

Yankee traders, old coasters

498

REVIEWS

shorter version of the present study, arranged according to the principal themes (perhaps in an English translation), would have been of great benefit to students of African history, especially because of the significance of the Mossi for any comparative analysis of African kingdoms.

What for us is a major contribution to the history of the Mossi, Michel Izard regards as an 'introduction' only. 'The history of the Mossi' he says, 'is before us not beyond'. Indeed, we wait eagerly for the publication of his more intensive study on the kingdom of Yatenga.

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NEHEMIA LEVTZION

AMERICAN TRADE WITH WEST AFRICA

Yankee Traders, Old Coasters, and African Middlemen. Boston University African Research Studies No. 11. By GEORGE E. BROOKS, JR. Boston: Boston University Press, 1970. Pp. 370. \$12.50.

In the book under review Brooks provides just what his sub-title claims—*A History of American Legitimate Trade with West Africa in the Nineteenth Century*. The history of United States trade, as such, with Africa obviously only begins in 1783, and Brooks shows that the opportunity to make a real lodgement came, shortly after the War of Independence, with the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars and the inability of France, in particular, to maintain a closed imperial system. The first focus of American interest was Senegal, and in his tracing of the development of American trade with that region Brooks makes valuable additions to our knowledge of the history of European trade and rivalries in that region. Simple breach of often fragile colonial regulations in the years after the wars, and the liberalization of European colonial fiscal policies from the 1820's onwards, are not the only explanations of the growth of American trade: probably more fundamental was American ability to offer two of the staples of West African trade, tobacco and rum, at unrivalled prices, whilst there was a complementary and continuing American demand for hides and groundnuts, and a lesser and more fluctuating demand for a range of other African products. Curiously, American cotton goods never gained the acceptance on the west coast that they secured on the east. Salem was the United States port principally involved in the West African trade, whilst in West Africa American merchants did most trade with Goree, Bathurst and Freetown, and the Gold Coast, and, by barter on shipboard, along the Grain and Ivory coasts (Brooks specifically excludes the study of American trade with Liberia). There was also an American trade as far south as Angola but the Niger Delta was a particularly notable area in which American traders never established themselves. The end of an era came as a result, firstly, of the coming of the steamship. Brooks suggests that the volume of American trade with Africa was insufficient to support a direct steamship trade with the result that American trade was increasingly via European ports and European steamer lines. Secondly, tariff charges, both in the United States and in West Africa, following the extension of European colonial rule, altered the terms of trade to the disadvantage of American traders.

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