

and on their return stated that it was called 'rio de Casamanssa', that is to say, the river of a negro chief named Casamansa, who dwelt about thirty miles up the river, but that this chief was not now to be found there, having gone to war against another. After learning this, we left on the following day. Note that from the Rio di Gambra to this of Casamansa is about twenty-five leagues, that is, one hundred miles.

CHAPTER XLVI

*The GREAT RIVERS found on this coast,
and the people*

Leaving the river of Casamansa we followed the coast until we reached a cape which we judged to be about twenty miles from the river. This cape is somewhat higher than the coast: as the face shows red, we gave to it the name Capo Rosso¹.

We continued along the coast beyond until we reached the mouth of a moderately sized river, in our estimate, a bow shot in width. This, to which we gave the name Rio de Sancta Anna², we did not choose to examine. Continuing upon our course beyond it, we came to another river on the coast, which did not appear smaller than that of Sancta Anna, and to this we gave the name Rio de Sancto Dominico³. We judged it by estimation to be fifty-five to sixty miles from Capo Rosso to this river.

Then, still sailing along this coast for a day, we came to the mouth of a very large river⁴. I say very large, for we all thought at first that it was a gulf: nevertheless very beautiful green trees were to be seen on the other part of the land to the south. We all estimated it to be at least twenty miles and upwards in breadth, so that we spent a considerable time in crossing this

¹ Cape Roxo: this had already been named by the Portuguese.

² Cacheu River.

³ Mansoa River.

⁴ The Rio Grande, now the River Jeba. Cadamosto's impression of its size is strongly emphasized on the charts of Benincasa.

estuary, that is from one side to the other: when we were at the farther side, we sighted islands out to sea.¹

We then decided to obtain news of the country at this place, and at once anchored. The next morning came out to our ships two canoes, which were similar to those already described, and in truth were of great size; one was almost as long as one of our vessels, but not so high; and in it were more than thirty negroes; the other was smaller, having about sixteen men. On seeing them rowing out very fast, in the manner already described, and having doubts of them, we stood to arms, waiting to see what they were about. When they drew near, they raised a white cloth tied to an oar, as though requesting safe conduct. We replied in the same fashion; on seeing which, they came alongside, the larger to my caravel, and gazed upon us in great amazement to see white men. They also examined the shape of the vessel, the mast and the cross-yards, for they did not know what they were, nor their use. Then I, wishing to gain information of this people, caused my interpreters to speak with them, but none of them could understand what was said, nor could those on the other caravels: on realizing this, I was greatly disappointed, and at last they left without our having been able to understand them.

Reflecting that we were come to a new country of which we could not learn anything, we decided that to continue farther would be useless, for we judged that we should be continually encountering new dialects, and should not be able to achieve any good results. We accordingly decided to turn back. From the negroes in the canoes we obtained some gold rings in exchange for some trifles, buying and selling without speaking to them.

In this fashion we spent two days at the mouth of this great river. The north star appeared there very low in the sky. In this place we observed a most unusual phenomenon, which, as far as I have been able to learn, is not found in other parts to which Christians have sailed: the tides rose and fell, as they do at Venice and in all the West: but whereas in other places they flow for about six hours and ebb for another six, here they flow

¹ The Bissagos Islands.

for four hours and ebb for eight¹. So great is the force of the tidal stream when it begins to wax that it is almost incredible—three anchors at the bows with great difficulty could scarcely hold, and thus it was that the current made it necessary to set sail, and not without danger, for it was much stronger than the sails and the wind.

CHAPTER XLVII

*How we DEPARTED THENCE, as we could
not SPEAK the LANGUAGE*

We left the estuary of this great river to return thence to Spain, and set our course at sea for those islands, which were about thirty miles from the mainland. We reached them, two large and several small ones². The large ones are inhabited by negroes. The islands are very low, covered with very beautiful, large trees, tall and green. We had, however, no speech with the negroes, for they did not understand us, nor did we them. Departing thence, we proceeded towards our parts of Christendom, whither we sailed, so that God in his mercy brought us when it pleased Him safely to port.

¹ The *Africa Pilot*, with reference to the Jeba channel, warns vessels of the tidal streams and states that great caution is necessary. 'In the channel, both streams attain a rate of two to three knots; in its eastern part,...the ebb stream sets strongly towards Bissau island...off the mouth of the Orango channel the streams set for six hours each way' (Pt. I, p. 234). It is noteworthy that, referring to the Cacheu river, the *Pilot* states 'The ebb-stream usually runs eight hours, but the flood stream, which is often merely a lessening of the ebb stream, or slack water, rarely runs more than four hours' (p. 233). It is possible, therefore, that Cadamosto's remarks refer to his 'Rio de Sancta Anna', rather than to his 'Rio Grande'.

² The Bissagos Islands are shown thus on the Benincasa chart of 1468.

CHAPTER XLVIII

*The DISCOVERERS of new COUNTRIES, with
the NAMES of the LATTER*

This is what I have seen and learnt during the time I was in these parts; but there have been others after me. Of most importance were the two armed caravels which the king of Portugal had sent thither after the death of the Infante Don Heurich¹. Their commander was one Piero de Sinzia, a squire of this lord's, whom he commissioned to sail farther along this coast of the Blacks, and to discover new lands. With this captain went a Portuguese youth, a friend of mine, who had been thither with me as a notary. On the return of the caravels, I, Alouise da Mosto, was in Lachus², a place near Capo de San Vincenzo whither the said captain returned. My friend came ashore to my house, and gave me his observations point by point on the land they had discovered, the names they had given, the places at which they had stayed, all in due order commencing with the above mentioned Rio Grande³—whither we had previously been—as set forth below.

First my friend told me that they had been to the above mentioned large inhabited islands⁴, upon one of which they had landed and spoken with the Blacks, but had been unable to understand them. They had also visited their dwellings some distance inland, miserable huts of straw. In some of these they found wooden idols, from which they concluded that these blacks were idolators, and worshippers of idols. Not being able to obtain anything nor to understand these people, they left them and continued their voyage along the coast until they reached the mouth of a great river, in his judgment three to four

¹ Prince Henry died in 1460. Cadamosto left Portugal in 1463.

² Lagos.

³ The farthest point reached by Cadamosto: the River Jeba.

⁴ The Bissagos Islands. According to the *Africa Pilot*, Pt. I, p. 234, 'The houses are circular, built of stones and mud, with low doors and no windows, rendering them dark and insufferably hot, though well thatched, with broad projecting eaves.' The inhabitants are still noted for their skill in fashioning wooden figures.

miles wide, which he estimated to be fifty miles along the coast beyond the mouth of the Rio Grande. He said that this river was called the Rio de Besegue¹, from the name of the chief that dwelt near its mouth.

Departing thence, and sailing on, they came to a cape which they called Capo de Verga². All the coast between the Rio de Besegue and Capo de Verga is mountainous, though not of great height. The distance between them he estimated at one hundred and forty miles³. The mountains are covered with very beautiful, large, and tall trees, and appear very green from a great distance—a very pleasant sight to the eye.

CHAPTER XLIX

CAPO DE SAGRES, *with three others; and the name of the very great river*

They passed this Capo de Verga, and sailing along the coast for a distance of about eighty miles, discovered another cape, which in the opinion of all the sailors was the loftiest cape they had ever seen. In the middle of the land of this cape there is a high point, in the shape of a diamond. The whole is covered with very tall, green trees. They named it Capo Sagres⁴ after a fort which

¹ The River Cassini.

² The Cape Verga of the Admiralty Charts. It seems probable that the description of 'Capo Sagres' in the next chapter really applies to the 'Capo de Verga', for the *Africa Pilot* (Pt. 1, p. 252) says: 'Cape Verga cannot be mistaken, for, unlike all the adjacent coast, it rises at once from its base to a considerable elevation, and when seen from the southward, in connection with a conspicuous range of hills, is one of the most remarkable landmarks on the whole coast.... When Cape Verga bears 070°, distant thirteen or fourteen miles, two conical elevations, lying about one and a half miles northward of the Cape, will be seen; the eastern of these is isolated and shaped like a sugar loaf....'

³ This is the approximate distance between the Rio Grande (Jeba) and Cape Verga.

⁴ This is the promontory on the south-east of Sangaria Bay, off which lies Tumbo Island, on which Konakri stands. See the note on Cape Verga above. It may be, however, that the diamond-shaped point here referred to is the conical peak of Mount Kakulima.

was built by the Infante Don Hurich above one of the points of Capo San Vincenzo, called Sagres. For this reason it is known to the Portuguese as Capo di Sagres di Signea [Guinea]. The sailors say, from the information they gathered, that the inhabitants are idolators, and worship statues of wood in the form of men. They also say that when they are about to eat or drink, they first make offerings to their idols. They are more nearly brown in colour than black. They have marks made with hot irons on their faces and bodies. They always go naked, and in the place of loincloths wear the bark of trees to cover their private parts. They have no weapons, for iron is not to be found in their country. Their food is rice, millet, vegetables, such as beans, of different species to ours, for they are larger. They have the flesh of cows and goats, but not in large quantities.

Further, they say that off this cape there are two islets¹, the one six, the other eight miles off: on account of their small size they are uninhabited, but have plenty of very beautiful green trees.

Item the people of this river² have very big canoes (that is, what we style *zopoli*) which carry thirty to forty men. They ply their oars standing [without rowlocks], as I have said above.

These people all have their ears pierced round with holes in which they wear various gold rings, one behind the other. They also pierce their nostrils. When they wish to eat, they have to draw them aside. These are worn by men and women alike. They say also that the wives of the King and the chiefs, or men of standing, all have their lips pierced as well as their ears, in which to signify their grandeur and rank they wear rings of gold, and these they wear or lay aside as it pleases them.

About forty miles beyond Capo Sagres there is another river, called San Vincenzo³: its mouth is about forty [four] miles wide. Fifty [five] miles farther along the same coast, there is another

¹ The Isles do Los (or Idoles). Though, including Tumbo Island, they are seven in number, two are distinctly larger than the others. The preceding remarks appear to apply to their inhabitants.

² The river referred to here, though not mentioned elsewhere, is presumably either the Dembia or the Dubreka, which flow into Sangaria Bay.

³ The Forikaria River.

river called Rio Verde¹, the mouth of which is wider than that of the Rio de San Vincenzo, that is, more than forty miles. These names were given to the rivers by the above-mentioned navigators in the King's caravels. All this region and coast is mountainous, with good harbours and anchorages.

About twenty-four miles beyond the Rio Verde there is another Cape to which they gave the name Capo Liedo², that is in our tongue 'Aliegro': because it seemed to them that this cape, with the surrounding country, was exceedingly pleasant.

Beyond this Capo Aliegro begins a mountainous coast which extends for about six [fifty] miles³, and is very high, covered with tall and perennially green trees: at the end of it, about eight miles out to sea, there are three islets, the largest of which is about ten to twelve miles in circumference. They named this the 'Isola Salvaza'⁴, and the mountain 'Montagna Liona'⁵ [Sierra Liona, because of the great noise of the thunder claps which are heard continually from the clouds which always surround the summit].

Beyond the coast of the 'Montagna Liona' all is low land, and fringed with many sandbanks which run out to sea⁶.

Thirty miles beyond the cape of this mountain there is another large river, three miles wide, which they named 'Fiume Rosso'⁷, because the river water appeared red, as the bottom was red

¹ Ramusio's emendation to 'five miles' makes this river the Mellakori.

² This distance is twenty-four miles in the manuscript; the printed version is again erroneous, probably due to the compositor mistaking 'xxiv' for 'cciv'. The emendation makes this 'Capo Liedo' Bullo Point; from the statement in the next paragraph and Duarte Pacheco's description, however, it is apparent that 'Capo Liedo' is the modern Cape Sierra Leone.

³ The extent of the Sierra Leone peninsula is about twenty miles.

⁴ Dublin Island, the largest of the three islands forming the Banana Islands.

⁵ Sierra Leone: Ramusio has substituted 'Sierra Liona' for 'Montagna Liona', and inserted the explanation. Duarte Pacheco, however, gives another version: 'Many believe that Serra Lyoa is so-called because there are lions here, but this is not so, for Pero de Sintra, a knight of Prince Henry's household, who discovered Serra Lyoa at the prince's bidding, seeing that it was a wild rough country, called it the Lioness, and there was no other reason; and there can be no doubt of this, for he told me so himself' (*Esmeraldo*, Hakluyt Soc. series II, LXXXIX, p. 99).

⁶ Yawri Bay and the Shoals of St Anne.

