Fr. João de Meneses, O. P. An ageing Meneses still held power there in the 1740s, by which time the islands were becoming a favorite haunt for French slavers who sought to avoid the relative restrictions imposed on their trading at Moçambique after Almeida left office. In March 1742, Noronha resolved to send a small body of troops to the islands to prevent the French from trading there, as three ships had arrived in less than six months to take on cargoes of cowries for the French factory at Bengal, where these would be exchanged for the cloths that the French merchants would later trade for slaves. Meneses was at the center of this trade, and it was rumored that he had some sort of agreement with a Portuguese Augustinian friar who headed a secret association in Bengal which had been organized specifically for exploiting the trade of the Kerimba Islands and the Cape Delgado area. Noronha recommended that Meneses be ordered to leave the islands, and the Viceroy gave orders to this effect later in 1742, but to no avail. So the notorious Fr. João de Meneses continued his personal domination of the Kerimba Islands until his death in 1749.²

Unfortunately, nothing is known of Kilwa and the coast of Southern Tanzania during this period. As Kilwa had suffered more recently at the hands of the Arabs than at those of the Portuguese, and as the sources of Kilwa's wealth had always been to the south, it is quite likely that Kilwa fell more within the commercial sphere of the Portuguese than that of the Arabs to the north. The Sultan of Kilwa was certainly more favorably disposed to the former than to the latter, who had so lately abused his position. In 1742, in accordance with orders from the Viceroy, a Swahili courier was sent from the Kerimba Islands to Kilwa. He bore a letter from the Governor to the Sultan "warning him of the French project" to seize Mombasa, and

1. Panduronga S. S. PISSURLENCAR, *Assentos do Conselho do Estado [da Índia] (1698-1750)*, Bastorá, V, 1957, 113; Luís Fernando DE CARVALHO DIAS, ed., "Fontes para a história, geografia e comércio de Moçambique (sec. XVIII)", *Anais*, IX, 1, 1954, p. 256; António Alberto DE ANDRADE, *Relações de Moçambique Setecentista*, Lisboa, 1955, pp. 337-338, 376; *AC*, I, 1917, pp. 122-123.

2. CEHU, MF, LM 115, fl. 175-178, *regimento* (official instructions) for José Gonzales Valverde, Moç., 4 May 1742; *ibid.*, fl. 179-180. José de Sousa, inquiry regarding trade of foreigners at Cape Delgado Islands, n.d.; *ibid.*, fl. 198-211, Sousa, inquiry, 20 May-20 July 1742; see also BRAGANÇA PEREIRA, *APO*, n.e., pp. 252-254, 257-258; McCALL THEAL, V, pp. 192-195; Castello-Novo Codex, #88, fl. 265-267. The French triangular trade between the Kerimba Islands (cowries and slaves), Bengal (cloth), and the Mascarene Islands (*piastres*) may be compared to its more notorious South Atlantic equivalent. It should be noted, however, that the main markets for the plantation crops of the Mascarenes were located elsewhere in the Western Indian Ocean.

from there to dominate the entire northern coast, and making a play for his support by reminding him that his people had a recent history of being oppressed by foreigners. If the Sultan made a reply, it is now lost.¹ For the most part, however, French ships did not trade to the north of Cape Delgado, although one or two must have strayed into that area in search of slaves. For while serious French interest in this part of the coast began in the time of La Bourdonnais, corresponding commercial involvement did not commence until the 1770s.

At mid-century, then, French traders from the Mascarene Islands were clearly considered to be an economic threat of the first order to the only other major European power operating in East Africa. Indeed, from 1749 to 1765, the actual, as well as the official, policy of the Portuguese administration at Moçambique was to prohibit the French from trading there. In contrast to the late 1730s and early 1740s, virtually no French trading was undertaken at Moçambique in the late 1740s and throughout the following decade. The specific application to the Conquest of the general law forbidding foreign trade within the dominion of Portuguese Africa, expressed in a royal decree dated 10 April 1756, was a result of French activity in the Kerimba Islands alone.²

Consequently, after a brief upswing in the slave trade at Moçambique during and immediately after Almeida's encouragement of it, this business returned to its previous lethargic pace. According to official figures, from 1753 to 1760, fewer than 5,000 slaves entered Moçambique from the various parts of the Conquest, including Inhambane, Sofala, the Rivers of Sena, and the Kerimba Islands, as well as the opposing mainland.³ While it is most likely that some slaves were sporadically traded to the French by the Makua and by Portuguese contrabanders at bays and inlets in the immediate vicinity of the capital, there is no reason for thinking that these amounted to more than a small number of individuals.

The French did not, however, cease trying to cultivate a market for slaves at Moçambique. In 1752 Dupleix, then Governor-General of the Compagnie des Indes, proposed a treaty of alliance with the Portuguese in India, article 9 of which read: "The trade of Kaffirs at Moçambique will be permitted to the French Nation, by means of a tax per head which will be agreed upon amicably, and this number of

1. CEHU, MF, LM 115, fl. 183, Valverde to Noronha (Querimba), 20 June 1742; *ibid.*, fl. 170-171, Noronha to Viceroy, Moç., 14 August 1742, also in BRAGANÇA PEREIRA, *APO*, n.e., p. 255.

2. AHU, Cod. 1307, fl. 291.

3. AHU, CM 6, António Baltasar Pires *et al.*, "Extracto do rendimto da alfândega de Mossambiç.", 10 July 1753-20 August 1758; AHU, CM 8, António Francisco Xavier, "Extracto do rendimento da alfândega desta ilha", enclosed in Saldanha de Albuquerque to Crown, Moç., 18 August 1760.

Blacks will be able to be fixed at two thousand every year." The immediate Portuguese reply was equivocating, and nothing ever seems to have come of this proposal.¹ According to official documents, in fact, only four French ships entered the harbor of Moçambique during Francisco de Melo e Castro's administration (1750-1757) and only three came there between 1758 and 1765.² Although French merchantmen may, in fact, have been more frequent visitors to Moçambique in these later years, there is no doubt that the renewed growth of their influence there stemmed directly from the encouragement they received from Baltasar Manuel Pereira do Lago, who became Governor-General in August 1765. As this development coincided with a considerable expansion of trading activity at the French islands themselves, comparison with the brief period of French commercial influence at Moçambique during the collaboration of La Bourdonnais and Almeida is inevitable; for, like his notorious predecessor, Pereira do Lago soon aligned himself with the interests of the French slavers.

A year after he took office, Pereira do Lago apprised the King of his commitment to "the total prohibition of entry to this port by French and English ships except in cases of urgent necessity."³ But António Pinto de Miranda charged that French slavers only began to come continuously to Moçambique after the arrival of Pereira do Lago, while Luís António de Figueredo wrote that the French were the most frequent traders there. Moreover, Montauray also asserted that Pereira do Lago allowed the French to go to the mainland and trade directly with the Makua and Yao, and that these consequently received a regular supply of firearms and gunpowder.⁴

Needless to say, Pereira do Lago never informed the King of his understanding with the French, although he shrewdly reported whenever, in a situation of 'urgent necessity', he was obliged to allow a French vessel to enter the port and was forced to trade with it. This happened in both 1766 and 1767, when a shortage of certain

1. Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Lisboa, Ministério do Reino (hereafter ANTT, MR), Maço 602, "Copie du projet [. . .] d'une alliance perpétuelle entre la nation française et la nation portugaise dans la presqu'île de l'Inde", enclosed in Duplex to Viceroy, Pondichéry, 11 February 1752; *ibid.*, reply, Goa, 24 May 1752.

2. Historical Archives of Goa, Panjim, LM 126-A, fl. 75-77, 266, 272, Viceroy to Crown, enclosures, Goa, 20 January 1754.

3. AHU, Cod. 1321, fl. 215-223, Pereira do Lago to Secretary of State (hereafter Sec. St.), Moç., 20 July 1766; AHU, CM 12, same to same, Moç., 13 August 1766.

4. ANDRADE, pp. 240 and 274; CARVALHO DIAS, p. 354; cf. AHU, CM 12, Henrique José de Mendanha Benevides Cirne, "Narração do Estado em que se acha a fazenda real no governo de Mossambique", Moç., post-August 1766; ANTT, MR, Maço 603, anon., "Breves reflexoens, sobre o commercio de Azia, e Africa . . .", n.d., but clearly referring to Pereira do Lago.

necessary supplies occurred. In each year Pereira do Lago wrote of his trading with a French vessel for specifically needed items and paying for these with slaves and cowries. He even reported how, in 1767, he refused an offer to cooperate in this trade, with a cut of the profits, which was proposed in letters carried to him from the Governor-General of the French islands, even though circumstances necessitated his obtaining supplies from the ship.¹ Similar incidents from this period, together with the King's approval of Pereira do Lago's stated policy towards foreign vessels, probably persuaded the Governor-General to continue to sanction the trade on this basis.² By his actions, then, Pereira do Lago facilitated the beginning of a new period of direct French commercial influence at Moçambique.

III. — PEREIRA DO LAGO AND MORICE (1771-1784)

The fifteen years following Kilwa's reassertion of independence from Oman in about 1770 were marked by a noticeable increase in the volume of the slave trade in East Africa. By 1770 the Omani export slave trade to the north of Cape Delgado numbered perhaps 2,000 souls annually.³ To the south the Portuguese themselves still exported only several hundred slaves a year from the overland trade to Ibo and Moçambique. The Brazilian slave trade at Moçambique, although it was prohibited by a royal decree issued on 12 December 1772, apparently continued to be perpetuated by a few individuals, but it was not to increase significantly until the last decade of the eighteenth century. It seems reasonable, then, to attribute the increased demand for slaves from this part of Africa to the rapid expansion of trade at the French islands of Ile de France and Bourbon.