⁷ Cockboro River.

ground. Beyond this river there is a cape, the earth of which is red, to which they also gave the name Capo Rosso¹. Off this cape, about eight miles out to sea, there is a red islet, originally part of this Capo Rosso, the 'Isola Rossa'². At this island, the Pole Star appears at the height of a man above the sea. Note that from the mouth of the Fiume Rosso to this islet is about ten miles. Beyond the Capo Rosso there is a gulf³, at the head of which is a large river. They named this 'Rio de Sancta Maria' because it was discovered by them on the day of Sancta Maria de la neu⁴.

On the further side of the river there is a point⁵ with an islet a short distance out to sea. In this gulf there are many sandy shallows which extend for twelve miles along the coast and over which the sea breaks. The sea currents are very strong, and there are great flood and ebb tides. To this islet they gave the name 'Isoletta di scanni'⁶, on account of these banks.

Beyond the islet there is a great cape which they named 'Capo de Sancta Anna'⁷, because I believe they discovered it on that day. From the island to the cape is about twenty-four miles: all this coast is shallow and has few anchorages.

¹ Shenge Point: 'is composed of soft red sandstone which is rapidly being encroached upon by the sea' (*Africa Pilot*, Pt. 1, p. 276).

² One of the Plantain Islands.

³ The Sherbro River, or, more properly, Sound, into which several rivers flow.

⁴ The Bagru River.

⁵ The modern Cape St Anne. Saint Anne's Day is July 26, and 'Our Lady of the Snow' August 5th; the text appears to be confused here.

⁶ One of the Turtle Islands.

⁷ If the distance from the Turtle Islands and the point beyond Bagru River is twenty-four miles as given, it would appear that the original 'Capo de Sancta Anna' was the promontory at the south-east of Sherbro Island, now called Argyle Point. The modern Cape St Anne is described as low and sandy: this does not seem to agree with the 'great cape' of the text.

CHAPTER L

The RIVER of the PALMS, and many others

Seventy miles along the coast beyond this Capo de Sancta Anna, there is another river, to which they gave the name 'Fiume de le Palme'¹, for there were many palms there. The mouth of this river, although it was seen to be of considerable width, is filled with shoals and sandbanks, so that the entry is very dangerous. From the Capo de Sancta Anna to this river it is shallow.

Having passed about seventy miles beyond this river, despite the shallows of the coast, they discovered a small river which they called the 'Rio de li Fiumi'², because at the time of the discovery they saw along the entire coast nothing but smoke over the land, made by the people of the country. Twenty-four miles beyond this river, still navigating the shallows, they found a cape which ran far out to sea: above it appeared a high mountain, wherefore they called it 'Capo del Monte'³.

Beyond this Capo del Monte, having progressed about sixty miles along shore, they found a small, low cape, which also showed a hillock upon it: this they called 'Capo Cortese' [or 'Misurado']⁴. Here, on that first night, they saw many fires among the trees and along the shore, made by the Blacks on sighting the first Christian vessels which had ever been seen by them.

Sixteen miles along the shore beyond this cape, there is a great forest of very green trees which grow right down to the water's edge. [This they named the 'Bosco', or rather 'Arboreto', di Santa Maria.] To the caravels which anchored beyond this, there came some small canoes, two or three Blacks

¹ Sulima River: the description of the mouth of this river given in the text is very accurate. As it is approximately seventy miles from the south-east end of Sherbro Island, this is additional evidence that the original Cape St Anne has been transferred to its present position.

² This sentence appears to have been misplaced in the text. Twenty-four miles from the Sulima River carries one to the 'Capo del Monte', as is stated in the next sentence; seventy miles from the Sulima River is the St Paul River, close to Cape Mesurado.

³ Cape Mount.

⁴ Cape Mesurado.

in each, quite naked and carrying pointed sticks, what we should style darts. Some had small knives, and two leathern shields with three bows amongst them. They came alongside. Each had his ears pierced right round, and the lower part of the nose. Some of them also wore teeth around their necks; these appeared to be human teeth. Several negroes who were on the ships spoke to them, but without understanding a single word, nor making themselves understood. Three of the Blacks boarded one of the caravels: of these three, the Portuguese detained one, allowing the others to go. This they did in obedience to His Majesty the King, who had enjoined them that, from the farthest land they reached, if it chanced that the people were unable to understand their interpreters, they were to contrive to bring away a negro, by force or persuasion, so that he might be interrogated through the many negro interpreters to be found in Portugal, or in the course of time might learn to speak, so that he might give an account of his country. For this reason, they detained one of the three negroes. Deciding to advance no farther, they carried him back to Portugal and presented him to His Majesty the King, who caused divers negroes to speak with him. Finally a negress, the slave of a Lisbon citizen, who had also come from a far off country, understood him, not through his own language but through another known to both. What this negro told the king through this woman I do not know, save that he said that among other things found in his native country were live unicorns. The said lord, having kept him several months, shown him many things of his Kingdom, and given him some clothes, very charitably had him carried by a caravel back to his own country.

No ship had passed beyond this farthest place down to the time of my leaving Spain, which was on the first of February 1463. To the above mentioned wood was given the name 'Boscho de Sancta Maria'.

Finis

THE LETTER OF ANTOINE MALFANTE



Copy of a letter written from Touät by ANTOINE MALFANTE and addressed to GIOVANNI MARIONO at Genoa. 1447.

AFTER we had come from the sea, that is from Hono¹, we journeyed on horseback, always southwards, for about twelve days. For seven days we encountered no dwelling—nothing but sandy plains; we proceeded as though at sea, guided by the sun during the day, at night by the stars. At the end of the seventh day, we arrived at a *ksour*², where dwelt very poor people who supported themselves on water and a little sandy ground. They sow little, living upon the numerous date palms. At this *ksour* we had come into Tueto³. In this place there are eighteen quarters, enclosed within one wall, and ruled by an oligarchy. Each ruler of a quarter protects his followers, whether they be in the right or no. The quarters closely adjoin each other and are jealous of their privileges. Everyone arriving here places himself under the protection of one of these rulers, who will protect him to the death: thus merchants enjoy very great security, much greater, in my opinion, than in kingdoms such as Themmicenno⁴ and Thunisie⁵.

Though I am a Christian, no one ever addressed an insulting word to me. They said they had never seen a Christian before. It is true that on my first arrival they were scornful of me, because they all wished to see me, saying with wonder 'This Christian has a countenance like ours'—for they believed that

¹ Honein.

² Tabelbert.

³ Tuat, a group of oases of which Tamentit is the capital.

⁴ Tlemcen.

⁵ Tunis.

Christians had disguised¹ faces. Their curiosity was soon satisfied, and now I can go alone anywhere, with no one to say an evil word to me.

There are many Jews, who lead a good life here, for they are under the protection of the several rulers, each of whom defends his own clients. Thus they enjoy very secure social standing. Trade is in their hands, and many of them are to be trusted with the greatest confidence.

This locality is a mart of the country of the Moors, to which merchants come to sell their goods: gold is carried hither, and bought by those who come up from the coast. This place is De Amamento², and there are many rich men here. The generality, however, are very poor, for they do not sow, nor do they harvest anything, save the dates upon which they subsist. They eat no meat but that of castrated camels, which are scarce and very dear.

It is true that the Arabs with whom I came from the coast brought with them corn and barley which they sell throughout the year at 'f. saracen, la nostra mina'³.

It never rains here: if it did, the houses, being built of salt in the place of reeds, would be destroyed⁴. It is scarcely ever cold here: in summer the heat is extreme, wherefore they are almost all blacks. The children of both sexes go naked up to the age of fifteen. These people observe the religion and law of Muhammad. In the vicinity there are 150 to 200 *ksour*.

In the lands of the blacks, as well as here, dwell the Philistines⁵, who live, like the Arabs, in tents. They are without number, and hold sway over the land of Gazola⁶ from the

¹ The Latin word employed is 'contrafactum'.

² Tamentit.

³ A *Saracen* was the Arab coin known as the *dinar*; *Mina* was a measure equalling approximately half a bushel. The 'f.' perhaps stands for 'six'.

⁴ De la Roncière (I, p. 152) suggests that this is not a description of Tamentit but of Taghaza, where the houses were all built of rock salt.

⁵ The Tuareg.

⁶ *Gazola* (the *Gazula* of Idrisi) appears on many portolan charts, sometimes applied to a town, sometimes to a region. On the Pizigani chart of 1373 there is a cape, probably Cape Nun, called 'Caput finis Gozole'. It has been derived from the Berber people, the Guezulah, a branch of which inhabited the Sus; as used by Malfante it appears to be applied to the same area as 'Sarrah', or Sahara, of other contemporary writers (see Magnaghi, A., *Precursori di Colombo?*, p. 45).

borders of Egypt to the shores of the Ocean, as far as Massa and Safi, and over all the neighbouring towns of the blacks. They are fair, strong in body and very handsome in appearance. They ride without stirrups, with simple spurs. They are governed by kings, whose heirs are the sons of their sisters—for such is their law. They keep their mouths and noses covered. I have seen many of them here, and have asked them through an interpreter why they cover their mouths and noses thus. They replied: "We have inherited this custom from our ancestors." They are sworn enemies of the Jews, who do not dare to pass hither. Their faith is that of the Blacks. Their sustenance is milk and flesh, no corn or barley, but much rice. Their sheep, cattle, and camels are without number. One breed of camel, white as snow, can cover in one day a distance which would take a horseman four days to travel. Great warriors, these people are continually at war amongst themselves.

The states which are under their rule border upon the land of the Blacks. I shall speak of those known to men here, and which have inhabitants of the faith of Muhammad. In all, the great majority are Blacks, but there are a small number of whites [i.e. tawny Moors].

First, Thegida¹, which comprises one province and three *ksour*; Checoli², which is as large.

Chuchiam³, Thambet⁴, Geni⁵, and Meli⁶, said to have nine towns;

Thora⁷, Oden⁸, Dendi⁹, Sagoto¹⁰, Bofon¹¹, Igdem¹², Bembo¹³, all these are great cities, capitals of extensive lands and towns under their rule.

These adhere to the law of Muhammad.

To the south of these are innumerable great cities and territories, the inhabitants of which are all blacks and idolators, continually at war with each other in defence of their law and

¹ Takedda, five days' march west-south-west of Agadez.

² Possibly Es Suk (Tadmekka), north of Takedda at the head of the Tilemsi valley.

³ Probably Gao.

⁴ Timbuktu.

⁵ Jenne.

⁶ Mali.

⁷ Unidentified.

⁸ Wadan.

⁹ Dendi, probably the original home of the Songhai.

¹⁰ Unidentified.

¹¹ Unidentified.

¹² Unidentified.

¹³ Possibly Bamba, a town on the Middle Niger.

faith of their idols. Some worship the sun, others the moon, the seven planets, fire, or water; others a mirror which reflects their faces, which they take to be the images of gods; others groves of trees, the seats of a spirit to whom they make sacrifice¹; others again, statues of wood and stone, with which, they say, they commune by incantations. They relate here extraordinary things of this people.

The lord in whose protection I am, here, who is the greatest in this land, having a fortune of more than 100,000 *doubles*, brother of the most important merchant in Thambet, and a man worthy of credence, relates that he lived for thirty years in that town, and, as he says, for fourteen years in the land of the Blacks. Every day he tells me wonderful things of these peoples. He says that these lands and peoples extend endlessly to the south: they all go naked, save for a small loin-cloth to cover their privates. They have an abundance of flesh, milk, and rice, but no corn or barley.

Through these lands flows a very large river² which at certain times of the year inundates all these lands. This river passes by the gates of Tambet, and flows through Egypt; and is that which passes by Carium³. There are many boats on it, by which they carry on trade. It would be possible, they say, to descend to Egypt by this river, were it not that at a certain spot it falls 300 cubits over a rock⁴, on account of which boats cannot go or return. This river flows at about twenty days' journey on horseback from here.

These people have trees which produce an edible butter⁵, of which there is an abundance here. I have seen them bearing it hither: it is as wonderful an unguent as the butter of sheep. The

¹ Cf. Seligmann (*op. cit.* pp. 61-2). 'The Bambara have been little affected by Islam and retain their animistic beliefs and ancestor worship. Each village has its presiding spirit (*dasiri*) or divine ancestor, usually resident in a tree at which sacrifices are made and prayers offered by the *dugutigi* on all important occasions.'

² The Niger. It is to be noted that Malfante correctly implies that it flows eastwards, of which there was no certain knowledge till the end of the eighteenth century.

³ Cairo. On the confusion between the Niger and the Nile, see p. 28 above.

⁴ This appears reminiscent of the cataracts of the Nile.

⁵ The Karité tree, the most characteristic of the Savannah. The butter is obtained from the kernel.

slaves which the blacks take in their internecine wars are sold at a very low price, the maximum being two *doubles* a head. These peoples, who cover the land in multitudes, are in carnal acts like the beasts; the father has knowledge of his daughter, the son of his sister. They breed greatly, for a woman bears up to five at a birth. Nor can it be doubted that they are eaters of human flesh, for many people have gone hence into their country. Neither there nor here are there ever epidemics.

When the blacks catch sight of a white man from a distance, they take to flight as though from a monster, believing him to be a phantom. They are unlettered, and without books. They are great magicians, evoking by incense diabolical spirits, with whom, they say, they perform marvels.

"It is not long since I was in Cuchia¹, distant fifty days' journey from here, where there are Moors", my patron said to me. "A heathen king, with five hundred thousand men, came from the south to lay siege to the city of Vallo. Upon the hill within the city were fifty Moors, almost all blacks. They saw that they were by day surrounded by a human river, by night by a girdle of flames and looked upon themselves as already defeated and enslaved. But their king, who was in the city, was a great magician and necromancer; he concluded with the besieger a pact by which each was to produce by incantation a black goat. The two goats would engage in battle, and the master of that which was beaten, was likewise to consider himself defeated. The besieger emerged victorious from the contest, and, taking the town, did not allow one soul to escape, but put the entire population to the sword. He found much treasure there. The town to-day is almost completely deserted save for a poverty-stricken few who have come to dwell there."

Of such were the stories which I heard daily in plenty. The wares for which there is a demand here are many: but the principal articles are copper, and salt in slabs, bars, and cakes. The copper of Romania², which is obtained through Alexandria, is always in great demand throughout the land of the Blacks. I frequently enquired what they did with it, but no one could

¹ Gao.

² The Byzantine Empire.

give me a definite answer. I believe it is that there are so many peoples that there is almost nothing but is of use to them.

The Egyptian merchants come to trade in the land of the Blacks with half a million head of cattle and camels—a figure which is not fantastic in this region.

The place where I am is good for trade, as the Egyptians and other merchants come hither from the land of the Blacks bringing gold, which they exchange for copper and other goods. Thus everything sells well; until there is nothing left for sale. The people here will neither sell nor buy unless at a profit of one hundred per cent. For this reason, I have lost, *Laus Deo!*, on the goods I brought here, two thousand *doubles*.

From what I can understand, these people neighbour on India¹. Indian merchants come hither, and converse through interpreters. These Indians are Christians, adorers of the cross. It is said that in the land of the Blacks there are forty dialects, so that they are unable to understand each other.

I often enquired where the gold was found and collected; my patron always replied “I was fourteen years in the land of the Blacks, and I have never heard nor seen anyone who could reply from definite knowledge. That is my experience, as to how it is found and collected. What appears plain is that it comes from a distant land, and, as I believe, from a definite zone.” He also said that he had been in places where silver was as valuable as gold.

This land is twenty-eight days’ journey from Cambacies², and is the city with the best market. It is twenty-five days from Tunis, from Tripoli in Barbary twenty days, from Trimicen³ thirty days, from Fecia⁴ twenty days, from Zaffi⁵, Zamor⁶ and Messa twenty days on horseback. I finish for the present; elsewhere and at another time, God willing, I will recount much more to you orally. I am always at your orders in Christ.

YOUR ANTONIUS MALFANT

¹ Probably Abyssinia, the kingdom of Prester John, which was regarded in the Middle Ages as one of the Three Indias.

² Probably Ghadames.

³ Tlemcen.

⁴ Fez.

⁵ Safi.

⁶ Azamor.

THE VOYAGES *of* DIOGO GOMES



SOME time after this¹ the Prince equipped at Lagos a caravel, named *Picanso*, and appointed Diogo Gomes captain, together with two other caravels, of which he appointed Diogo Gomes captain-in-chief. The captain of one of these was João Gonçalves Ribeiro, of the Prince's household, and of the other Nuño Fernandes de Baya, the Prince's esquire-at-arms. The Prince gave them orders to proceed as far as they could. After passing the river of S. Domingos², and another great river called Fancaso³ beyond the Rio Grande, we encountered strong currents in the sea, so that no anchor could hold. These are called *macareo*⁴. The other captains, therefore, and their men were greatly alarmed, thinking that they were at the extremity of the ocean, and they begged me to return. In the middle of the current the sea was very clear, and the Mouros came from the shore in their canoes and brought us their merchandise, viz., cotton cloth, or *algodão*, elephants' teeth, and a quart measure of *malagueta*, in grain and in its pods as it grows, with which I was much delighted. The current prevented our proceeding farther, and in fact increased so much that it obliged us to put back.

We came to a land where, near the shore, were many palm trees, with their branches broken, and so tall that from a

¹ The unsuccessful expedition of Adalbert, or Vallarte, the Dane, on which he lost his life (see *Ázurara, op. cit.* II, p. 280). This took place in 1448; from internal evidence, Gomes's voyage took place in 1457, or perhaps 1456 (see Introduction, p. xxiv).

² The Mansoa River: the Rio de San Dominico of Cadamosto.

³ The present Rio Grande. On Benincasa's map of 1468, 'Fancaso' appears to be used for Cadamosto's 'Rio Grande' (the Jeba). Jobson says 'Fancassa' was the native name for the sea: '...the Sea, whereof they are altogether ignorant, onely by the name, or word Fancassa, which signifieth great waters' (*Golden Trade*, p. 93).

⁴ Cadamosto (p. 76) also refers to these currents.

distance we thought that they were masts or spars of negro vessels¹. Thither we went, and found an extensive plain full of grass, and more than five thousand animals called in the negro language *myongas*. These are beasts a little larger than stags, which showed no fear at sight of us. We also observed five elephants come out of a small river sheltered with trees. Three of them were large, with two young ones, and they fled from the *myongas*. On the sea-shore we saw many crocodiles' holes. We returned to the ships, and on the next day made our way from Cape Verde, and we saw the broad mouth of a river, three leagues in width, which we entered, and from its size correctly concluded that it was the river Gambia. We entered it with the wind and tide in our favour, and came to a small island in the middle of the river², and there remained that night. In the morning, however, we went farther in, and saw many canoes full of men, who fled at sight of us, for it seems they were the same who had slain Nuño Tristão and his men³. The next day, however, we saw beyond the head (? point) of the river some people on the right hand bank, to whom we went, and were received in a friendly manner. Their chief was called Frangazick, and was the nephew of Farisangul, the great Prince of the negroes. There I received from the negroes one hundred and eighty *arrateis* weight of gold, in exchange for our merchandise; such as cloths, necklaces, &c. They told us that the negroes on the left shore would not hold intercourse with us because they had slain the Christians. The lord of that country had a certain negro, named Bucker, who was acquainted with the whole country of the negroes, and finding him perfectly truthful, I asked him to go with me to Cantor, and promised to give him a mantle and shirts, and every necessary. I made also a similar promise to his chief, which I kept. We ascended the river, and I sent a captain with his caravel into a certain harbour, named

¹ This appears to be the 'Cabo de Mastos', identified by A. Cortesão with Red Cape, just beyond Cape Verde. If so, Gomes had 'put back' a considerable distance, but the later reference to Cape Verde confirms this identification.

² This may be Cadamosto's 'Isola de Santa Anna' (see p. 66).

³ Nuno Tristão was killed on the Rio Grande. It has been suggested that Gomes is confusing the attack on Cadamosto on his first voyage with this earlier event.

Ulimays. The other remained in Animays¹, and I went up the river as far as Cantor², which is a large town near that river's side. On account of the thick growth of the trees on both sides of the river, the vessels could proceed no farther, and I sent out the negro whom we had brought with us, to make it known to the people of the country that I had come thither for the purpose of exchanging merchandise, and, in consequence, the negroes came in very great numbers. When the report spread throughout the country round, that the Christians were in Cantor, the natives came together from all quarters, viz., from Tambucutu in the north, from the Serra Geley in the south, and there came also people from Quioquun³, which is a great city, surrounded by a wall of baked tiles, and where I understood there was abundance of gold, and that caravans of camels and dromedaries crossed over thither with merchandise from Carthage or Tunis, from Fez, from Cairo, and from all the land of the Saracens, in exchange for gold. They said that the gold was brought from the mines of Mount Gelu, which is the opposite side of the range called Sierra Lyoa⁴. They said that that range of mountains began at Albafur⁵, and ran southwards, which pleased me much, because all the rivers, large and small, descending from those

¹ Major suggests that this is a corruption of Gnumimansa.

² Gomes says later that Cantor was some fifty leagues up the Gambia. It will be remembered that Cadamosto's parley with Battimansa took place about sixty miles up stream. Cantor is mentioned by Duarte Pacheco as a district 150 leagues upstream. Jobson says: 'On the southside [of the Gambia] the whole country we past, even to the highest we went, which you must needs conceive to be very spacious, had all reference to the great King of *Cantore*' (*Golden Trade*, p. 60). Barros places the trading station 180 leagues up the Gambia.

³ Gao on the Niger (see Introduction, p. xvii). Gomes should be taken as implying that Cantor was the terminus of trade routes from the towns he mentions, and not that traders came thither on learning of his arrival.

⁴ This appears to be the first recognition of the existence of a divide between the westward and eastward flowing rivers of western Africa. The mountains referred to are the Futa Jallon, in which the upper streams of the Niger rise. Sierra Leone was not of course discovered by de Sintra for some years after the probable date of Gomes's voyage. This information was no doubt acquired by Gomes later, but incorporated in his narrative.

⁵ The identity of this range of mountains 'which began at Albafur' is open to doubt. It would appear from the preceding statement that it formed the watershed of the rivers flowing to the Atlantic, and this is the interpretation accepted by Prestage (*Portuguese Pioneers*, p. 131). The difficulty is raised by the use of the name Albafur in this connection. Both Duarte

mountains (which had been as yet observed) ran westward; but they told me that other very large rivers ran eastward from them, and that near that city was a certain great river, named Emin¹, and that there was also a great lake, but not very broad, on which were many canoes, like ships, and that the people on the opposite sides were in constant warfare with each other, those on the eastern side being white men². On my enquiring what sovereigns ruled in those parts, they answered that the chief of that part, which was inhabited by the negroes, was named Sambegeny, and that the lord of the eastern part was called Semanagu, and that a short time before they had a great battle, in which Semanagu was the conqueror. And a certain Saracen of Termezen³, named Admedi, told me that he had been through all that land, and had been present at the battle,

Pacheco and Rodriguez refer to mountains of Baffor, or Bafoor, much farther to the north. Kimble, in his edition of Duarte Pacheco (p. 76), speaks of the Bafur as 'a sedentary folk inhabiting the Sudan fringe of the Sahara', though he concludes with Prestage that the mountains are to be located in the hinterland of Sierra Leone. But the evidence of Rodriguez, a factor at Arguim, is even stronger in favour of a northerly location. In his description of the province of 'Lodea', the coast land of Arguim, divided from Guinea by the Senegal, the following passage occurs: 'Six miles from the rock Schelud lies a very high mountain, called Baffor. It is eighteen miles long, and as steep as a wall, especially on the north towards the desert. This mountain is so lofty that it seems to reach the sky. It has three approaches only, which appear unclimbable, but which are accessible to camels. In this mountain lie the approaches to four cities, one market town, and fourteen waterless streams. It is quite overgrown with tamarinds. Of these cities, the most important is called Oadem, the second Oulili, the third Schinguete, the fourth Tunniqi; the market town is called Fara' (Kunstmann, F., 'V. Ferdinands Beschreibung', *Abh. hist. Cl. k. bay. Ak. Wissens.*, VIII (1856), i, p. 270). It is clear, therefore, that the mountains of Albafur lay to the north of the Senegal, and 'Schinguete' is evidently Chinguetti in Adrar. In assuming that the range at the head of the Gambia was related to the northern, Gomes is supported by modern observations: cf. *Atlas des colonies françaises*: 'En retrait se dressent en falaises les grès primaires. Ils atteignent une altitude voisine de 500 mètres dans l'Adrar mauritanien (Atar, Chinguetti). Les assises de l'Adrar se prolongent au nord par le Hank. Au sud, par le Tagant, etc., on les suit jusqu'au Fouta-Djallon' (p. 47).

¹ The 'certain great river' must be the Niger, though I have not encountered the name Emin elsewhere: possibly it is connected with the Amenuam or Emenuam of the Spanish Friar. Duarte Pacheco, however, notes that with the Bulom of Sierra Leone the word for water was 'men' (*op. cit.* p. 97). The 'great lake' is the inundated area of the Niger, which figures in Cadamosto's and other accounts of Wangara.

² I.e. tawny Moors, in contradistinction to blackamoors.