Both the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763 and the transfer of responsibility for the islands from the Compagnie des Indes to the French Crown injected the twin colonies with new vitality. The

1. AHU, CM 12, Pereira do Lago to Crown, Moç., 20 August 1766 and 18 August 1767, both also in AHU, Cod. 1321, fl. 202-203 and 247-249; *ibid.*, fl. 178, same to Sec. St., Moç., 18 August 1766; *ibid.*, fl. 253-254, same to Conde de Oeiras, Moç., 20 August 1767; AHU, CM 12, same to Crown, Moç., 21 August 1767; AHU, Cod. 1333, #364, Mendonça Furtado to Pereira do Lago, Ajuda, 1 April 1769.

2. AHU, Cod. 1332, fl. 7-10, Pereira do Lago to Sec. St., Moç., 17-18 August 1766; *ibid.*, fl. 12-13, Francisco Pereira Henriques to Pereira do Lago, Cabaceira Grande, 23 June 1768, and Mussinga Muave, 25 June 1768; BM, Add. MSS. 18,140, fl. 21-22, Dumas to Glemet, Ile de France, 31 October 1768.

3. This figure is based on Morice's description of this trade. Although he nowhere indicates his volume, it is clear that by the standards of the French trade to Ile de France, he considered it to be important. See FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, *The French . . .*; and OLIVER and MATHEW, I, p. 155.

greatest boost to trade, however, came in 1769 with the abolition of the commercial monopoly of the Compagnie and the substitution of free trade. Moçambique was the first place to feel the effect of these measures, as it was the particular desire of the French government to cultivate the slave trade between there and the islands. In the late 1760s it was increasingly difficult for French traders to procure slaves at Madagascar, and French officials at Ile de France recommended that the slack should be taken up by encouraging the trade to Moçambique. Their correspondence shows that some of these officials were unaware of the trade already carried on there by French interlopers, but it also reveals a change in Pereira do Lago's attitude towards this trade which seems to have occurred in about 1770. During the first five years of his administration, Pereira do Lago had avoided openly sanctioning the illegal slave trade with the French. But the shortage of slaves at Ile de France led the French authorities to persist in their efforts, and by 1773 their perseverance was being rewarded.¹

Pereira do Lago's reasons for making this decision are not known. Costa Mendes states that his appointment as Governor-General was political exile from Portugal and that his frequent requests to be repatriated were all unsuccessful.² It seems likely, in these circumstances, that once Pereira do Lago resigned himself to his fate, he decided to profit by it. Thereafter, he never looked back. In 1773, the Governor of Ile de France wrote:

"Last year seven or eight French ships have done quite a considerable trade in blacks at Mozambique and Kerimba. All give much praise to the Governor-General, from whom I received a very upright letter in which he asks me, however, not to send so many ships at one time, and never in the months of March and April, because then ships arrive in his port from Europe."³

Pereira do Lago only once gave the Crown any indication that he was allowing these vessels to trade at Moçambique, and then covered up his activities with the sort of excuse he had more legitimately utilized in the 1760s. By 1777, however, word had reached Lisbon

1. ANF, Col. C⁴ 18, Pierre Poivre to Minister of Navy, Ile de France, 30 November 1767; ANF, Col. C⁴ 20, Dumas to same, Ile de France, 27 February and 24 November 1768; *ibid.*, Dumas to Poivre, Ile de France, 24 October 1768; ANF, Col. C⁴ 22, Poivre to Min. of Navy, Ile de France, 15 January and 16 June 1768; ANF, Col. C⁴ 24, Desroches and Poivre to Min. of Navy, Ile de France, 1 September 1769; ANF, Col. C⁴ 25, Poivre to same, Ile de France, 2 September 1769. I am indebted to Dr. FREEMAN-GRENVILLE for allowing me to utilize his draft paper, "Some Eighteenth-Century Documents concerning Eastern Africa in the *Archives de France*", Legon, 1965.

2. FRANCISCO DA COSTA MENDES, *Catálogo cronológico e histórico dos capitães generaes e governadores da provincia de Moçambique desde 1752, época da sua separação do governo de Goa, até 1849*, Moçambique, 1892, p. 17.

3. FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, *The French . . .*, p. 221.

that the French were 'doing a great business' in slaves and cloth at Moçambique. Pereira do Lago was ordered to stamp out this trade. The next year, he reported the execution of this order, but added that in view of the shortage of provisions and of other necessities at Moçambique he was obliged to trade with whomever could supply these needs. As he advised Lisbon: "Necessity has no law." He further justified his permissive attitude by arguing that he was the only Governor-General to let the French trade there and to make them pay duties. Finally, he asserted that the reports which the King had received of numerous French vessels entering Moçambique to trade were false.¹

The magnitude of Pereira do Lago's complicity in this trade only became known to the metropolitan authorities after his death in early June 1779. As part of a special judicial investigation into his transgressions, an official account was compiled to determine how many French ships had entered Moçambique during his thirteen-year administration and how many slaves had been exported by them. According to this document, Pereira do Lago had granted licenses to thirty-two French and two Portuguese vessels for transporting slaves to the French islands; these ships had embarked a total of 9,158 slaves for that destination.² All of these licenses presumably were granted after Pereira do Lago decided upon his new policy towards this trade in about 1770. Thus, this figure probably represents a yearly average of more than 1,000 slaves exported from Moçambique to Ile de France and Bourbon. The estimates made by two independent observers confirm this figure: the first being 1,000 annually, and the second being 1,500 to 2,000 per year.³ In view of the fact that certainly some French slavers must have traded at Moçambique without Pereira do Lago's license, such as those who came in time of 'urgent necessity', the figure of 1,500 slaves exported annually may be nearest to the truth.

These two documents, together with further information revealed in the record of Pereira do Lago's tribunal, give us a vivid picture of the operation of the French slave trade at Moçambique during the 1770s. According to the findings of the inquiry, the captain of

1. AHU, Cod. 1332, fl. 129, Pereira do Lago to Sec. St., Moç., 20 August 1773; AHU, Cod. 1333, #415, Martinho de Melo e Castro to Pereira do Lago, Ajuda, 15 April 1777; AHU, CM 15 and Cod. 1332, fl. 255-257, Pereira do Lago to Crown, Moç., 15 August 1778.

2. AHU, CM 16, Diogo Guerreiro de Aboim to Clerk of the *alfândega*, Moç., 23 August 1779; *ibid.*, *certidão*, Joaquim Jorge, Moç., 24 August 1779.

3. AHU, CM 13, anon., "Os Francezes extraem . . .", n.d., but clearly post-1770; ANTT, MR, Maço 602, José Joaquim de Segreira Magalhães Lançous, "Memórias sobre Mossambique", Goa, 5 August 1779, enclosure in same to Visconde da Vila Nova de Cerveira, Goa, 12 January 1780. Lançous was *Chancelor do Reino* at Goa and visited Moçambique in 1778.

each French ship had to pay Pereira do Lago 1,050 *patacas* (4,200 *cruzados*, at a revised rate of exchange of 4 *cruzados* to each *pataca*) in order to obtain his license to trade there. Furthermore, the Governor-General charged them 4 *patacas* for each slave they exported from Moçambique. In addition, both independent observers commented that the French paid him a gift, proportionate to the size of each cargo, which seems to have averaged about 250 *patacas* per ship. Furthermore, Pereira do Lago collected an unspecified sum in rents, which he charged the French for utilizing the houses which he had ordered built for this purpose. All of this money went directly into his own pocket; the Royal Treasury received none of it. True to his word, however, Pereira do Lago also charged the French a capitation tax of 2 *patacas* in the name of the Crown. In addition to these various expenses, the French also had to pay the local traders for the slaves whom they bought. These purchases were made in Indian trade cloths, on which Pereira do Lago graciously charged them no taxes. Slaves whom the Portuguese, or Indians, acquired for the equivalent of 20 to 30 *cruzados*, or perhaps more, were sold to the French for anywhere from about 60 to 100 *cruzados*.¹ Thus the average total cost of obtaining a slave at Moçambique for the French was about 120 *cruzados* (30 *patacas*) each. Yet despite these expenses, and the prospect of about a 20% death rate on the return voyage, which usually took at least forty days to navigate, the French slavers could still turn a sizeable profit on this trade, as slaves sold at the French islands for 80, 100, or even 150 *patacas* each, just as they had in the 1750s. Nevertheless, the French slavers naturally sought greater profits in this trade, and after the death of Pereira do Lago they complained of the unjust taxes he used to charge them, especially his personal head tax of 16 *cruzados* per slave.²

During the 1770s the French also continued to trade in force at the Kerimba Islands. Although there are few records of their activities there, the observations of João Vito, captain and pilot of the Portuguese corvette *Santa Ana*, preserve many details of the operation of this trade.³ According to Vito, the French traded there "in almost every month of the year," and when he arrived at Ibo there were two French vessels in the harbor, waiting to take on cargoes of 400 and

1. AHU, CM 16, Aboim to Crown, Moç., 24 August 1779, for the relevant information from Pereira do Lago's *devassa*.

2. FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, *The French . . .*, pp. 64, 84, 167; AHU, CM 13, anon., "Os Francezes extraem . . ."; AHU, CM 16, Aboim to Crown, Moç., 24 August 1779; LOUGNON, *Correspondance (1740-1746)*, p. 248.

3. Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, Vermelho MS. 273, "Noticias que dá João Vitto das Ilhas de Cabo Delgado", n.d., also in CARVALHO DIAS, pp. 269-272; this is an incomplete copy of the original manuscript, which has not been located. Vito took port at Ibo on 14 April 1778, but does not indicate when he set sail from there.

250 slaves, respectively. Most of these were purchased with firearms, gunpowder, and cloth, with about a third of both cargoes being paid for in *patacas*. The price of each slave at Ibo was established at 100 *cruzados*. After careful scrutiny of this business, Vito calculated that the French introduced at least 100,000 *cruzados* in goods into Ibo every year. It would appear, then, that some 1,500 slaves were annually embarked at Ibo for Ile de France and Bourbon, a figure which is supported by the same anonymous writer who was so well informed on the French slave trade at Moçambique. His estimate of 1,600 slaves annually was made, however, for the French trade throughout the Kerimba Islands,¹ but if the French did seek slaves elsewhere along the Cape Delgado coast, Vito was unaware of these activities. On the other hand, he was fully aware of the complicity of the Portuguese officials at Ibo in turning the French trade to their own profit. While Vito is silent on the price paid by the French for this cooperation, later accounts indicate that it was not much less than they paid Pereira do Lago at Moçambique. This is not really surprising, however, as Pereira do Lago spawned this attitude by auctioning off the office of Commandant at Ibo and by requiring the successful bidder to make him an annual payment of 3,000 to 4,000 *cruzados*. The Commandant, or Captain-General, naturally sought to make his office pay and usually received a gift of 1,000 to 2,000 *cruzados*, depending on the size of the vessel, from French slavers. He also charged them 3 *patacas* (12 *cruzados*) for each slave whom they exported from Ibo,² thus making each as costly there as at Moçambique.

At Ibo, however, trading with the French was something more of a community project than it was at the capital, deals often being made over drinks in public taverns.³ Vito gives a splendid description of its operation. A French captain would declare the nature of his cargo, especially the amount of *patacas*, to the Commandant of Ibo, who would take most of the money for his own payment for supplying slaves. The Frenchman would then rent a hut in which he could reside and at which he could hold the slaves he received.

"The same Governor [*sic*] usually distributes the goods: so much for the Vicar, so much for the Curate [. . .], so much for the Commandant of the Troops, so much for the District Judge: so much for his cronies, etc. Each one of these is obliged to supply a number of slaves proportionate to the value of the goods which he receives."

1. AHU, CM 13, anon., "Os Francezes extraem . . ."

2. AHU, CM 18, Raimundo Luís de Lima to Crown, Goa, 24 January 1781, enclosing Ricardo José de Lima, "Relaçam dos descaminhos, gravames da Faz^{da} Real, e ruinas do comércio no governo de Monsambique", n.d., articles 20-21.

3. *Ibid.*, article 23.

Each trader would then send his African agents into the hinterland to barter for slaves, and this business would last two or three months. Monsieur Boudoim (Boudoigne?), one of the French slavers whom Vito met at Ibo, had been there for four months making up a cargo of slaves.¹

Both the wearisome and expensive business of trading illegally at Moçambique and Ibo, as well as the continuing demand for more and more slaves on the French islands eventually caused a few adventurous French slavers to seek other sources, beyond the control of the Portuguese. Not surprisingly, they turned to Zanzibar, the steadily growing entrepôt for all coastal trade north of Cape Delgado. By far the most ambitious of these merchants was Jean-Vincent Morice, who purchased 700 slaves at Zanzibar in 1775, 500 of whom were safely disembarked at Ile de France. In the following year Morice returned to Zanzibar, where he bought 925 slaves, 860 of whom survived the passage to Ile de France. At Zanzibar, however, Morice encountered the old Moçambique slaver, Clonard, whose 'little war' with the local authorities undoubtedly strained their relations with the French in general. In view of Clonard's clumsiness, Morice, still seeking more slaves, sailed to Kilwa, already the principal source of slaves for the Zanzibar market and independent of Omani control since about 1770. At Kilwa, Morice purchased another 700 slaves and made a contract with the Sultan to provide him with a steady supply of slaves. Returning to Ile de France before 3 March 1776, Morice began to formulate and to press his ultimately unsuccessful plan for a French factory and colony at Kilwa; but on 13 September he was back at Kilwa, where another of his vessels had preceded him.²

On the following day, Morice concluded a one hundred year treaty with the Sultan of Kilwa, Hasan bin Ibrahim, which granted the Frenchman primary rights in the European slave trade at Kilwa. Morice contracted to purchase 1,000 slaves annually, and could take as many more as he desired before other Europeans would be allowed to trade there. By the terms of the treaty, a standard price of 20 *piastres* (80 *cruzados*) per slave was established, and Morice agreed to pay a tax of 2 *piastres* (8 *cruzados*) to the Sultan for each slave. Furthermore, the Arabic version of the treaty stipulated that "there shall be no extra tax upon him [Morice]." Finally, Morice was granted

1. CARVALHO DIAS, pp. 270-271 and note.

2. FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, *The French . . .*, pp. 12-16, 64, 74, 82, 87. Morice was not the first Frenchman to trade on the Kilwa coast. In 1754, Joseph Crassons de Medeuil took on a cargo of slaves and provisions at Songo Songo Island, between Kilwa and Mafia. As early as 1771, the French were attempting to arrange a treaty of protection with the Sultan of Kilwa. G. S. P. FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the First to the Earlier Nineteenth Century*, Oxford, 1962, p. 193; ANF, Col. C¹ 29, Brayer du Barre to Min. of Navy, n.d., but c. 1771.

the right to establish cannon in and to raise the French flag over the palace known as Husuni Kubwa.¹

In June 1777 Morice was still, by his own account, "the only European who has secured a trade in slaves on the coast of Zanzibar." But he had already made three voyages there himself and, with an interest in several vessels, had purchased 2,725 slaves at Zanzibar and Kilwa. Shortly thereafter, in order to secure his own position and, ultimately, that of the French at Kilwa, while he awaited a decision from France on the fate of his proposal, Morice "set up a company with which we have engaged two ships which, until the court replies, will ply to and fro with cargoes of blacks for the colony." A year later, the fame of this operation had reached Moçambique, where Pereira do Lago wrote that a French company had "now established a factory in Kilwa."² Finally, on 7 February 1779, the Minister of the Navy wrote from Versailles that, "for the present it is enough for us to limit ourselves to friendship with the King of Kilwa," thereby ending Morice's elaborate plans for the French at Kilwa. Although it is not known when Morice received the news, he evidently continued to control the French slave trade at Kilwa. Some time previous to 3 September 1779, when he sailed for Africa, he contracted to sell 600 slaves, at 32 *piastres* each, to the government of Ile de France. Following this, however, Morice's activities are unknown, except that he later shipwrecked near Zanzibar and returned with a fair amount of money to Kilwa, where he was well received and where he remained until his death, which occurred some time before 1782.³

From the incomplete figures now remaining, it seems that Morice traded for about 1,500 slaves annually in East Africa after 1775, most of whom came from Kilwa. In 1776 alone, he obtained more than 2,000 north of Cape Delgado. During the late 1770s, then, French traders were taking away about 4,500 slaves each year from the ports of Moçambique, Ibo, Kilwa, and Zanzibar. Most, but not all, of these slaves were destined for Ile de France and Bourbon. Slave population figures for both these islands in the eighteenth century are extremely haphazard, however, and about all one can conclude is that their combined net annual increase was about 2,000 souls. Nevertheless,

1. FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, *The French . . .*, pp. 70-73 and 83-84.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 96 and 207; AHU, CM 15, Pereira do Lago to Crown, Moç., 15 August 1778.

3. FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, *The French . . .*, pp. 54-55, 214; ANF, Col. C⁴ 49, Souillac and Foucault to Min. of Navy, Port Louis, 2 November 1779, enclosing draft contract with Morice for purchase of 600 slaves by government, n.d., unsigned; FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, *The East African Coast . . .*, p. 193. The ship sent to fetch these slaves took on only 227 at Kilwa, 98 of whom died before reaching Ile de France. Karl NOËL, *L'esclavage à l'île de France pendant l'occupation française (1715-1815)*, thèse de doctorat d'Université présentée à la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Paris, 1953, pp. 54-229.

it is clear that most of the slaves obtained by the French in East Africa were destined for sale in the French islands, however many of them were actually disembarked there.¹

On the other hand, some were destined for a more distant market, America. During the course of the Seven Years' War, France had lost her West African colonies of Senegal and Gorée to the British. One result of these losses was to force up the price of slaves along the Guinea coast for French traders, and this in turn caused them to seek new sources for supplying the vast sugar plantations on their West Indian colonies of Martinique, Guadalupe, and Saint-Domingue (Haiti). At first, French slavers ventured no farther afield than the Congo and Angola, but after the Compagnie des Indes lost its commercial monopoly in 1769 they were able to explore the possibility of seeking their slaves along the coast of East Africa. From 1769 to 1776, trade between the East Indies and France more than doubled in volume; by the end of that period, a new triangular trade with its corners at France, the Mascarenes and the East African coast, and the Antilles, had been inaugurated. French slavers from Europe began trading between Moçambique and Ile de France as early as 1771, but the enterprising Morice appears to have been the first to have sent slaves from East Africa to America. In 1774 he shipped a cargo of slaves to Cap Français, in Saint-Domingue, from the Kerimba Islands. "By 1776, Morice wrote, there were three ships making this voyage, two for Kerimba [. . .]. There are other ships on the way from Europe for the same operation. I know of two here [Ile de France]. There are also others of which I do not know." Encouraged by requests for Moçambique slaves which were forwarded to him from Port-au-Prince and Cap Français by his associates in Lorient, Morice remained an active proponent of this new trade and is known to have shipped a cargo of 400 slaves to Saint-Domingue from Kilwa in 1777. For his own part, Morice's learned correspondent, Joseph-François Charpentier de Cossigny, attested to well established trading ties between slavers from France and the Moçambique coast.² Still, this

1. The annual rate of importation of slaves at the Mascarenes was dictated not only by the demands of a growing economy, but also by a low birth rate and high incidence of mortality among the slave population of the islands. For complete population figures, including African immigration into Ile de France, see R. R. KUCZYNSKI, *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire*, London, II, 1949, pp. 746-762, 789-793, 869-879. For Bourbon, see AZÉMA, pp. 144-145 (1767: 15,047; 1777: 28,457); anon., "La population des Iles de France et de Bourbon en 1740 et en 1761-1764", *Revue de l'Histoire des Colonies Françaises*, XX, 1927, p. 435 (1761: 15,020); Abbé RAYNAL, *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies* (trs. J. Justamond), London, 3rd ed., II, 1777, pp. 74 and 151 (1763: 15,149); GRANT, pp. 155, 163-164 (1763: c. 18,000; 1776: 26,165).