³ Tlemcen.

both by sea and land. When I afterwards related all these things to the Prince, he told me that a merchant in Oran had written to him two months before respecting this engagement, which had taken place between Semanagu and Sambegeny, and, therefore, he believed the account. Such are the things which were told me by the negroes who were with me at Cantor. I questioned the negroes at Cantor as to the road which led to the countries where there was gold, and asked who were the lords of that country. They told me that the king's name was Bormelli, and that the whole land of the negroes on the right side of the river was under his dominion, and that he lived in the city Quioquia. They said further, that he was lord of all the mines, and that he had before the door of his palace a mass of gold just as it was taken from the earth, so large that twenty men could scarcely move it, and that the king always fastened his horse to it, and kept it as a curiosity on account of its being found just as it was, and of its great size and purity¹. The nobles of his court wore in their nostrils and ears ornaments of gold. They said also, that the parts to the east² were full of gold mines, and that the men who went into the pits to get the gold did not live long, on account of the impure air. The gold-bearing sand was afterwards given to women to wash the gold from it.

I inquired the road from Cantor to Quioquia, and was told that to Morbomelli³ from Cantor the road is eastward to Somanda, and from Somanda to Commuberta and to Cereculle⁴ and other places, the names of which I have forgotten. And in these aforementioned places is great abundance of gold, as I can well believe, for I saw the negroes at the time who went by these roads come loaded with gold. And they said that Forisangul⁵ was subject to Mormelli, who was lord of the right bank of the river Gambia.

¹ In the twelfth century Idrisi (ed. Dozy and de Goeje, p. 8) reported that the royal treasure of the then powerful Soninke kingdom of Ghana, lying west of Timbuktu, included a nugget of gold to which the king was accustomed to tie his horse.

² The Wangara area, east of the Gambia.

³ Kukia or Gao.

⁴ According to Barros, the Caragoles were a people living on the upper Senegal.

⁵ This is in accord with Cadamosto's statement, see p. 67.

While thus holding peaceful intercourse with these negroes of Cantor, my men became worn out with the heat, and so we returned in search of the other two caravels, and in the caravel which had remained in Ollimansa, I found nine men had died, the captain, Gonçalo Affonso, very ill, and all the rest of his men sick, except three. I found the other caravel fifty leagues lower down towards the ocean, and in it five men had died. We immediately withdrew, and made for the sea, and I went to the place where I had hired the negro traveller, and gave him what I had promised him.

They then informed me that on the other, that is, the left or south side of the river, there was a certain great chief named Batimansa, and I desired to make peace with him, and I sent to him that negro who had been with me at Cantor. That chieftain desired to speak with me in a great wood on the bank of the river, and brought with him an immense throng of people armed with poisoned arrows, azagays, and swords and shields (*adagas*). And I went to him, carrying him some presents and biscuit, and some of our wine, for they had no wine except what is made from the date palm¹, and he gave me three negroes, one male and two female, and he was pleased and extremely gracious, making merry with me and swearing to me by the one true God that he would never again war against the Christians², but that they might travel safely through his land and exchange their merchandise. Being desirous of putting this to the proof, I sent a certain Indian named Jacob, whom the Prince had sent with us, in order that, in the event of our reaching India³, he might be able to hold speech with the natives, and I ordered him to go to the place which is called Alcuzet, with the lord of that country, whither, on a former occasion, a knight had gone with him, through the land of Geloffa to find the land of Gela and Tambucutu. This Jacob, the Indian, related to me that Alcuzet⁴

¹ Gomes is referring to palm wine, called by Cadamosto *Miguol*.

² Cadamosto had been amicably received by Battimansa on his second voyage.

³ See p. 90, note.

⁴ I have not identified this place with certainty. Leo mentions 'Alguechet', an oasis on the eastern side of the Sahara, but though it is stated that its inhabitants traded with the land of the Blacks, it can scarcely be the place in question.

is a very vicious land, having a river of sweet water and abundance of lemons, some of which he brought with him to me. And the lord of that country¹ sent me elephants' teeth, one of them very large, and four negroes, who carried the tooth to the ship. And so they came peacefully up to our ships, and thus I was safe from them. Afterwards I went to his abode, which was surrounded by many negro habitations. Their houses are made of seaweeds, covered with straw, and I remained with them for three days. Here were many parrots and many ounces, and he gave me six skins, and ordered that an elephant should be killed and its flesh carried on board the caravels.

It was here that I learned the fact that all the mischief that had been done to the Christians had been done by a certain king, called Nomymans², who possesses the land which lies on that promontory. I took great pains to make peace with him, and sent him many presents by his own men in his own canoes, which were going for salt to his own country. This salt was plentiful there, and of a red colour. He greatly feared the Christians, on account of the injury which he had done them. I went by the river towards the ocean, as far as the harbour, near the mouth of the river, and he sent to me many times men and women to try me, whether I would do them any harm, but, on the contrary, I always gave them a friendly reception. When the King heard this, he came to the river-side with a great force, and sitting down on the bank, sent for me to come to him, which I did, paying him all ceremonious respect in the best fashion I could. There was a certain Bishop there of his native church, who put questions to me with respect to the God of the Christians, and I answered him according to the intelligence which God had given me, and at last I questioned him respecting Muhammad, in whom they believe. What I said pleased the King so much, that he ordered the Bishop within three days to take his departure out of his kingdom, and springing to his feet, he declared that no one, on pain of death, should dare any more to utter the name of Muhammad, for he believed in the one God only, and that there was no other God but He, in

¹ Battimansa, not the lord of Alcuzet.

² ? Gnumimansa, see page 71.

whom his brother, the Prince Henry, said that he believed. Calling the Infante his brother, he desired that I should baptize him, and so said also all the lords of his household, and his women likewise. The King himself declared that he would have no other name than Henry, but his nobles took our names, such as Jacob, Nuño, &c., as Christian names. I remained that night on shore with the King and his chiefs, but I did not dare to baptize them, because I was a layman.

On the next day, however, I begged the King with his twelve principal chiefs and eight of his wives to come to dine with me on board the caravel, which they all did unarmed, and I gave them fowls and meat cooked after our own fashion, and wine, both white and red, as much as they pleased to drink; and they said to each other that no nation was better than the Christians.

Afterwards, when we were on shore, he desired that I would baptize him; but I answered that I had not received authority from the supreme pontiff. I told him, however, that if he so desired, I would convey his wishes to the Prince, who would send a priest to baptize them. He immediately wrote to the Prince to send him a priest, and someone to inform him respecting the faith, and begged the Prince to send him a falcon for hunting, for he wondered greatly when I told him that the Christians carried a bird on the hand which caught other birds. He wished him also to send two rams, and sheep, and ganders and geese, and a pig, as well as two men who would know how to construct houses and make a survey [?] of his city. All these requirements I promised that the Prince would fulfil. At my departure he and all his people lamented, so great was the friendship which had sprung up between him and me.

It so happened that for two years no one went back to Guinea, because King Affonso was gone, with a fleet of three hundred and fifty-two ships, to Africa, and took the powerful city of Alcacer dalquivi, for which reason the Prince, being fully occupied, gave no attention to Guinea. I then reminded the Lord Infante of the matters about which this king had written, and he ordered everything to be done as I had promised.

After leaving the king of Gambia I pursued my way to Portugal, and sent one caravel with those who were in the best

health straight home. The other remained with me, because the people on board of her were sick. And I ordered the captain of the first vessel, if he had a favourable wind, to go straight to Portugal, if not, to wait for me at Arguim, and so he departed; but I with the other caravel sailed with a favourable wind to Cape Verde. As we came near the sea-shore we saw two canoes putting out to sea. We sailed between them and the land, and came up to them, and in one of the canoes we counted thirty-eight men, and the interpreter came to me, and said in my ear, that that was Beseghichi¹, lord of that land, a malicious man, of whom I have already spoken. I made them come into the caravel, and gave them to eat and drink, and a double portion of presents, and pretending that I did not know that he was the chief, said to him by way of trying him, "Is this the land of Beseghichi?" He said "Yes." I replied, "Why is he then so malignant against the Christians? It would be better for him to make peace with them, and that both might exchange merchandise, so that he might have horses, &c., as Burbuck and Badamel, and other lords of the negroes had. Tell him that I have taken you in this sea, and for love of him have set you free to go on shore." He much rejoiced, and I told them to go into their canoes, which they did, and as they all stood in their canoes, I said to the chief, "Beseghichi, Beseghichi, do not think that I did not know thee. It was certainly in my power to do with thee whatever I wished, and since I have acted kindly by thee, do thou do likewise with our Christians," and so they went their way.

A few days after we came to Cape 'Tofia, and to Anterot², and entered Arguim. And not far from the coast we came to the island called the Ilha de Garças. It was not inhabited, and was only one league in circumference. On it we found an innumerable multitude of birds of every kind, and on the ground pelicans' nests, and many dead pelicans. These are not as the painters represent them, but have a broad beak, and a

¹ The 'Isola di Beseghichi' is Gorée Island, near Cape Verde. According to Barros, Pero d'Evora made peace with Beseghichi on the voyage for the foundation of El Mina in 1481.

The coast from Arguim to the Senegal.

stomach large enough to hold a measure of wheat, such as is commonly called an *alqueiro*. The number of birds there was so great, that we killed as many as we could carry in our boat, and so we went into Arguim. We thus sailed for Portugal, and came to Algarve, to the great city named Lagos, where the Prince at that time was, and he rejoiced greatly at our arrival.

After the Prince returned from the fleet with King Affonso, I reminded him of what King Nomimans had said, so that he should send to him all those things which had been promised. This the Prince did, and sent thither a certain priest, a relation of the cardinal's, the Abbot of Soto de Cassa, that he should remain with that king and instruct him in the faith. He also sent with him a young man of his household, named João Delgado. This was in the year 1458¹.

Two years afterwards² the Lord King Affonso equipped a large caravel, in which he sent me out as captain, and I took with me ten horses and went to the land of Barbacins³, which is between Serreos⁴ and King Nomimans. Those Barbacins had two kings, viz. Barbacin Dun and Barbacin Negor. And the King gave me authority over the shores of that sea, that whatever caravels I might find off the land of Guinea should be under my command and rule, for he knew that there were caravels there which carried arms and swords to the Moors, and he ordered me to take such prisoners and bring them to him to Portugal. And by the help of God in twelve days I arrived at Barbacins, and found there two caravels: one, in which was Gonçalo Ferreira, of the household of Prince Henry, a native of Oporto, who was conveying horses thither; and in the other caravel was a captain, Antonio da Noli⁵, a Genoese, who was also a merchant conveying horses. This was in the port of Zaya⁶. I found there also Borgebil, who had been King of Geloffa, and who had fled thither from fear of the King Burbuck, who had

¹ The following portion, here omitted, deals with the death of Prince Henry.

² For the date of Gomes's second voyage, see Introduction, page xxvi.

³ More accurately 'the land of the king of Sine'.

⁴ The land of the Sereri.

⁵ For da Noli, see Introduction, p. xxxix.

⁶ Zaya may have been at the mouth of the Rio de Barbacini (the Joal).

taken his country from him. The aforesaid merchants with their caravels greatly damaged the traffic in those parts, for whereas the Moors used to give seven negroes for one horse, they gave them now no more than six. Then I summoned those captains to me, and on behalf of the King gave them seven negroes for one horse, but myself exchanged every horse for fourteen or fifteen negroes. While we were there, there came a caravel from Gambia, which brought us information that a certain man, named De Prado, was coming with a very richly laden caravel, whereupon I immediately fitted out the caravel of Gonçalo Ferreira, and ordered him in the King's name, on pain of death, and confiscation of all his goods, to go to Cape Verde, and to look out for that caravel, which he did, and took it, and we found great booty in it. I forthwith despatched the captain, together with Gonçalo Ferreira, to the King, and wrote to the King an account of all these events.

I and Antonio da Noli then left that port of Zaya, and sailed two days and one night towards Portugal, and we saw some islands in the sea¹, and, as my caravel was a lighter sailer than the other, I came first to one of those islands, and saw white sand, and it seemed to me a good harbour, and I cast anchor there, and so also did Antonio. I told them that I wished to be the first to land, and so I did. We saw no sign of any man there, and we called the island Santiago: it is so called to this day. There was abundance of fish to be caught there. On the shore we found many strange birds and streamlets of fresh water. The birds were so tame, that we killed them with sticks; and there were many geese there. There were also an abundance of figs, but they do not grow on the trees in the same manner as in our parts, for our figs grow near the leaf, but these all over the bark from the foot of the tree to the top. These trees grow in great numbers, and there was great quantity of grass there. And I had a quadrant when I went to these parts, and I wrote on the table of the quadrant the altitude of the Arctic Pole, and I found it better than the chart. It is true that the course of sailing is seen on the chart, but when once you get wrong, you

¹ On the question of the discovery of the Cape Verde Islands, see Introduction, p. xxxvi.

do not recover your true position¹. We afterwards saw one of the Canary Islands, called Palma, and after that we went to the island of Madeira. Though I was anxious to go to Portugal, I was driven by a contrary wind to the Azores, but Antonio da Noli remained at Madeira, and availing himself of a more favourable wind, reached Portugal before me. And he begged of the King the captaincy of the Island of Santiago, which I had discovered, and the King gave it to him, and he kept it till his death. And I with extreme labour made my way to Lisbon, and after some time the King went to Oporto, where that De Prado, who had carried arms to the Moors, and whom Gonçalo Ferreira had taken prisoner, lay in irons, and the King ordered that they should martyrize him in a cart, and that they should make a furnace of fire, and throw him into it with his sword and gold.