2. Alfred COBBAN, *A History of Modern France*, Harmondsworth, 3rd ed., I, 1963, pp. 73-74, 79, 92, 121-122; Louis DERMIGNY, *Cargaisons indiennes: Solier*

trade was limited in comparison with the traditional one to Ile de France and Bourbon, and the resumption of Anglo-French hostilities during the American War for Independence (1778-1783) prevented its expansion until after the Treaty of Versailles was signed in the latter year.

At Moçambique the death of Pereira do Lago, unlike the departure of Almeida forty years previously, did not mark the end of an era. Indeed, Pereira do Lago's cooperation with the French slavers set a pattern which none of his immediate successors was able, or willing, to oppose. In fact, all not only followed his lead in slave trading with the French, but apparently eclipsed his excesses in that endeavor.¹ When Pedro de Saldanha de Albuquerque arrived there in 1782, he found three French slavers anchored in the harbor. Shortly thereafter yet another French vessel was run aground on the bar, its captain piously claiming that it had sprung a leak. On inspection, a leak was found, but it was obviously made for the purpose and could have been plugged easily. Saldanha de Albuquerque learned that the captain had indeed caused the leak himself, but that this is what the previous governors had wanted. Furthermore, he was told by one of the ship's officers, this vessel had been sent to Moçambique by the Governor-General of Ile de France, who needed slaves for the French Asian fleet and who expected it to be received in good faith, and there were still others to follow. The privilege of their trading at Moçambique had been granted, he continued, by Vasconcelos de Almeida, and Maia e Vasconcelos had also agreed to this, while the original arrangement even called for the stationing of a French agent on the island. Annoyed at the foolishness of the system of false pretext, Saldanha de Albuquerque granted the captain a license to trade and ordered him to enter openly. When the other two ships arrived, they were told to do the same. Within two months this first vessel had a cargo of 400 slaves and on its departure carried a letter from Saldanha de Albuquerque to the Governor-General of the French islands, François de Souillac.²

et Cie, 1781-1793, Paris, I, 1960, pp. 90 and 96-97; FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, *The French . . .*, pp. 17-19, 80, 153, 157. I have been unable to document the origin of Morice's interest in the Caribbean trade, although there is one tantalizing reference to a Jean Morice, *matelot*, who served in the crew of a slaver in those waters in 1763-1764. See RINCHON, pp. 127-128; but cf. FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, *The French . . .*, p. 7.

1. AHU, Cod. 1472, fl. 40-43, Crown to Dias de Sousa, Ajuda, 21 March 1785; ANTT, MR, Maço 604, Le Fèvre de Chantraine to Gov., Moç., 29 July 1779; AHU, CM 24, *devassa* of Maia e Vasconcelos, 1787; AHU, CM 19, Saldanha de Albuquerque to M. de Melo e Castro, Moç., 1 August 1783, also published in *AC*, I, 1917, pp. 36-42.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-42.

In this letter Saldanha de Albuquerque proposed to his French counterpart that although Portuguese law forbade foreigners to trade at Moçambique, except in cases of extreme need, he would encourage Portuguese merchants to supply the French islands with as many slaves as were needed there. Souillac's response was limited to reporting that he had made this decision known to the colony's shipowners and to assuring Saldanha de Albuquerque that Portuguese vessels would be received as usual at the islands.¹ But Saldanha de Albuquerque was deeply impressed with the potential value to the Portuguese Crown of the French slave trade. Thus he recommended that it be legalized and regulated in such a manner as to turn it to the Crown's profit and to the advantage of the Portuguese colony.² Nevertheless, neither Saldanha de Albuquerque's letter to Souillac, nor his righteous denunciation of his predecessor's sins prevented him from allowing the French to trade at Moçambique during his term of office. The provisional government which succeeded Saldanha de Albuquerque similarly continued to allow the French to trade at Moçambique in exchange for the usual remunerations.³

Unfortunately, there is absolutely no document which gives us any clue to the volume of the French slave trade at Moçambique after the death of Pereira do Lago. There is, however, one which records that of the Portuguese slave trade there from 1781 through 1785, giving a total of 7,790 slaves exported aboard Portuguese vessels during that period. The yearly figures are: for 1781, 315; for 1782, 1,045; for 1783, 1,765; for 1784, 2,313; and for 1785, 2,352.⁴ While all the vessels on which these slaves were shipped may have flown Portuguese colors, it is virtually a certainty that many were no more than nominally Portuguese. Some may have been of French ownership, but captained by the lone Portuguese aboard. Nevertheless, if these figures are at all accurate, they not only indicate a considerable expansion of Portuguese slave trading at Moçambique during the early 1780s, but also suggest that at least as many slaves may have been carried away on French vessels. Certainly in 1781, for instance, during the corrupt administration of Vasconcelos de Almeida and Maia e Vasconcelos, a good many more than 315 slaves were sold at Moçambique to French merchants.

In the Kerimba Islands there was far less administrative confusion than at the capital, as Joaquim José da Costa Portugal headed the

1. AHU, CM 18, Saldanha de Albuquerque to Souillac, Moç., 18 November 1782; AHU, Cod. 1472, fl. 70-71, reply, Ile de France, 20 February 1783.

2. *AC*, I, 1917, pp. 36-42.

3. AHU, CM 22, Manuel Galvão da Silva to Crown, Moç., 28 August 1785.

4. AHU, CM 33, anon., "Mappa da importância das fazendas, marfim, ouro, escravos, e patacas [. . .] (1781 to 1790)", Moç., September 1796.

government at Ibo from 21 May 1778 to 31 July 1786.¹ As a consequence, the French knew always to expect full cooperation at Ibo. Although there seems to have been a period in late 1783 when the French were feared to have ceased trading at Ibo, this break in commercial relations was only temporary. Otherwise, the French slave trade at Ibo continued to operate on about the same scale, and with the same procedure, as it had in the 1770s. The only change appears to have been that Costa Portugal raised the head tax on each slave exported from 12 to 16 *cruzados*.² The Crown's general concern over the French contraband in that captaincy led, in 1785, to an inquiry into the malconduct of Costa Portugal. This investigation proved not only his complicity in trading with the French in slaves, cloth, arms, and gunpowder, but also in that with the Swahili in ivory and cloth. But the fact that Costa Portugal made a clean breast of his guilt, and that his services to the Crown had otherwise been exceptional, exempted him from punishment.³ Despite his close escape from the justice of the Crown, however, Costa Portugal appears not to have let this alter his policy of trading with the French. In July 1785, only three months after his hearing was completed, it was reported that there were three French ships trading for slaves in the Kerimba Islands.⁴

By this date, some considerable changes had taken place in the operation of the French slave trade at Kilwa. Until his death in about 1781, Morice seems to have held a monopoly of this trade there as a result of his treaty with Sultan Hasan bin Ibrahim. Thereafter, however, a number of French slavers began competing with each other for the lion's share of this lucrative new market. Writing late in 1784, Joseph Crassons de Medeuil gave an account of "the trading that has been done in this port for the last three years, without counting traders

1. AHU, Cod. 1484, fl. 21-23, *termo da entrega*, Costa Portugal, Ibo, 21 May 1778; *ibid.*, fl. 27-28, *carta patente*, Saldanha de Albuquerque to same, Moç., 28 March 1783.

2. AHU, CM 20, António de Paiva Pinto to Gov., Ibo, 24 November 1783; *AC*, I, 1917, pp. 36-42; AHU, CM 21, four Portuguese and two Banian traders to Provisional Government, Moç., 27 February 1784; *ibid.*, Morais Durão to Maia e Vasconcelos and São Tomas, Moç., 8 March 1784; AHU, CM 22, same to Sec. St., Moç., 8 July 1785.

3. AHU, CM 22, Crown to Morais Durão, Ajuda, 14 March 1781, and *devassa* of Costa Portugal, Moç., March-April 1785, enclosed in Costa Portugal to Morais Durão, Ibo, 7 March 1785; see *ibid.*, same to same, Ibo, 8 March 1784, and reply, Ibo, 18 February 1785; AHU, CM 24, *devassa* of Maia e Vasconcelos, Moç., 1787, question #33 and replies, and testimony of Costa Portugal, fl. 26-28.

4. AHU, CM 22, Morais Durão to Sec. St., Moç., 8 July 1785. The only figures for the slave trade at Ibo during these years relate to the exportation of 966 slaves and to the duties of 7,389 *cruzados* collected on these and remitted to Moçambique, which indicates that the slaves were embarked on Portuguese vessels. *Ibid.*, *certidão*, Silva Guedes, Moç., 23 March 1785.

not personally known to me."¹ According to Crassons, in the fourteen voyages, including two of his own, a total of 4,193 slaves were embarked by French slavers at Kilwa, "and certainly there must have been more in three years."² Although the slaves were "superb specimens if they are selected with care," Crassons made it clear that, whatever the arrangements had been during the period of Morice's monopoly, the traders of Kilwa now dictated the terms under which the slave trade with the French functioned. He protested that

"This selection we cannot make ourselves, being at the discretion of the traders, who are now aware of our needs and who know that it is absolutely essential for us to sail at a given season in order to round the Cape of Good Hope. In addition to competition amongst ourselves the expeditions have never been properly thought out and always left to chance, and so it happens that three or four ships find themselves in the same place and crowd each other out."