¹ This is the earliest reference to the use of the quadrant for navigation. The passage appears to mean that Gomes observed the altitude of the Pole Star with his quadrant, then made the necessary correction, in accordance with the 'regiment of the North Pole' engraved upon the quadrant. The earliest chart now extant which bears a scale of latitudes is one by Pedro Reinel, *circa* 1505. It is possible that in Gomes' time some kind of sailing directions containing a list of prominent coastal features with their latitudes, similar to that given later by Duarte Pacheco, had already been compiled. (See Fontoura da Costa, p. 31.)

THE ASIA of JOÃO DE BARROS¹

THE FIRST DECADE

B O O K T W O

Of the deeds which the Portuguese performed in the discovery and conquest of the seas and lands of the Orient: containing what was achieved in the time of *King Afonso the Fifth* of that name in *Portugal*.

CHAPTER I

How the KING, D. AFONSO, the FIFTH of that name, SUCCEEDED to the GOVERNMENT of this KINGDOM, at the end of his minority; although PRINCE HENRY pursued this discovery as long as he lived, we continue this HISTORY with the KING, and not with him: and of the REASONS WHY we DO NOT WRITE about other FEATS of this KING.

When King Afonso, his minority ended, began to govern at the age of seventeen, he immediately sent ships to this discovery². The Prince, however, on his part, also continued it, and at Santarem, on the second of September, 1448, the King³ issued a charter in his favour, prohibiting others from promoting dis-

¹ João de Barros (1496-1570) was commander of S. Jorge da Mina from 1522 to 1525; Treasurer of the *Casa da Índia e Mina*, 1525-8, and Factor in 1532. The first decade of his *Asia* was published in 1552, the second in the following year, the third in 1563, and the fourth, a considerable time after his death, in 1613. Other works which he planned, or partially carried out, are mentioned below.

² Afonso V succeeded to the throne in 1438 as a minor; he assumed the government of the kingdom in 1449, and reigned until 1481. There is no record of these early voyages under his direction.

³ These rights had already been conferred upon Prince Henry by the charter of October 22nd, 1443. He was also granted the monopoly of trade between Capes Cantim and Bojador by the charter of February 25th, 1449 (*Alguns documentos*, pp. 8, 13).

covery beyond Cape Bojador; and granting to him, as long as he wished, the fifth and the tithe of everything brought thence. This grant the Prince enjoyed until his death. But as at the beginning of the King's reign, there was strife between him and Prince Peter, the former Regent of these Kingdoms, which we related in the part of *Europa*¹, and also expeditions to Africa and Castille which occupied most of the King's reign, the course of this enterprise was not so continuous as it had been in the time of Prince Henry². Gomes Eanes de Zurara³, Chronicler of these Kingdoms, a man very skilled in the art of history, on which account he well deserved the charge he had, took care to record these feats; so that if there be anything well written in the Chronicles of this Kingdom, either of events that happened in his time or of those that happened before which had not been recorded, it came from his hand. What he wrote about these discoveries in the time of Prince Henry, he had received (according to what he says) from one Afonso Cerveira⁴, the first to set these matters in order. We found some letters written at Beny by this Afonso Cerveira, when he was there as a factor of King Afonso. Though all, or the most part of what we have written so far, was taken from the writings of Gomes Eanes, and of Afonso Cerveira, we had no little work in putting together scattered materials and torn and disordered papers used by Gomes Eanes in the course of this discovery. Although he had promised to relate the events of the reign of King Afonso, we found no account of them, so that it seems as though he had the intention but not the opportunity; or if he wrote them, they are lost, as are so

¹ There are frequent references in the *Decades* to a work which Barros had planned but apparently never carried out. It was to have been a history of the Portuguese people, divided into three parts—*Europa*, *Africa*, and *Santa Cruz*—the first dealing with the early history of Portugal.

² This refers to the period after Prince Henry's death in 1460.

³ Gomes Eanes de Zurara, or Azurara (c. 1400–c. 1473), the author of *The Chronicle of the discovery and conquest of Guinea*, which brings the story of Portuguese expansion down to the year 1448, the point at which this extract from Barros begins. The *Chronicle* was completed in 1453, and he was appointed Guarda Mór of the Torre do Tombo, and probably also Chronista Mor, in the following year. (See Beazley, C. R. and Prestage, E., *Chronicle of discovery of Guinea*, vol. I, Hakluyt Soc. xcv, pp. xiii ff.)

⁴ Afonso Cerveira: author of a history of the Portuguese conquests on the coasts of Africa, now lost, which formed the basis of Azurara's chronicle.

many other writings, which time has destroyed¹. What we record therefore of the reign of King Afonso are no more than some memoirs which we found in the Tombo², and in the books of his exchequer,—not consecutive annals, as before, but fragments only of this discovery. From these memoirs we learn that in the year fourteen hundred and forty nine the King gave permission to the Prince to people the seven islands of the Azores, which had already been discovered³, and on which, by order of the same Prince, one Gonçalo Velho, commander of Almourol, near the Town of Tancos, had landed cattle. And in the year fourteen hundred and fifty seven the King made a gift of all the islands then discovered⁴ to his brother Prince Fernando, with civil and criminal jurisdiction, though with some limitations. And in fourteen hundred and sixty Prince Henry gave the two Islands of Jesus and Graciosa⁵ to Prince Fernando, his nephew and adopted son, reserving for himself only the spirituality which belonged to the Order of Christ, of which he was governor. This gift was confirmed by the King in Lisbon on the second of September of the same year⁶. In the following year, as traffic in gold and negroes from Guiné was active in the Islands of Arguim, the King ordered the building of the Castle of Arguim⁷, which stands there to-day, by Soeiro Mendes, a nobleman of his household, and inhabitant of Evora, to whom he gave the

¹ Barros later corrects this statement; see below p. 113, note.

² The national archives of Portugal are known as the *Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo* from a tower of that name in the Castello de São Jorge where they were kept from 1375. After the great earthquake of 1755 they were removed to their present home in the building now known as the Palácio das Cortes.

³ Some of the islands of the Azores appear on maps of the fourteenth century; they were probably rediscovered by the Portuguese in 1427 and 1431-2. (See Arruda, M. M. V., *Descobrimento e povoamento dos Açores*, Ponta Delgada, 1932.) The date of the license to people the islands should be 1439 (see the charter in *Alguns documentos*, p. 6).

⁴ The donation of November 17th, 1457, conferred upon the Infant, D. Fernando, any islands discovered by his vessels after that date (*Alguns documentos*, p. 22).

⁵ Islands of the Azores. Jesus Christo is now known as Terceira.

⁶ The donation of December 3rd (not September 2nd), 1460 included also the islands of Madeira, Porto Santo and some of the Cape Verde Islands.

⁷ This statement is not strictly accurate. The castle of Arguim had been built circa 1445. Cadamosto refers to it, and the methods of trading, in his account of his first voyage in 1455, see above, p. 17. Duarte Pacheco, *Esmeraldo*, p. 72, says that the castle was built after Prince Henry's death in 1460. This reference, and that of Barros, is probably to its completion or extension.

constablenesship for himself and his sons. We learnt also that at this time the islands which we now call the Ilhas do Cabo Verde were discovered by one Antonio de Nola, a Genoese nobleman, who on account of some grievances in his own country came to this Kingdom with two large ships and a *barinel*, accompanied by Bartholomeu de Nola, his brother, and Rafael de Nola, his nephew. To them the Prince gave permission to discover¹. And sixteen days after sailing from Lisbon they reached the Island of Maio, to which they gave this name because they saw it on that day²; and the next day, which was the day of Sant-Iago and St. Felipe, they discovered two islands that now bear the names of these saints³. At the same time there went also to the discovery of those islands some servants of Prince Fernando, who discovered the others⁴, which in all are ten, commonly called the Ilhas do Cabo Verde, because they lie one hundred leagues west of that cape. By the ancient geographers they were called the Fortunate Islands⁵, about which we wrote at length in our *Geographia*⁶. These the King granted

¹ For da Noli and the disputed question of priority in discovery of the Cape Verde Islands, see p. xxxvi above. Barros's account differs considerably from that of Diogo Gomes, who claims to have been in da Noli's company. The islands are mentioned in a donation by Afonso V to the Infant, D. Fernando, dated 1460, but da Noli's name is not mentioned until two years later, in a similar donation: 'cinco per Antonyo de Nolla, em vida do Ifante dom Anrique', i.e. before 1460 (*Alguns documentos*, pp. 27, 30). The five islands mentioned in the donation of 1460 are Santa Maria, São Jacobo e Felipe, (St Thiago), Ilha dellas Mayaes, Sam Christovam and Ilha Lana.

² ? In that month.

³ The names of the two saints, however, were given to one island. The day was May 1st.

⁴ These remaining islands are first mentioned in the grant of 1462: their names are given as Brava, Sam Nycollao, Sam Vicente, Ilha Rasa, Branca, Santa Lucia and Sant Atonio. They were discovered by Diogo Affonso, in the service of the Infant, D. Fernando. It has been suggested, from the evidence of the Saints' names, that the discovery was made in December 1461 and January 1462.

⁵ The 'Insulae Fortunatae' of the classical geographers were the Canary Islands. Behaim on his globe of 1492 also identifies them wrongly with the Cape Verde Islands.

⁶ This is another lost work of Barros—his *Geographia universalis*. From the references to it in the *Decades*, it dealt with ancient and modern geography, and the use of nautical instruments. A portion of it is said to have been in the possession of his son. No doubt its contents was similar in style to the section on the Senegal and Gambia country (Book III, ch. viii, below), and to the descriptions of the regions of India in the succeeding *Decades*.

to his brother Prince Fernando on the nineteenth of September of the year fourteen hundred and sixty two¹. That called Santiago was the first to be peopled, and by the same Prince Fernando², to whom the King gave the liberties which it still enjoys, by charter of the twelfth of June, fourteen hundred and sixty six. But later on, as the inhabitants used these first liberties in the trade with Guiné with more licence than the King wished, he limited them by another charter in accord with his intention when he made the first grant.

CHAPTER II

How the KING LEASED the TRADE of GUINÉ to FERNÃO GOMES for FIVE YEARS, upon CONDITION that DURING THIS TIME he CAUSED FIVE HUNDRED LEAGUES of COAST to be DISCOVERED; and how for his DISCOVERY of the TRADE in GOLD at MINA he was GIVEN the SURNAME of 'DA MINA' with a COAT of ARMS.

At this time the trade of Guiné was already very current between our men and the inhabitants of those parts, and they carried on their business in peace and friendliness, without those warlike incursions, assaults and robberies which happened at the beginning,—as could not have been otherwise with people so wild and barbarous, both in law and customs and in the use of the things of this our Europe. These people were always intractable until they grew accustomed to them. However after they learnt something of the truth through the benefits they

¹ *Alguns documentos*, p. 31.

² The captaincy of Ribeira Grande in St Thiago was bestowed upon da Noli, though the date of the original grant is not known. It passed to his daughter, D. Branca de Aguiar, in 1497, on her marriage to Jorge Correia (*Alguns documentos*, p. 90). This charter states that the peopling of the island had begun in 1462. Diogo Affonso was rewarded with a donation of the northern portion of St Thiago; this passed to his nephew Rodrigo in 1473. Apart from the traffic with Guinea, the prosperity of the island was increased by the introduction of orchel in 1469. For the early history of the island see Senna Barcellos, *Subsidios*, ch. i.

received, both spiritual and intellectual, and articles for their use, they became so well disposed that when ships, sailing from this Kingdom, arrived at their ports, many people came from the interior to seek our goods, which they received in exchange for human beings, who were brought here more for salvation than for slavery. As all these things were so current and usual in the parts of the coast already discovered, and as the King was very occupied with the affairs of the Kingdom and was not satisfied to cultivate this trade himself nor let it run as it was, he leased it on request in fourteen hundred and sixty nine to Fernão Gomes, a respected citizen of Lisbon, for five years, at two hundred thousand reis a year, on condition that in each of these five years he should engage to discover one hundred leagues of coast farther on, so that at the end of the lease five hundred leagues should be discovered, beginning from Serra Leoa, where Pero de Cintra¹ and Soeiro da Costa, who were the last discoverers before this lease, turned back. Later this Soeiro da Costa discovered the river which we now call 'de Soeiro'², between Cabo das Palmas and the 'tres pontas'³, near the house of Axem⁴, where the factory of the gold trade is. And among other terms of this contract was that all the ivory should be delivered to the King at the price of one thousand five hundred reaes per hundredweight, and the King sold it for a higher price to one Martin Eanes Boaviagem, because he had engaged to do so by a previous contract for all the ivory obtained in Guinea; and, a privilege much appreciated at that time, Fernão Gomes was allowed to buy in each of the said five years one civet-cat⁵.