In view of the considerably increased tempo of the French slave trade at Kilwa, especially that to the French West Indies, and of the obvious competition for cargoes among the French, it is not surprising to see that the price of slaves also rose in the early 1780s. Morice had agreed to pay the equivalent of 80 *cruzados* for each slave at Kilwa, in addition to an 8 *cruzado* head tax to the Sultan. Lacking the protection which the conditions of Morice's treaty imposed on both the Sultan and the Swahili traders of Kilwa, the French now found themselves having to pay about 40 *piastres*, or 160 *cruzados*, for each slave they purchased there—exactly twice what Morice had agreed to pay. According to information which the Governor-General of Moçambique received from some Swahili from Kilwa in 1786, the local traders of Kilwa were not the only ones to profit from the increased demand for slaves and the cessation of Morice's conditions of trade. In a description which complements that of Crassons, he wrote that the French trade "is made immediately with the King of Kilwa, who after charging a tax of ten *patacas* [40 *cruzados*] per head, sells them the slaves all together, at a price which suits him, without their having the freedom to reject them." It should be noted, however, that Crassons states that the capitation tax was only 6 *piastres* (24 *cruzados*). Still, the Sultan of Kilwa, who was probably the same Hasan bin Ibrahim who had welcomed Morice, had increased his share in this trade considerably.³ Nevertheless, slave trading at Kilwa was still cheap in compar-

1. All quoted material attributed to Crassons is found in FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, *The East African Coast* . . . , pp. 194 and 196-197.

2. AHU, CM 20, Paiva Pinto to Gov., Ibo, 24 November 1783, noting information that three ships were then at Kilwa; AHU, CM 21, Prov. Govt. to M. de Melo e Castro, Moç., 7 August 1784, reporting that "in a few months [. . .] more than ten ships" had taken on cargoes at Kilwa.

3. See E. A. ALPERS, "A Revised Chronology of the Sultans of Kilwa in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries", *Azania*, II, 1967, pp. 145-163.

ison to that at Moçambique, "where, Crassons complained, they make us pay fifty or sixty *piastres* [200 or 240 *cruzados*] each for them. This does not include presents and tiresome vexations."¹

During the 1770s the prices paid by the French for a slave at Kilwa were appreciably less than those demanded at Moçambique. This disparity continued into the next decade. The striking fact is that during the course of only ten years, the rising French demand for slaves at these markets gave rise to a parallel increase in costs. By the mid-1780s the price of a slave at both Moçambique and Kilwa had doubled in comparison with what was paid in the 1770s.

The fear that another European power might successfully establish itself to the north of Cape Delgado led, as it had previously in the century, to a spate of unfounded rumors at Moçambique concerning the establishment of a French factory at Kilwa. Certainly Morice had personally set himself up on the island, but here again things changed noticeably after his death. Ending several years of speculation on this matter, António Manuel de Melo e Castro explained to Lisbon "that the French have not yet obtained permission from the King of Kilwa to make the establishment for which they have been aspiring for a long time." Having completed their cargoes, he continued, they at once departed from Kilwa, "without a single Frenchman remaining there, leaving evacuated a house in which they usually stayed on land, which is perhaps what has given place to it being said that the French have an establishment, and factory, there."²

IV. — HEYDAY (1785-1794)

French domination of the slave trade in East Africa reached its zenith between 1785 and 1794. During the brief period of peace following the conclusion of the American War for Independence, up to the beginning of the Napoleonic Wars, an unprecedented number of French merchantmen called at the ports of the coast. While it was a time of outstanding prosperity for Ile de France and Bourbon, whose traders did an increasingly large trade in slaves from the continent, the greatest activity was the noticeably expanded slave trade between French America and these ports. The re-establishment of the *Compagnie des Indes* on 14 April 1785 was bitterly opposed by those who favored the system of free trade which had prevailed since 1769, but it did not inhibit the remarkable expansion of the trans-Atlantic trade from East Africa. Before the termination of its monopoly

1. AHU, CM 23, A. M. de Melo e Castro to M. de Melo e Castro, Moç., 14 August 1786.

2. *Ibid.*

in 1790, the Compagnie issued 119 licenses for trading along the coast of East Africa during the years 1786-1789 alone. Many of these ships, as Dermigny suggests and contemporary Portuguese documentation confirms, intended to sell their cargoes of slaves in America.¹

The French slave trade from East Africa to America made rapid progress in spite of the longer voyage which it required than that from West Africa and of the fact that the mortality rate was consequently higher. By the mid-1780s, wrote one French merchant, slaves were difficult to procure on the Guinea coast and the prices asked for them exorbitant. Compared to these, slaves from East Africa were much less expensive to buy. According to figures given by Dermigny, profits of well over 500% on each slave appear to have been normal. It is not surprising that the fears expressed by certain individuals, both French and Portuguese, over the ability of this trade to withstand rising prices in East Africa and problems at home in dispatching ships to these ports, were groundless.² Only war, or the fear of war, together with a chronic state of civil disorder at Saint-Domingue from 1791, were able to inhibit its operation.

At Moçambique, the many years of flagrant disregard by successive governors of royal orders prohibiting trading with foreigners finally led to a reversal of this longstanding policy. The reappraisal of official policy towards such trade formed part of a larger reorganization of the colony's entire commerce. Supervised by Martinho de Melo e Castro, the Secretary of the Navy and Overseas Dominions, this general reorganization of trade was designed to terminate the years of administrative chaos which had followed on the death of Pereira do Lago. The executor of these reforms was the Secretary's nephew, previously the Governor of the Rivers of Sena, António Manuel de Melo e Castro, who took office as Governor-General of Moçambique on 11 March 1786, replacing the inept and corrupt provisional government which had succeeded Saldanha de Albuquerque. The new Governor-General was ideally suited for the task and his six-year administration of the colony was the most outstanding since that of his illustrious father, Francisco de Melo e Castro.

The new regulations were drawn up on 19 April 1785, but it does not appear that they were put in effect until the middle of 1787, after António Manuel had closely studied the situation. Unfortunately, there are no accounts at all of French traders at Moçambique during this important period, as a result of which there appears to be an abrupt change, rather than any sort of transition, from the old methods

1. See DERMIGNY, I, pp. 98-103 and 153; AHU, CM 23, A. M. de Melo e Castro to M. de Melo e Castro, Moç., 26 September 1787; also Henry WEBER, *La Compagnie Française des Indes (1604-1875)*, Paris, 1904, pp. 616-654.

2. DERMIGNY, I, pp. 98 and 110, n. 23; AC, II, 1918, p. 36.

of illegal trading to the new legalized system. In any case, the 1785 orders specifically instructed Melo e Castro to admit French traders to the port of Moçambique, as it was clear to all that they would continue to arrive there, and that this was preferable to the extortions to which previous governor-generals had subjected them. This decision was the logical sequitur to the royal decree issued several days previously, which strictly forbade Crown officials from trading in the colony, or from tampering with its official economic apparatus.¹ It is notable, however, that Melo e Castro was directed by his uncle that this permission should appear to be "your own decision, so that no one can perceive, or suspect, either directly or indirectly, that you are doing this on the order, or suggestion of this Court." In this way, general Portuguese colonial policy remained publicly unaltered, while at Moçambique trade with the French was secretly authorized.

The procedure to be followed by the Governor-General was carefully detailed in his instructions. Immediately on the arrival of the French ship at Moçambique, a guard was to be placed on board, all the indispensable necessities were to be seized, in order to prevent the unloading of wares directly to the mainland, and the Captain and Super-cargo were to be brought before the Governor-General and Chief Justice. The decision to admit a ship was to be the Governor-General's prerogative, without limitations, but he was obliged to inform the Crown of each permit so granted. Entrance having been conceded, all merchandise, save only firearms and gunpowder, which were the monopoly of the Royal Treasury and to which they had to be sold, was to be transported to the *alfândega* (customs house) for evaluation. Anything caught being smuggled from the ship to the mainland would be seized and a fine equal to twice its value levied; a second offence was punishable by immediate imprisonment. No French traders were allowed to leave the island for the mainland, and all export trade outside of slaves and provisions was completely forbidden. Each adult slave was to be taxed at the rate of 16 *cruzados* per head, with minors paying only 12 *cruzados* per head. None of the crew could remain at Moçambique after his ship had departed. Within these conditions, which were to be strictly observed and for which the Governor-General was entirely responsible, the French could trade freely at Moçambique. The Secretary also suggested the imposition of a 10% or 12% duty on all French imports. Finally, all French trading at subordinate ports, especially at the Kerimba Islands, was to be ended, if that were possible; Moçambique alone was to be the center of the French slave trade in Portuguese East Africa.²

1. AHU, Cod. 1472, fl. 53-55, royal decree, Ajuda, 14 April 1785.

2. *Ibid.*, fl. 65-70, M. de Melo e Castro to A. M. de Melo e Castro, Ajuda, 19 April 1785.

Late in June 1787, Melo e Castro launched the new policy, making no attempt, however, to camouflage the fact that the Crown had ordered the change. His proclamation embodied the 1785 instructions with only minimal modifications.¹ Emphasizing Portuguese determination to defend the subordinate ports against French traders, Melo e Castro conveyed the substance of this proclamation to his French counterpart at Ile de France a month later.²

The first vessel which is known to have traded under the new regulations arrived at Moçambique in mid-July 1787. Thereafter, until March 1794, the great importance of the French slave trade at that port is vividly attested to by the many *autos da visita* (writs of inspection) which one encounters in the Portuguese archives from this period.³ Although the available statistical sources for this trade do not inspire great confidence, they too reflect the growth of the slave trade at Moçambique during this period. One list gives the following figures for the years 1786-1790:⁴

<i>Year</i>	<i>In Portuguese ships</i>	<i>In foreign ships</i>
1786	2,847	—
1787	3,665	4,548
1788	5,506	5,510
1789	2,687	6,987
1790	656	6,697
TOTAL	15,361 slaves	23,742 slaves

The accuracy of these figures is, however, very suspect. The suspiciously large Portuguese figures for 1787 and 1788 may well be due to the fact that, in order to circumvent the higher capitation taxes levied on French exported slaves, local Portuguese traders took a large number of slaves through customs on their own account, only to deliver them to French slavers with whom they had previously struck a bargain. Other sources record that in 1789 a total of 1,886 slaves were exported from the capital aboard Portuguese vessels, while 4,838 were shipped under foreign colors. These figures are consonant with the *alfândega* duties collected on the slave trade in that year.

1. *Ibid.*, fl. 51-52, Crown to same, Ajuda, 15 April 1785, registered by same at Moç., 14 April 1787.

2. AHU, CM 23, A. M. de Melo e Castro, "Condiçoens com que serão admitidos os navios francezes nesta capital até a real resolução de Sua Magestade", Moç., 20 June 1787; AHU, Cod. 1478, fl. 38, same to Souillac, Moç., 23 July 1787.

3. See, e.g., AHU, CM 26, Benjamin Ferrão, *auto da visita* taken aboard the French frigate *Breton*, Captain Gardon, Moç., 16 July 1787. These *autos* are records of the Chief Justice's inspection of the foreign ships which came to trade at Moçambique, in accordance with the regulations of 1787. Each *auto* includes the name (and usually the type) of the ship, its captain, its nationality, and a detailed account of its cargo, but only rarely its port of destiny.

4. AHU, CM 33, anon., "Mappa da importância...".

Similarly, it appears that the correct figures for exportation of slaves in 1790 are some 758 in Portuguese ships and 6,387 in foreign ships.¹ No capitulation figures exist for the years 1791-1794, but one can deduce the minimum number of slaves embarked from Moçambique from the taxes collected from this trade. According to these, one gets the following picture:²

<i>Year</i>	<i>In Portuguese ships</i>	<i>In foreign ships</i>
1791	1,376	4,147
1792	1,214	3,730
1793	1,000	3,273
1794	764	1,576
TOTAL	4,354 slaves	12,726 slaves

During the period 1786-1794, then, according to the most reliable official figures, about 19,016 slaves were exported from Moçambique aboard Portuguese vessels, while some 34,009 were shipped by foreigners.

The effect of this greatly expanded slave trade on the general economy of Moçambique was striking. The Governor-General wrote that the trade of both the island and the interior was growing at a terrific pace. The great influx of specie and trading cloths, the latter from Diu and Damão, was due solely to "the great exportation of slaves, the most flourishing branch of trade of this Captaincy." Gold and ivory, which had formerly been the most important exports of the colony, were now "faded, and in precipitate decadency." Melo e Castro related that whereas gold and ivory had once paid for virtually all the imports of Moçambique from India and Portugal, they now barely accounted for a third of these. Furthermore, the volume of

1. AHU, CM 25, Silva Guedes, "Resumo do rendimento da alfândega no anno preterito de 1789", Moç., 11 August 1790; AHU, CM 27, A. M. de Melo e Castro to M. de Melo e Castro, Moç., 24 August 1790; *ibid.*, same to same, Moç., 28 August 1791, enclosing *alfândega* figures for the previous year, Silva Guedes, Moç., 15 March 1791; see A. LOBATO, *História do presidio de Lourenço Marques*, Lisboa, II, 1960, p. 359.

2. AHU, CM 33, anon., "Mapa dos rendimentos reais da capitania de 1788 a 1793", Moç., August 1794; *ibid.*, anon., "Mapa dos rendimentos de 1791 a 1795", n.d.; see LOBATO, *História . . .*, II, pp. 357-358 and 388. These figures are calculated by dividing the head tax of 16 *cruzados* for adult slaves exported on foreign ships into the total amount of duties collected on that trade, and the corresponding tax of 8 *cruzados* paid by Portuguese vessels for similar slaves into that total. This is the same method employed by the Portuguese, as the 1789-1790 figures reveal. It yields, however, a minimal figure, as it ignores the fact that young slaves were taxed at a lower rate, so that the total sum of revenue must have represented a larger number of slaves in proportion to the number of minors embarked. For similar problems of quantitative analysis, see David BIRMINGHAM, *Trade and Conflict in Angola: The Mbundu and their Neighbours under the Influence of the Portuguese, 1483-1790*, Oxford, 1966, pp. 141 and 154.

these imports had also increased considerably. There was no doubt in his mind that the stimulus to this growth, and the sole bastion supporting the colony's relative prosperity, was the French slave trade.¹ Melo e Castro's observations were corroborated by Jerónimo José Nogueira de Andrade, who in 1790 had just returned to Lisbon after nearly eight years' service in Moçambique. Devoting a lengthy section of his highly informative memoir on the trade of Portuguese East Africa to the French slave trade at Moçambique, Nogueira de Andrade argued strongly against the complaints of some settlers that this trade was harmful to the colony. He also praised Melo e Castro's regulation and supervision of the French trade. Utilizing the same data as the Governor-General, he reasoned that the increase in trade from India was due to the increased demand for trading cloths with which to acquire slaves for selling to the French. Likewise, he pointed out that the increased imports from Lisbon to Moçambique were financed by the *patacas* with which the French bought their slaves.² In view of these recommendations, it is not surprising that Martinho de Melo e Castro instructed his nephew's successor, D. Diogo de Sousa (Coutinho), to continue this policy of tacit toleration. Sousa's restatement of this policy at the end of May 1793, two and a half months after he had assumed office, only added a provision forbidding the raising of the French or any other foreign flag on Portuguese territory to the original decree of 1787.³

During this decade, the price paid for a slave at Moçambique continued to rise. In the 1770s the average price had been about 120 *cruzados* per head; by about 1784 it had doubled to anywhere between 200 and 240 *cruzados* each. Within the next five years the average price for any adult male slave, according to Portuguese sources, seems to have varied between about 250 *cruzados* to more than 400 *cruzados* each, not including the 16 *cruzados* capitation tax. A clear distinction was made between slaves newly arrived from the interior and those who had acquired desirable skills through having served Portuguese masters on the coast, with the latter fetching the higher prices.⁴ As for distinctions of sex, age, and stature, Blancard

1. AHU, CM 26, A. M. de Melo e Castro to M. de Melo e Castro, Moç., 14 August 1789; AHU, CM 27, same to same, Moç., 24 August 1790 and 20 August 1791.

2. AC, II, 1918, pp. 32-36. Nogueira de Andrade estimated that the Moçambique coast provided some 4,000 to 5,000, or more, slaves each year.

3. AHU, Cod. 1472, fl. 107-111, M. de Melo e Castro to Sousa, Queluz, 12 October 1792; AHU, Cod. 1361, fl. 16-17, Sousa, "Condiçoens que os capitães dos navios francezes . . .", Moç., 30 May 1793; see *ibid.*, fl. 15, same to Francisco António Tavares de Siqueira, Moç., 31 May 1793; *ibid.*, same to João da Costa Xavier, Moç., 4 June 1793.

4. AHU, CM 25, "Declaração dos negociantes cristãos e baneanes da praça de Moçambique", Moç., 30 June 1789; AHU, CM 26, Manuel do Nascimento

furnishes prices current at this time for eight classifications of slaves, the highest of which are somewhat lower than the contemporary Portuguese figures. They are especially valuable, however, in that they suggest the limitations one faces in relying on official Portuguese figures for the slave trade, based, as these appear to be, on the presumption that each slave exported was an adult. Blancard's figures read:¹

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Price in piastres</i>
Males, aged 20 and over	35 to 45
Females, aged 18 and over	30 to 35
Males, aged 15-20, being 4' 1" to 4' 2" tall	30
Males, aged 15-20, being 4' 6" tall	35 to 45
Males, aged 8-15, being 3' 8" to 3' 11" tall	20 to 25
Females, aged 8-15, being 4' 6" tall	30 to 35
Females, aged 8-15, being 4' 5" tall	25 to 28
Females, aged 8-15, being 3' 6" to 3' 11" tall	18 to 22

Although the increased demand for slaves at Moçambique was matched by rising prices, French traders continued to frequent that port in strength until March 1794. Thereafter, until early in 1796, no French vessels entered Moçambique harbor, as a result of the war, although friendly relations were maintained between Sousa and the French Governor-General, Malartic.² Besides the fact that the urgency of the French demand for slaves gave them little choice but to do a large portion of their business with the Portuguese, the innovation of the 1787 regulations for that trade would seem to have been a factor in inducing them to return to trade at Moçambique. Under the administrations of both Melo e Castro and Sousa, French traders knew what was expected of them: prices were high and restrictions rigidly but honestly applied. The time-consuming business of bribing the Governor-General and the uncertainties of being subject to his whims no longer existed. Moçambique was now fully geared to supplying slaves and the government saw to it that this was done with maximal efficiency.

Such was not the case at the Kerimba Islands, where the French slave trade declined during this decade. Complaints continued to be

Nunes to Crown, Moç., 10 June 1790; see LOBATO, *História . . .*, II, pp. 358-359 and 388, n. 1. Nascimento Nunes includes details which corroborate the general details of the French slave trade at Moçambique during this period.