¹ Soeiro da Costa is not mentioned in Cadamosto's account. De Sintra passed beyond Sierra Leone to Cape Mesurado. See above, p. 83.

² The 'Rio de Soeiro' is the Assini River.

³ Cape Palmas, 4° 25' N., 7° 49' W.; Cape Three Points 4° 42' N., 2° 6' W.

⁴ Axim, 4° 51' N., 2° 15' W. A fort was built here by the Portuguese, circa 1502. This was destroyed during a native rising, and a second fort was built in 1515. Burton, *To the Gold Coast for gold* (II, p. 84), says: 'There is no better landing-place than Axim upon this part of the African coast. The surf renders it impracticable only on the few days of the worst weather'. The gold was obtained from the alluvial deposits of the Ankobr river.

⁵ King Afonso, in October 1470, declared a royal monopoly in civet, *malagueta* pepper, 'unicornio', spices, precious stones, etc. (*Alguns documentos*, p. 33). 'Unicornio' appears to be the horn of the rhinoceros, which was said by Garcia de Orta to be an antidote against poison.

This contract was made in the year fourteen hundred and sixty nine, upon condition that he was not to trade on the continent opposite the Ilhas do Cabo Verde because, as they belonged to the Infant D. Fernando, this trade was reserved for their inhabitants. Also the traffic of the Castle of Arguim was excluded, because the King had given it to his son Prince D. João as part of his revenue; however, later on the same Fernão Gomes secured this traffic of Arguim from the Prince for some years at a price of one hundred thousand reis a year. Fernão Gomes was so diligent and fortunate, that immediately in January fourteen hundred and seventy one, his agents, João de Santarem and Pero de Escobar, both knights of the King's household, discovered the traffic of gold at the place we now call the Mina, the pilots being Martin Fernandes, inhabitant of Lisbon, and Alvaro Esteves, inhabitant of Lagos. This Alvaro Esteves at that time was the most skilled man of his profession in the whole of Spain¹. The first traffic of gold done in that land, was at a village called Sammá², which then had about five hundred inhabitants; and later on it was done farther down, at the place where the fortress which the King D. João ordered to be built now stands, (as we shall see in due course). This spot is called by our men 'Aldea das duas partes'³. But Fernão Gomes not only established this traffic of gold; his discoverers, under the terms of the contract, reached the Cabo de Santa Catharina⁴ thirty seven leagues beyond Cabo de Lopo Gonçalves⁵, two and a half degrees south of the Equator. During this time Fernão Gomes gained great wealth, with which he later served the King in Cepta (Ceuta) and in the capture of Alcacer, Arzila and Tangere, where the King knighted him. And in the year fourteen hundred and seventy four, which was the last of his lease, the King gave him a new coat of arms of nobility—a shield

¹ This description of Esteves is identical with that given by Duarte Pacheco (*Esmeraldo*, p. 118), and is one of the passages suggesting that Barros utilized Duarte Pacheco's work.

² Sammá, the modern Shama, in 5° 2' N., 1° 36' W., near rich auriferous deposits.

³ 'Village of the two parts': so called because the native village was divided by a stream.

⁴ Cape St Catherine, in 1° 54' S., 9° 20' E.

⁵ Cape Lopez, 0° 34' S., 8° 44' E.

with crest and three heads of negroes on a field of silver, each with golden rings in ears and nose, and a collar of gold around the neck, and 'da Mina' as a surname, in memory of its discovery. And he gave him a patent to this effect on the twenty ninth of August of the said year. Four years later he appointed him to his Council, because at this time the trade of Guiné and the traffic of Mina were so profitable and assisted the economy of the Kingdom so much through the good industry of Fernão Gomes, that, both for this service and for others he had personally performed, he deserved every honour and favour that might be given to him. Also at this time one Fernão do Pó discovered the Ilha Formosa, which now bears the name of its discoverer in place of that which he had given it¹. And the last discoverer in the life of this King Dom Afonso² was one de Sequeira, knight of his household, who discovered the cape which we call Cabo de Catharina, a name he then gave to it because it was discovered on the day of this Saint. And not only by order of this King, from the beginning of his government, but also by order of the same Infant D. Henrique, who, as we have seen, lived till the year fourteen hundred and sixty three³, the conquests and discoveries continued always, including the coast whence came the first *malagueta*, which was explored by order of the Infant D. Henrique⁴; if this *malagueta* reached Italy before this discovery, it was obtained from the Moors of these parts of Guiné, who crossed through the great region of Mandinga, and the deserts of Libya, which they call Çahará, until they reached the Mediterranean sea, at a port called by them Mundi barca, or corruptly Monte da Barca⁵. As the Italians did not know where it was grown, and as it was a valuable spice, they called it *Grana paradisi*, which is the name it bears among them. The Ilha de

¹ Fernando Po.

² King Afonso died in 1481. Barros has already implied that Cabo de S. Catharina was discovered before the expiry of Gomes's lease in 1474.

³ Prince Henry died in 1460.

⁴ According to Duarte Pacheco (*Esmeraldo*, p. 108) the trade in *malagueta* began at the 'forest of Santa Maria' beyond Cape Mesurado. On Barros's own showing this coast cannot have been discovered during Prince Henry's lifetime.

⁵ The town of Barca in Cyrenaica is now known as Merj (32° 31' N., 20° 55' E.). In the Arab period it was a stage on the caravan route from Egypt to the west. The town of Tolmeita is on the site of the former port of Barca, and it is probably to this port that Barros here refers.

S. Thomé, Anno bom, and do Principe¹, were also discovered by order of the King D. Afonso, and other trading-places and islands, which we do not treat in detail because we do not know when or by which captains they were discovered; however it is generally known that many more events happened and discoveries were made in the time of this King of whom we have written²; for example, an island, of which we still know nothing to-day, was discovered in the year fourteen hundred and thirty eight; in order that what I say may not seem strange, I shall give here evidence to the truth of which many witnesses exist. In the year fifteen hundred and twenty five a fleet of Castille of which the commander was Fr. Garcia de Loais, commendador of the Ordem de S. João, on a voyage to our Ilhas de Maluco (Molucca Islands) crossed from the coast of Guiné to the coast of Brazil; we had a *roteiro* of this voyage in which the author relates the dispute in that part of the sea between one D. Rodrigo da Cunha, an Andalucian nobleman, captain of the ship *Sant-Iago* of that fleet, and Sant-Iago Guevara, a Biscay man, captain of a *patara* also called *Sant-Iago*. They quarrelled as to who should take before the commander a Portuguese ship seized by both of them, which had come from the Ilha de S. Thomé loaded with negroes; from words the captains came to bombard shots, and at last the caravel was taken before the commander, who discussed with the pilot the possibility of taking him in his company; but he did not do so, because, there being no other person on board who

¹ Ravenstein suggests that S. Thomé and S. Antão were discovered by Sequeira on his return from Cabo de S. Catharina. In 1474 the revenues of the latter were granted to Prince João and the island was renamed Ilha do Principe. The captaincy of the Island of S. Thomé was granted to João de Paiva in 1485, and in the following year he received the donation of half the island for colonisation (*Alguns documentos*, pp. 56-7). Barros's reference to the discovery of Annobon during the reign of Afonso confirms Ravenstein's suggestion that the island was known before its 'official' discovery on January 1st, 1501, by a caravel of Fernão de Mello from S. Thomé, as recorded by V. Fernandez. Ravenstein believed that it was the island called by Behaim 'Insula Martini'. Duarte Pacheco, however, makes no reference to Annobon, and says S. Thomé and Principe were discovered by order of João II. (*Martin Behaim*, p. 28.)

² This statement has been used by Portuguese historians to support the theory of 'national secrecy' about the extent of the Portuguese voyages, which are held to have extended across the Atlantic some time before Columbus's discovery. (See J. Cortesão, *O sigilo nacional*.)

could take the negroes from that latitude to Portugal, this would have meant that he would be responsible for the death of many souls; therefore he kept the pilot for a day, questioning him about affairs of the sea, and then sent him away unharmed. From this pilot, according to the author of the *roteiro*, they learnt that the Portuguese were in Maluco, where they had built a fortress; and that while pursuing their voyage, two degrees beyond the Line, they had found an uninhabited island¹, called S. Matheus, where there were two watering places, one very, and the other not so good: and on two trees there were inscriptions showing that the Portuguese had been there eighty seven years before. And it appeared to have been cultivated, for there were many fruit trees, especially sweet oranges, palm-trees, and fowl, similar to those of Spain, in the tree tops, many of which they shot down with cross-bows. He also related other things that they found there, of which I only took these as evidence of what I have said, —that at that time our men had discovered more lands than we find recorded in the writing of Gomes Eanes de Zurara. It was not unusual that they should have found this memorial cut on the trees, because at that time our men frequently did so, and some of them, in praise of Prince Henry, cut the motto of his emblem, which, as we have seen, was *Talent de bien faire*; because they thought that this inscription cut in the bark of the dragon-trees, in addition to wooden crosses, would be sufficient to establish possession of their discoveries. Later on, (as we shall see), King João the Second ordered *Padrões* [stone columns] to be erected with inscriptions setting forth when and by whom the land had been discovered. This was sufficient to establish royal possession, but now even the fortresses built there are not enough, because men have invented laws in accord with their own covetousness. And as great men spend most of their lives in works of their preference, King Afonso came to neglect the affairs of discovery, and celebrated much more those of the war in Africa by the seizure of the towns of Alcacer, Arzila and Tangier²,

¹ An island 'Sam mateus' is shown on the Reinell chart of 1519 (Armeebibliothek, Munich) approximately on the meridian of St Helena, and slightly north of the latitude of Anobon. This 'discovery' is also mentioned by Galvão.

² El-Qsar es Sgir was taken in 1458; Tangier and Arzila in 1471.

(as we related in our *Africa*¹), whither he went personally: this war in Africa gave him so much satisfaction, because of the good fortune he met there, that he undertook, (if affairs of state permitted), to go personally to take the town of Fez and all its Kingdom, for which purpose he had organized an Order called the 'Ordem da Espada'. Accordingly he sent his chief Chronicler, Gomes Eanes de Zurara, to the Town of Alcacer Ceguer in Africa so that he could record as an eye-witness the feats of that war; to him he wrote a letter with his own hand in praise of the work he had performed on that mission:—not in restrained and insincere words, as Princes use, but eloquently, like an orator, and as one who was proud of his faculty². Gomes Eanes, seeing the pleasure of the King in the incidents of this war, wrote the Chronicle of the taking of Ceuta, and another Chronicle of the feats of the Conde D. Pedro de Menezes, and of his son the Conde D. Duarte, relating these exploits so circumstantially and with so clear a style, that he well deserved his title. He also wrote the Chronicle of King Afonso³, to the death of the Infante D. Pedro, and the Chronicle of King Duarte, his father. These Rui de Pina⁴, who succeeded him as Chronicler, appropriated, corrected, and enlarged, especially that of King Afonso, in regard to events after the death of the Infante D. Pedro. Gomes Eanes also carried out another task in the Tombo of this Kingdom, which much clarified its contents, that is, its entry-books, rearranging in certain volumes many loose documents from the time of King Pedro to that of King João of glorious memory; for he was chief keeper of the Tombo, a post very suitable to chroniclers, as in its keeping are all the

¹ See note on p. 104, *supra*.

² Extracts from this letter are printed in Beazley and Prestage, *op. cit.* 1, pp. xli-xlii.

³ These remarks correctly amend his earlier statement regarding Azurara's chronicle of Afonso V. This and the chronicle of D. Duarte appeared under de Pina's name (see below).