1. P. BLANCARD, *Manuel du commerce des Indes et de la Chine*, Paris, 1806, pp. 16-19. Blancard lived in the East from 1770 to about 1790. He also notes the necessity of paying a baptism tax of about 2 *cruzados* on each slave exported.

2. Mabel V. JACKSON [HAIGHT], *European Powers and South-East Africa: A Study of International Relations on the South-East Coast of Africa, 1796-1856*, London, 1942, p. 45.

voiced that French contraband was still rife there, but these appear to have been based on slightly outdated information and repeated as a matter of habit. Two factors influenced the decline of French slaving at the islands: stricter enforcement of official Portuguese policy prohibiting this trade, and the greater concentration of French commercial activity to the north of Cape Delgado. Melo e Castro continually warned the Governor of the Kerimba Islands during the first eighteen months of his administration against allowing the French to trade there. He particularly stressed that Portuguese officials were forbidden to trade privately, as ordered by the royal decree of 14 April 1785.¹

The establishment of a factory and an *alfândega* at Ibo, in accordance with the general reorganization of the colony's trade, may well have encouraged this new efficiency, as did Melo e Castro's own example. This trend was apparently intensified after António José Teixeira Tigre was nominated Governor and Commandant of the islands in September 1788.² Indeed, a later Governor of the Kerimba Islands verifies that Tigre had 'religiously' guarded against the French trading within his jurisdiction.³ During the height of French slaving activity along the coast of East Africa, then, the conscientious execution of official Portuguese policy, which had been thoroughly flaunted by successive governors of the Kerimba Islands for the previous half century, excluded the French from trading in what had once been their favorite area of supply.⁴

Despite this turn of events, the French continued to receive slaves from this area as a result of the inability of the Portuguese to inhibit the Arab and Swahili trade from the islands and mainland to the towns located north of Cape Delgado. This coasting trade had always frustrated the Portuguese, but its importance seems to have grown considerably after 1786, when the French began to face opposition to their trading personally at Ibo and to devote increasingly more attention to the Kilwa coast. The extension of Omani hegemony over Kilwa in 1785 also influenced the growth of this coasting trade. The magnitude of this trade is unknown, but there is no doubt that it

1. AHU, Cod. 1478, fl. 1-3, A. M. de Melo e Castro to Agostinho de Melo e Almeida, Moç., 11 September 1786, enclosing same to Costa Portugal, Moç., 20 June 1786; AHU, Cod. 1484, fl. 46, same to Melo e Almeida, Moç., 23 July 1787; AHU, CM 23, same to same, Moç., 5 August 1787.

2. AHU, Cod. 1478, fl. 20-21, A. M. de Melo e Castro to Tigre, Mossuril, 16 September 1788.

3. AHU, CM 28, Constantino António Alvares da Silva to Sousa, Ibo, 9 October 1795.

4. Despite the decline in French slaving at the Kerimba Islands, Blancard includes prices for the various types of slaves there. These range from a top price of 35 to 40 *piastres* for adult males, to 18 to 20 for the youngest and smallest females; cf. BLANCARD, pp. 19-21.

continued to flourish for as long as there was a market for slaves at Kilwa and only a minimal demand at Ibo.

As they had since Morice's day, French slavers to the north of Cape Delgado concentrated their activities at Kilwa. At the same time, however, a concerted effort was made by the French to open up trade with Mongalo (Mgau Mwanya), to the south of Kilwa. Morice had noted Mongalo only as a place with a small harbor, where one could buy smaller cowries than at the Kerimba Islands. It was scarcely better known to Crassons in 1784.¹ But from 1786 to 1789, Mongalo became the focus of French attempts from Ile de France to secure a foothold in East Africa.

The details of this episode do not bear close examination here. Briefly, the Mongalo interlude represents an unusual union of official Metropolitan with local colonial and commercial ambitions regarding the coast north of Cape Delgado. The first sign of interest dates to 1784 and grew out of a general French interest in the affairs of the Western Indian Ocean. By December 1785 an official French voyage of reconnaissance was underway, and in early January 1786 the royal corvette *Prévoyance*, commanded by Lieutenant le Chevalier Saulnier de Mondevit, weighed anchor at Mongalo Road.² The French had been clearly rebuffed at Kilwa, where neither the Sultan, the local traders, nor the Omani Governor were anxious to see the French open direct trading relations with a town nominally subordinate to Kilwa and, by implication, to the Bu Sa'idi. But their reception, not surprisingly, was quite amicable at Mongalo, which was as much a Makonde as a Swahili town, and which had little affection for the Arabs. In a few days a trading agreement was struck with the local authorities. It offered excellent prices for slaves, the maximum of 25 *piastres* for all male slaves being far below the prevailing prices elsewhere along the coast.

Saulnier de Mondevit attempted to parlay this bargain into a major, official French involvement at Mongalo, arguing to the Crown that the exigencies of the Mascarenes required it. The parallel with Morice's earlier proposal for Kilwa is obvious. Saulnier de Mondevit's encouraging reports on trading prospects at Mongalo were immediately followed up by a local shipowner named Commarmond. Six of his vessels were ultimately involved in pursuing this business from

1. FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, *The French . . .*, pp. 90, 103-104, 108, 120, 124, 173; and *The East African Coast . . .*, pp. 192-193.

2. ANF, Col. C¹ 80, Saulnier de Mondevit, "Mémoire sur la baye de Lindy et la rivière de Mongale, située à la côte orientale de l'Afrique . . .", n.d., but dated internally to 1786; ANF, Col. C¹ 84, Saulnier de Mondevit, "Mémoire sur la nécessité et les moyens de former un établissement françois à Mongalo sur la côte orientale d'Afrique", n.d., but probably composed at same time.

February 1786 to February 1788, but disaster plagued him. Several of the ships were lost and there is no indication that more than a very small number of slaves ever was shipped at Mongalo. Furthermore, the prices of slaves at Mongalo were equal to those at Kilwa by 1787; and had, by mid-1789, doubled since Saulnier's first visit in 1785.¹

But as both Commarmond and the administrators of Ile de France explained to the Minister of the Navy, the mission of these ships was not restricted to trade. According to Commarmond, Saulnier had first raised the French flag at Mongalo at the end of 1785. Commarmond had accepted the task of maintaining the French presence there until an official establishment could be undertaken by the French Government. In fact, he explained, one vessel was being kept at Mongalo "solely to show the French flag there." By late 1787, Commarmond's men had constructed a warehouse on the mainland at Mongalo, "under the protection of a small vessel armed with four cannons and with about a twelve men crew." The Governor-General and the Intendant of Ile de France reported that Commarmond had doubled his staff there so that Saulnier's observations could be verified and the rivers which entered the bay could be ascended. All three men strongly urged the Minister of the Navy to found an official French establishment at Mongalo, but their request must have fallen on deaf ears in Paris, for the Revolutionary Government was violently opposed to slavery.² Indeed, by the law of 8 *Ventôse* II (26 February 1794), the slave trade at Ile de France, and presumably also at Bourbon, was temporarily suspended.³

After a promising beginning, the French effort to establish a foothold at Mongalo soon failed. Commarmond, who apparently exercised a monopoly of trade there in return for his services to the State, was equally unsuccessful in making Mongalo into an independent rival to Kilwa. Indeed, the particular welcome which the French had been accorded at Mongalo was apparently somewhat worn out by early 1789.⁴

For all the involvement at Mongalo, then, Kilwa remained secure as the principal source of slaves for the French north of Cape Delgado. According to figures given by Blancard, which date from 1787, the

1. ANF, Col. C⁴ 78, Commarmond to Min. of Navy, Port Louis, 1 November 1787; ANF, Col. C⁴ 85, same to same, Ile de France, 20 June 1789; ANF, Col. C⁴ 72, "Rapport de M. le Brasseur . . .", c. 1785-1786; DERMIGNY, I, pp. 106 and 110, n. 23; BLANCARD, p. 23.

2. ANF, Col. C⁴ 95, Souillac to Min. of Navy, Ile de France, 14 March 1787; ANF, Col. C⁴ 78, Commarmond to same, Port Louis, 1 November 1787; ANF, Col. C⁴ 85, same to same, Ile de France, 20 June 1789; ANF, Col. C⁴ 96, d'Entrecasteaux and Motais de Narbonne to same, Port Louis, 30 January 1789.

3. NOËL, p. 56.

4. See AHU, CM 26, Bruno de Morais to Tigre, Vamizi, 7 February 1789.

price for an adult male slave at Kilwa had not risen since 1784, averaging from 35 to 40 *piastres*. As at Moçambique and the Kerimba Islands, the prices for females and younger males were proportionately less. By 1787, however, not only had the head tax on slaves been raised slightly from 6 to 6,5 *piastres*, but a considerable outlay had to be made in the way of additional presents to various local dignitaries for each cargo. For a sale of 300 slaves made in that year, a French trader had given the Sultan of Kilwa presents of cloth and glass equal to about 100 *piastres*; a further 30 *piastres* each went to the Sultan's 'Minister' and his 'Secretary'; to the Sultan's two brothers and an uncle, similar gifts totalling 60 *piastres*; while 60 *piastres* were paid to the Omani Governor of Kilwa. While these presents were not so exorbitant as those once demanded by the Portuguese officials to the south, against which Crassons had so strongly protested, they were an extra expense. Another new development in the operation of the French slave trade at Kilwa, and one of which Crassons no doubt approved, was the fact that the French no longer competed among themselves for cargoes, but did their trading in orderly fashion, each vessel in its turn.¹

Regrettably, no precise figures exist for the volume of the French slave trade at Kilwa during this period. In December 1788, it was reported that there were seven French ships trading at Kilwa, as well as two at Mongalo, but no further particulars are known of these vessels, or their trade. Less than a month later, Melo e Castro reported that eleven French ships were doing business at these ports and at Mikindani, while a Captain Le Maître told Nogueira de Andrade that during the nine months in which he had lived at Kilwa, five other French ships were taking on slaves.² Similarly, very little is known about the French slave trade along the Kilwa coast in the early 1790s. Apparently it continued to flourish at the same pace into 1793, after which time the fear of war caused a temporary hiatus, just as it did at Moçambique.³

Although the French resumed slave trading at Moçambique and along the Kilwa coast after a lapse of only about two years, after 1794 they no longer played the same key role in that trade which they had during the previous decade. This turn of events was not only a matter of an absolute decline in French slaving activity, but also one of their

1. BLANCARD, pp. 21-23. According to Captain P. Dallons, in 1788 the head tax on slaves purchased within the dominion of the Imam of Oman was fixed at 5 *piastres*. It seems doubtful that this limit was ever observed at Kilwa. FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, *The East African Coast* . . . , p. 200.