⁴ Rui de Pina (1440-1521) was appointed 'Chronista mor' by King Emmanuel in 1497. He compiled chronicles of the earlier kings, of Duarte and Afonso V, largely based upon Fernão Lopes and Azurara, and one of João II, the result of his own researches. These are printed in the *Chronica dos seis reys primeiros*, Lisbon, 1727-9, and the *Collecção de livros ineditos da historia portugueza*, Lisbon, 1790-2. Barros's account of West African history follows de Pina's fairly closely.

papers of the Kingdom, which it is convenient should pass under its chronicler's eyes, in order that he can write more accurately and fully about the feats of the King whose officer he is. Here are kept, if he wishes and knows how to use so many documents, ordinances, parliamentary records, marriage certificates, contracts, fleets, feasts, works, gifts and grants, both in the register of the Chancery and Treasury, and the accounts of the whole Kingdom. In truth (returning to Gomes Eanes, to whom were entrusted the two offices of Chronicler and Chief Keeper of the Torre do Tombo), I do not know either how long he lived or how long he had these employments; but I know, according to what he left written by his hand, that he was not an unprofitable servant, and that, both by his style and his diligence, he deserved these posts.

B O O K T H R E E

Of the deeds which the *Portuguese* performed in the discovery and conquest of the seas and lands of the *Orient*: containing what was achieved in the time of the *King D. João the Second*.

CHAPTER I

How the KING, D. JOÃO, SUCCEEDING to the KINGDOM on the DEATH of HIS FATHER, D. AFONSO, sent forthwith a GREAT FLEET to GUINÉ to BUILD the CASTLE, which we now call S. JORGE DA MINA, of which FLEET DIOGO DE AZAMBUJA was the CAPTAIN-MAJOR: and how he met CARAMANÇA, LORD of that place.

As the King, D. João¹, already had in the time of his father, D. Afonso, the trade of Guiné as part of the revenue of his household, and had drawn from it gold, ivory, slaves and other things which enriched his Kingdom, and as each year new lands and peoples were discovered, his hope of the discovery of India by these seas became ever the stronger. Being a very Christian

¹ King João II, 1481-95.

prince and lord of great prudence, he ordered the building of a fortress, to be the first stone of the Oriental Church, which he wished to build in praise and glory of God for the possession he took of that which he had discovered and which remained to be discovered, through the Pope's grant¹, as we said before. And knowing that in the land through which ran the traffic of gold the negroes liked silk, woollen and linen clothes, and other domestic goods, that they displayed a clearer understanding than others of that coast, and that in the trade with our men they showed they would be easily converted, he commanded that this fortress should be erected in the place, where our men usually made the traffic of the gold. Thus, with the bait offered by the worldly goods which would always be obtainable there, they might receive those of the Faith through our doctrine, which was his principal aim. And though opinions in his Council about the building of this fortress were divergent because of the distance, and the ill-effects of the climate, the food of the country, and the labour of navigation upon those who went thither, the King considered that the possibility of getting even one soul to the Faith by baptism through the fortress, outweighed all the inconveniences. For he said that God would take care of them, since the work was to His praise, that his subjects would win profit, and that the patrimony of this Kingdom would be increased. Once the building of this fortress was decided upon, he ordered the equipping of a Fleet of ten caravels and two *urcas*,—to carry hewed stone, tiles and wood, as well as munitions and provisions for six hundred men, one hundred of whom were craftsmen and five hundred soldiers. Diogo de Azambuja², a man very experienced in the art of war, was Captain-major of these ships and the other Captains were Gonçalo da Fonseca, Ruy de Oliveira, João Rodrigues Gante, João Afonso,—who was afterwards killed

¹ Sixtus IV by the Bull of June 21st, 1481, confirmed Nicholas V's grant of exclusive rights in Guinea to the King of Portugal, and Calixtus III's grant of the spiritualities to the Order of Christ.

² Diogo de Azambuja (1432–1518), who had served in Spain during the Infant Pedro's reign as King of Aragon, was a trusted servant of King João and of King Manoel. The latter placed him in charge of the Castello Real built at Mogador in 1506. He captured Saffi in 1508, and was governor of the African coast south of Cape Cantin. See Prestage, E., *op. cit.*, pp. 204–5, and Cordeiro, L., *Diogo de Azambuja (B.S.G. Lisboa, II (1892), pp. 172–249).*

in Arguim, when João de Moura was Captain of that fortress—Diogo Rodrigues Inglez, Bartholomeu Dias¹, Pero de Evora, and Gomes Aires, an esquire of King Pedro of Aragon. The latter went in place of Pero de Azambuja, brother of Diogo de Azambuja, who died from plague before they sailed from Lisbon. All were noblemen and servants of the King. The Captains of the *urcas* were Pero de Cintra², and Fernão d'Afonso. In order to take the munitions for this fortress, they sailed some days before, and with them went Pero de Evora in a small ship, so that, if the *urcas* did not succeed in obtaining fish in the port of Bezequiche³, where they were to wait, this ship might do so. This business Pero de Evora with much diligence accomplished, and something more, for he made peace with Bezequiche, Lord of that coast, from whom came the name that the port bears to-day. Diogo de Azambuja confirmed that peace on his arrival, on Christmas eve of the year fourteen hundred and eighty one, twelve days after he had sailed from Lisbon. Continuing on his course, God gave him so good a voyage—though he had some trouble with one of the *urcas*, which sprang a leak—that on the nineteenth of January in the following year he arrived at the place where he was to build the Castle, at that time called 'the village of the two parts'. There he met João Bernardes with a ship of the King trafficking in gold with Caramança⁴, lord of that village. He sent him to tell Caramança that he had arrived with a great fleet, sent by the King of Portugal, his lord, on which came many noble people, for the good and honour of his person, as he would himself know later, and to ask him to be pleased to meet him next day, when he intended to go ashore. When Caramança's answer arrived, expressing delight at his coming, Diogo de Azambuja landed with all his people smartly dressed, but with hidden arms in case of need. He first took possession of a big tree on a small hill not very far from the village, a place

¹ The commander of the expedition which rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1487-8.

² The discoverer of Sierra Leone.

³ The district south of Cape Verde. The 'port' became a regular calling-place for Portuguese vessels on the way to the East.

⁴ Caramança may be a corruption of Kwamin Ansa, i.e. King Ansa (Johnston, J. W. de G., *Hist. Geogr. of Gold Coast*, p. 12).

very suitable for the building of the fortress; on this tree he had a banner with the Royal Escutcheons hoisted, and at the foot an altar was set up, at which the first mass in those parts of Ethiopia was said. This mass was heard by our men with many tears of devotion, and thanks to God for allowing them to praise and glorify Him in the midst of those idolaters; asking Him that as He was pleased that they were the first to erect the altar of so great a sacrifice, He would give them wisdom and grace to draw those idolatrous people to His Faith, so that the church which they would found there might endure until the end of the world. As soon as this mass was said, on the day of S. Sebastião, (in whose memory this name was given to a valley in which ran a brook, where they first landed), Diogo de Azambuja drew up his men in ranks to await Caramança who had just left his village. He was seated on a high chair dressed in a jerkin of brocade, with a golden collar of precious stones, and the other captains were all dressed in silk. With the men drawn up in ranks, a long and broad way was made, up which Caramança, who also wished to display his standing, came with many people in war-like manner, with a great hub-bub of kettle-drums, trumpets, bells, and other instruments, more deafening than pleasing to the ear. Their dress was their own flesh, anointed and very shining, which made their skins still blacker, a custom which they affected as an elegance. Their privy parts only were covered with the skins of monkeys or woven palm leaves—the chiefs' with patterned cloth, which they had from our ships. All, in general, were armed after their manner, some with spears and bucklers, others with bows and quivers of arrows; and many, in place of helmets, wore monkey skins studded with the teeth of animals. All were so hideous in these fancies, designed to convey warlike ferocity, that they provoked laughter rather than fear. Those who were considered noblemen were followed by two pages; one of whom carried a round wooden stool so that they might sit down and rest when they wished¹; the other a war buckler. These noblemen

¹ These stools were of course emblems of chieftainship. The description of the appearance and behaviour of the king's body-guard in this passage is identical with that recorded by nineteenth-century travellers. See, for example, the accounts quoted by Ellis, A. B., *Tshi-speaking peoples of the Gold Coast*, ch. xviii.

wore rings and golden jewels on their heads and beards. Their king, Caramança, came in their midst, his legs and arms covered with golden bracelets and rings, a collar round his neck, from which hung some small bells, and in his plaited beard golden bars, which weighed down its untrimmed hairs, so that instead of being twisted it was smooth. To impress his dignity, he walked with very slow and light steps, never turning his face to either side. While he was approaching with this solemnity, Diogo de Azambuja remained very quietly on his dais, until, when Caramança was among our people, he went to meet him. Caramança took the hand of Diogo de Azambuja, and letting it go again, snapped his fingers saying, *Bere, Bere*, which means 'Peace, peace'. This snapping of the fingers is a sign among them of the greatest courtesy that can be offered. Then the king stepped aside, allowing his men to approach Diogo de Azambuja, to do the same; but the manner in which they snapped their fingers differed from that of the king: wetting their fingers in their mouths and wiping them on their chests, they cracked them from the little finger to the index finger, a kind of salute here given to princes; for they say that the fingers can carry poison, if they are not cleaned in this manner. These courtesies lasted for a good while, for Caramança brought many people with him; when they were finished and silence secured, Diogo de Azambuja began to tell him, through an interpreter, the reason for his coming,—the knowledge that the King, his Lord, had of Caramança's desire to serve him well, as he had striven to show by the rapid lading of his ships when they arrived in that part; and because these things proceeded from love, the King wished to repay them with love, which would be more advantageous than his, for it was love for the salvation of his soul, the most precious thing that man had, because it gave life, knowledge, and reason, which distinguished man from the beasts. And he who wished to know it, must first know of the Lord who made it, that is, God, the maker of sky, sun, moon, earth, and all upon it—He who made the day and night, rain, thunder, and lightning, and created the crops which nourished man. The King of Portugal, his Lord, and all Christendom, a great part of the world, recognised this God as Creator and Lord, adored Him, and believed in Him, as the One from whom they had received

everything, and to whom their souls would go after death, to give account of the good and evil they had done during this life. He was a Lord so beneficent, that He took the good to Heaven, where He was, and the bad He thrust into an abyss of the earth called Hell, the dwelling of devils who tormented their souls. For Caramança to understand these things, he must be washed in holy water, which the Christians called the Baptism of the Faith; because just as the waters of the river washed the eyes, when they were blinded with dust, so that they might see better, so the baptismal water washed the eyes of the soul in order that they might perceive and understand the things of the soul. King João had sent to ask Caramança to recognize this God as his Creator and to worship Him, to promise to live and die in His Faith, and to accept baptism as a token of it; should Caramança accept and receive baptism, Diogo de Azambuja, in the name of the King his Lord promised him that henceforward the King would regard him as a friend and brother in the Faith of Christ, and would help him in all his need. As a token of that promise he had come there with these people to do him honour and to maintain his estate; and not only at that time would he receive help, but at all times while he remained in the Faith of Christ, God, and our Lord, as expounded to him. And as he had come well supplied with much rich merchandize never before seen in that land, for the safeguarding of which it was necessary to build a strong house, in addition to quarters wherein to lodge the honourable people who accompanied him, he asked him to be pleased to allow it to be built, which he hoped would be a token that the King would ordinarily send thither to traffic, from which Caramança would become powerful in his land, and lord of his neighbours, for no one would trouble him, since that same house, and the power of the King, would be there to defend him. Though Bayo, king of Sâma¹, and neighbouring princes would consider it a great honour to have this fortress built in their lands, and over and above this would render a great service to the King on that account, he was pleased that this work should be carried out in Caramança's land, because of the love and friendship which he had shown in his affairs.

¹ The modern Shama.

CHAPTER II

Of the REPLY *of* PRINCE CARAMANÇA *to the* WORDS *of* DIOGO DE AZAMBUJA: *and of the* PERMISSION *he* GAVE *for the* BUILDING *of the* FORTRESS, *which* SECURED *the* TRAFFIC *in* PEACE *to this* DAY.