2. AHU, CM 25, Tigre to A. M. de Melo e Castro, Ibo, 24 December 1788; AHU, CM 26, A. M. de Melo e Castro to M. de Melo e Castro, Moç., 14 January 1789; *AC*, I, 1917, p. 125; see also RINCHON, p. 367.

3. AHU, CM 31, Alves da Silva to Sousa, Ibo, 19 August 1795.

relative position within a context of increasingly important Brazilian and Arab trading along the coast. It should be pointed out, however, that the only firm evidence we have for French domination of the East African slave trade pertains to the Portuguese ports below Cape Delgado. To the north, in the Omani sphere of influence, Arabs were trading for slaves at Kilwa and its associated ports throughout the later eighteenth century. Moreover, despite the obvious lack of substantiating documentation, it would appear that this trade was steadily increasing, as suggested previously. Consequently, the precise significance which we should attach to French involvement in slaving on the Kilwa coast must remain a matter for speculation. At the very least, however, the existing documentation suggests that it was of comparable importance to the Arab trade.

V. — THE END OF AN ERA (1795-1810)

Little is known of the French slave trade at Kilwa in the late 1790s and 1800s. In 1797 relations were strained between the French and the people of Kilwa as a result of an act of piracy by a M. Labadie against a boat from that port. Seven years later a British cruiser captured a French corsair about those waters; in 1809 there is another brief reference to the French slaving at Kilwa.¹ Mongalo passes unnoticed at this time. In fact, after 1795 most French slaving to the north of Cape Delgado was done at Zanzibar, which was ever becoming a growing slave market, in addition to its role as the principal ivory market of the Indian Ocean.² The estimate made by Captain Thomas Smee, in 1811, that the total number of slaves exported yearly from Zanzibar was "not less than 6,000 to 10,000," is probably fairly accurate. Many of these slaves, if not most, undoubtedly came from the Kilwa coast. Freeman-Grenville's suggestion that the annual exportation of slaves from Kilwa probably topped 6,000 therefore seems quite within reason.³

There is no doubt, however, that the French slave trade at Moçambique declined after the peak years up to 1794; but it certainly continued to be plied actively until 1808, when Franco-Portuguese hostilities were finally joined in the Indian Ocean. Until then, neither French corsairs, nor the series of statutes prohibiting the French

1. J. M. GRAY, "The French at Kilwa in 1797", *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, 58-59, 1962, pp. 172-173; JACKSON, p. 61; MCCALL THEAL, *Records* . . ., London, IX, 1903, pp. 1-2.

2. GRAY, *History* . . ., pp. 92-108; AHU, CM 44, Meneses da Costa to Crown, Lisboa, 6 January 1804; MCCALL THEAL, IX, p. 13.

3. GRAY, *History* . . ., p. 104; OLIVER and MATHEW, I, p. 156; FREEMAN-GRENVILLE, *The East African Coast* . . ., p. 200.

islanders from slaving, were able to suppress the trade. Neutrality prevailed in spite of both difficulties in Europe and local demands made by British cruisers for fulfillment of the Anglo-Portuguese alliance. Occasional restrictions of trade at Moçambique similarly did not seriously threaten the trade.¹ Meanwhile, the slave trade between Brazil and Moçambique began to be pursued more seriously from the 1790s, when it was actively encouraged by Governor-General Sousa. Statistics are minimal for this period, but in 1803 the official figures for exportations of slaves from Moçambique are 2,335 on Portuguese ships and 2,904 on foreign vessels. This is a total of 5,239. From the beginning of 1805 to October 1806, duties collected on the slave trade constituted two-thirds of the total amount of revenue taken on exportations at the *alfândega*. In 1805, the large majority of these duties were levied on slaves shipped by foreigners, undoubtedly French, with one American exception; in 1806, there was an abrupt reversal, with Portuguese transported slaves accounting for four-fifths of the total. For both years, just over half the taxes were yielded by Portuguese slavers.²

Following the extension of the war between France and Portugal to the Indian Ocean in 1808, the external trade of Moçambique would seem to have dropped sharply. According to the *alfândega* registers, between May 1805 and May 1808, 75 ships, 46 of which were Portuguese and 29 foreign, had entered Moçambique; from May 1808 to late November 1809, only six more, three of each, had arrived there.³ French corsairs roamed the Moçambique Channel, inflicting considerable losses to Portuguese shipping, while early in 1809 a French vessel blockaded the entrance to Moçambique harbor for nearly two months. The Portuguese were unable to defend the port by themselves, so that when there were no British cruisers there to protect it for them, trade could be stopped, or a disturbance caused, by the French.⁴ Nevertheless, in August 1809, Henry Salt recorded the departure for India of seven vessels from Moçambique. These carried about 500 slaves, in addition to their more important cargoes of ivory and gold. Salt, who was a keen observer, also noted that "five ships loaded with slaves

1. See JACKSON, pp. 45-63; NOËL, pp. 39 and 56-62; MALTE-BRUN, *Annales des voyages, de la géographie et de l'histoire*, Paris, IX, 1809, p. 314.

2. AHU, CM 44, Silva Guedes, "Mapa do rendimentos que houve na alfândega no anno próximo passado de 1803 . . .", Moç., 1804; JACKSON, p. 85, n. 2; E. DONNAN, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, Washington, IV, 1935, pp. 504 and 505; AHU, CM 47, Andrew Ross to Gov., Moç., 11 April 1806.

3. AHU, CM 51, Silva Guedes, Moç., 24 November 1809; see also, *ibid.*, petition of Costa Lacé, n.d., and same to Judge of the *alfândega*, n.d.; *ibid.*, testimony of Joaquim de Rosário Monteiro, Rio de Janeiro, 9 May 1809.

4. AHU, Cod. 1372, fl. 32v.-33, Prov. Govt. to Anadia, Moç., 10 November 1808; MCCALL THEAL, IX, pp. 1-3; JACKSON, pp. 74-79.

went this year to the Brazils, each vessel carrying from three to four hundred." The same pace of trade between Moçambique and Rio de Janeiro, where the Portuguese Court had been removed in 1807-1808, apparently continued in 1810.¹ In the end, then, there was only a very short period during which French corsairs posed a serious threat to the export trade of Moçambique. Beginning in 1808, it effectively ended with the British capture of Ile de France and Bourbon in 1810.

*

Although French slaving activity in East Africa ultimately pales numerically in comparison to that of the Omani Arabs, and possibly even to that of the Brazilians, it played a particularly crucial role in the rise of the slave trade there during the eighteenth century. The demand for slaves engendered by the growth of a typical colonial plantation economy on the Mascarene Islands, which in turn created a precedent which French slavers from the West Indian colonies could follow, was a unique departure from the previous character of East African involvement in the trade of the Western Indian Ocean System. For although ivory remained the basis of that involvement right through the nineteenth century, there is no doubt that slaves posed a serious challenge to its ancient supremacy at mid-century. And while the impact of the slave trade on the peoples of East Africa must be seen within the larger context of long distance trade in that part of the continent, it just as clearly added a new dimension to the history of East African societies.

The many years of slave trading from East Africa, particularly from the Portuguese ports, to the Mascarene Islands is reflected in the fact that, as early as 1806, more than two-fifths of the slave population of Ile de France were considered to be 'Mozambiques'. In 1830, this general category included Yao, Makua, Makonde, Maravi, Ngindo, Nyamwezi, and Africans from the Zambezi area and Inhambane, so that the term 'Mozambiques' was not strictly accurate.² Nevertheless, this generic name, and the reality of a great mass of East Africans who had been carried from their homeland to work on French plantations in the middle of the Indian Ocean, vividly attest to the long-standing

1. Henry SALT, *A Voyage to Abyssinia* [. . .] *in the Years 1809 and 1810* [. . .] *in which are Included an Account of the Portuguese Settlements on the East Coast of Africa, Visited in the Course of the Voyage* . . ., London, 1814, pp. 34-35, and 80; McCALL THEAL, IX, p. 12.

2. NOËL, p. 33, quoting MILBERT (*Voyage pittoresque à l'Ile de France*, Paris, 1812, p. 233) who states that in 1806 there were 26,670 'Mozambiques' in a total slave population of 60,646; Baron d'UNIONVILLE [Antoine MARRIER] (*Statistique de l'Ile Maurice et ses dépendances* . . ., Paris, I, 1838, pp. 249 and 276-279), who gives the slave population of Mauritius in 1830 as 67,619, in one place, and as 69,476, in another; MALTE-BRUN, *Annales* . . ., Paris, XIII, 1811, p. 380.

French trading connections between the Mascarenes and East Africa. Nor should we forget that a great many other East Africans were transported even farther away to the Caribbean. When looking carefully at the factors affecting the growth of French slave trading in East Africa and the mechanics of its operation in the ports of that coast, we must not lose sight of the essential inhumanity of the trade. To do so would be to place it in an unrealistic and wholly irrelevant historical context.