Though Caramança was a savage man, yet he was of good understanding, both by nature and by his intercourse with the crews of the trading ships, and possessed a clear judgment. And as one who desired to understand what was proposed to him, he not only listened to the translation of the interpreter but watched each gesture made by Diogo de Azambuja; and whilst this continued, both he and his men were perfectly silent; no one as much as spat, so obedient and disciplined were they. At the conclusion, as though wishing to reflect upon what he had heard and to consider his answer, he fixed his eyes on the ground for a space, and then replied: he received as a mark of graciousness from the King, his Lord, the desire shewn both for the salvation of his soul and for the matters touching his honour; that he for his part certainly deserved it, for the good dispatch of the ships that had come thither to trade, they having been faithfully and honestly treated. During that time nothing had astonished him as much as the captain's arrival; on the other ships he had seen ill-dressed and ragged men only, who were content with whatever he gave them in exchange for their goods. This was the aim of their voyages to those parts; all they asked was to be dealt with immediately, since they preferred to return to their country rather than to live abroad. But with him, the captain, it was otherwise. He came with many people, and with much more gold and jewels than there were in those parts where they were found, and moreover with a new request—that he might establish a residence in that land. From this he conjectured two things: first, that the captain must be a very close relative of the King of Portugal; secondly, that a man as important as he was surely came on great affairs, such as those of God, who made

the day and the night, about whom he had said so much, and whose servant his King was. But considering the nature of so important a man as the captain, and also of the gallant people who accompanied him, he perceived that men of such quality must always require things on a lavish scale; and, because the spirit of such a noble people would scarcely endure the poverty and simplicity of that savage land of Guiné, quarrels and passions might arise between them all; he asked him, therefore, to be pleased to depart, and to allow the ships to come in the future as they had in the past, so that there would always be peace and concord between them. Friends who met occasionally remained better friends than if they were neighbours, on account of the nature of the human heart—for it resembled the waves of the sea, which, breaking upon a rock barring their path, were tossed up to the sky, so that a double mischief was done, the sea being churned to fury, and the rock, its neighbour, being damaged. He did not speak thus to disobey the commands of the King of Portugal, but for the benefit of peace and the trade he desired to have with those who might come to that port: and also because, with peace between them, his people would be more ready to hear of God, whom he wished them to know; therefore, since time would reveal these inconveniences, he asked the captain to avoid them by allowing the traffic to continue as it had before. To these words and doubts, which seemed to oppose the building of the fortress, Diogo de Azambuja answered: the reason why the King his Lord had sent him with so much ceremony to that country, was his wish for peace and closer friendship with Caramança; and as a token of this he sought to build a house there in which he might keep his goods; by this His Highness showed the great trust he had in him, and in his subjects, because no one would put his goods in a place which he suspected: if there was cause for fear, he, Diogo de Azambuja, and all those who accompanied him might well be fearful, for they were trusting their lives and goods to a strange land, far from help; and though men's hearts, as Caramança had said, were free by nature, they belonged to those whose King was not so just as was the King his Lord. His subjects were obedient to his commands, fearing to disobey him more than

death itself. He was neither a son nor a brother of the King, as Caramança thought, but one of the least of his subjects, and so strictly bound to perform what he had been commanded with regard to peace and concord in the work of that house, that he would prefer to lose his life rather than to disobey. These words, and the obedience they signified, so amazed Caramança that he clapped his hands, and the negroes also did this as a sign of agreement, thus interrupting the speech of Diogo de Azambuja; before he could continue, after the noise had ceased, Caramança replied that he would be pleased to permit him to build the house as he wished, warning him that peace and truth must be kept, for should our men act otherwise they would cause more harm to themselves than to him, because the land was great, and he and his men could build another abode elsewhere with a few sticks and branches, of which they had plenty. When the king had given his decision about the building of the house, but without answering the question about the Baptism to which he had been exhorted, he took leave of the captain, retiring with the same ceremony as he had come, and the captain remained with those in charge of the work, considering where the fortress should be placed. The next day the masons began to break some rocks which were close to, and overlooking the sea, where they had decided to place the foundations, but the negroes could not bear such an offence against that spirit which they worshipped as God; kindled with fury, which the devil fanned so that they should die before baptism—which some of them received later—they seized their arms, and on the impulse briskly attacked the men at work. When Diogo de Azambuja, who was with the captains unloading the munitions from the ships, saw the people running to the beach, he went in haste to their assistance; learning from the interpreter that the main cause of the tumult of the negroes was that they had not received the gifts they expected, and that they were more grieved at this delay than with the offence to their gods, he held the attention of the people as well as he could in order that there should be no bloodshed, and sent in great haste for the Factor to bring a double supply of cloths, bracelets, basins, and other things he had ordered to be presented to the king and his chiefs,

as was customary; moreover, to please the negroes further he rebuked the Factor in their presence. With these gifts they were content and their fury subdued, so that they would have handed over their children, still more the rocks; so powerful is a gift, that, as it is said, Diogo de Azambuja broke both the stones, that is, the hearts of those angry Negroes, and the rocks that they defended. However during the work our men were always watchful, and careful with the negroes, lest there should be another attack. The work progressed so rapidly that in twenty days the outer wall of the castle was raised to a good height, and the tower to the first floor. On account of the special devotion of the King for the Saint, this fortress was called S. Jorge, and it was later created a town, with all the respective liberties and privileges, by a royal charter signed at Santarem on March 15 of the year fourteen hundred and eighty six. Although during this work our men continually strove to avoid quarrels with the negroes, the latter committed so many thefts and evil deeds that Diogo de Azambuja decided to burn their village. This punishment, as well as the benefits they derived, established peace firmly. When this work was finished, and trade begun in the country, Diogo de Azambuja sent back to the Kingdom the ships and the supernumeraries, with much gold that they had obtained, while he remained with the sixty men allotted to the fortress by the King's instructions. Others remained buried at the foot of the tree where the first Mass was said, which stood in the grounds of the church consecrated to São Jorge. There God is praised to-day not only by our men who visit that town, but also by those Ethiopians who, having been baptized, are included among the faithful. In this church in memory of the labours of the Infante D. Henrique, the author of this discovery, a mass is said every day for his soul by a chaplain appointed for the purpose. During the two years and seven months that Diogo de Azambuja was there, it pleased God that they did not suffer as much from disease as they had feared; and with so much prudence did he settle the prices and rules of the traffic, that to-day the greater part of his regulations are still observed, on which account the King rewarded and honoured him further on his return.

CHAPTER III

*How the KINGDOM of BENY was DISCOVERED*¹.

Though the christianizing of these people of Congo progressed greatly to the glory of God, through the conversion of their king, little profit accrued from what the King did in the matter of the request of the king of Beny, whose kingdom lay between that of Congo and the Castle of S. Jorge da Mina. For at the time of Diogo Cam's first return from Congo, in the year fourteen hundred and eighty six, this king of Beny also sent to solicit the King to despatch thither priests who might instruct him in the Faith. This country had already been visited in the previous year by Fernão do Po, who had discovered this coast and also an island near the land, now known by his name². On account of its size he called it Ilha Formosa—but it has lost this name and bears that of its discoverer. This emissary of the king of Beny came with João Affonso d'Aveiro, who had been sent to explore this coast by the King, and who brought back the first pepper from these parts of Guinea to the Kingdom. This pepper is called by us *de rabo* (long tailed)—because the stem on which it grows comes away with it—to distinguish it from that obtained from India. The King sent some to Flanders, but it was never held in as high esteem as the Indian. As this kingdom of Beny was near the Castle of S. Jorge da Mina and as the negroes who brought gold to that market place were ready to buy slaves to carry their merchandize, the King ordered the building of a factory in a port of Beny, called Gato³, whither there were brought for sale a great number of those slaves who were bartered very profitably at the Mina, for the merchants of gold gave twice the value obtainable for them in the Kingdom. But, as the king of Beny was very much under the influence of his

¹ The earlier portion of this chapter, which relates the discovery of the Congo, has been omitted.

² The discovery of Fernando Po is earlier dated by Barros as *circa* 1478.

³ Gwato: 'This is the harbour of the great city of Beny, which lies nine leagues in the interior, with a good road [between them]' (Duarte Pacheco, *Esmeraldo*, p. 125).

idolatries, and sought the priests rather to make himself powerful against his neighbours with our favour than from a desire for baptism, he profited little from the ministrations of those sent thither. On this account they were recalled, and also the officers of the Factory, for the place was very unhealthy, and among the persons of note who died was this João Affonso d'Aveiro, the first to establish it. However for a considerable time afterwards, both during the life of Dom João and of Dom Manuel, this sale of slaves continued from Beny to Mina, for ordinarily the ships that left this Kingdom went to Beny to buy the slaves, and then carried them to the Mina, until this trade was altered on account of the great inconveniences which arose. A large caravel was wont to sail from the island of S. Thomé, where the slaves of the coast of Beny joined those from the kingdom of Congo, because all the vessels that sailed to those parts called there, and this caravel carried them from the island to Mina. But the King, D. João the Third¹, our Lord, who was then reigning, perceived that these pagans who were in our power passed into the hands of infidels once more, so that they lost the merit of baptism, and their souls were damned eternally; accordingly as a very Christian prince, ever more mindful of the salvation of souls than of the profits of his treasury, he ordered the cessation of this trade, although he suffered great loss by this act. And by this means there were brought into the fold of the faithful more than a thousand souls, all of whom, a year before this holy precept, were in perpetual servitude to the devil, and either remained in their original condition or became Moslems when, through the barter between the Moors and the negroes of the province of Mandinga, they came under the power of the former. For this work, done in His praise, God immediately rewarded the King: because he had placed the salvation of these heathen souls above the gaining of much gold in the slave market, another mine was found below the city of S. Jorge from which have flowed great quantities of gold down to the present time, much exceeding what he would have obtained by the sale of slaves.

¹ João III, 1521-57, the patron of Barros.

CHAPTER IV

How the KING, on account of what he LEARNT from JOÃO AFONSO D'AVEIRO and the AMBASSADORS from the KINGDOM of BENY, sent BARTHOLOMEU DIAS and JOÃO INFANTE to the DISCOVERY: on WHICH VOYAGE they DISCOVERED the great CABO DE BOA ESPERANÇA.

Among the many things which the King D. João learnt from the ambassador of the king of Beny, and also from João Afonso d'Aveiro, of what they had been told by the inhabitants of these regions, was that to the east of Beny at twenty moons' journey—which according to their account, and the short journeys they make, would be about two hundred and fifty of our leagues—there lived the most powerful monarch of these parts, who was called Ogané. Among the pagan chiefs of the territories of Beny he was held in as great veneration as is the Supreme Pontif with us. In accordance with a very ancient custom, the king of Beny, on ascending the throne, sends ambassadors to him with rich gifts to announce that by the decease of his predecessor he has succeeded to the kingdom of Beny, and to request confirmation. To signify his assent, the prince Ogané sends the king a staff and a headpiece of shining brass, fashioned like a Spanish helmet, in place of a crown and sceptre. He also sends a cross, likewise of brass, to be worn round the neck, a holy and religious emblem similar to that worn by the Commendadores of the Order of Saint John. Without these emblems the people do not recognize him as lawful ruler, nor can he call himself truly king. All the time this ambassador is at the court of Ogané, he never sees the prince, but only the curtains of silk behind which he sits, for he is regarded as sacred. When the ambassador is leaving, he is shown a foot below the curtains as a sign that the prince is within and agrees to the matters that he has raised; this foot they reverence as though it were a sacred relic. As a kind of reward for the hardships of such a journey the ambassador receives a small cross, similar to that sent to the

king, which is thrown round his neck to signify that he is free and exempt from all servitudes, and privileged in this native country, as the Commendadores are with us. I myself knew this, but in order to be able to write it with authority, (although the King D. João in his time had also enquired well into it) when in the year fifteen hundred and forty certain ambassadors of the king of Beny came to this Kingdom, among whom was a man about seventy years of age who was wearing one of these crosses, I asked him the reason, and he gave an explanation similar to the above. And as in the time of the King, D. João, whenever India was spoken of, reference was always made to a very powerful king called Preste João of the Indies, who was reputed to be a Christian, it seemed therefore to the King that it might be possible to enter India by way of this kingdom. For he had learnt from the Abexijs (Abyssinian) priests who came to these parts of Spain¹, and also from some friars who had been from this kingdom to Jerusalem and whom he had ordered to gather information about this Prince, that his country was in the land above Egypt whence it stretched to the southern sea. Wherefore the King and his cosmographers, taking into consideration Ptolemy's general map of Africa, the *Padrões* on the coast which had been set up by his discoverers, and also the distance of two hundred and fifty leagues to the east where according to the people of Beny the country of prince Ogané lay², concluded that he must be Preste João, for both were hidden behind curtains of silk and held the emblem of the cross in great veneration. And it also appeared to him that if his ships continued along the coast they had discovered, they could not fail to reach the land where the promontory Praso³ was, that is, the limit of that country. Therefore taking into consideration all these facts which increased his ardour for the design of discovering India, he determined to send immediately in the year 1486 both ships by sea

¹ Professor Prestage thinks that these were probably pilgrims to Compostella, some of whom visited Lisbon on their way.

² By the time of Duarte Pacheco, Ogané (Hooguanee) had been located at a little more than one hundred leagues to the east of Benin (*Esmeraldo*, p. 126). He was probably a chief in the Niger delta.

³ The 'Prasum promont.' of Ptolemy has never been satisfactorily identified. He placed it on the east coast of Africa in approximately 15° S. Some have thought it to be C. Delgado.

and men by land, in order to get to the root of this matter which inspired so much hope in him¹.

CHAPTER VI

How a PRINCE of GUINÉ, named BEMOY, came to THIS KINGDOM, because of a WAR in which he had LOST HIS KINGDOM: and how the KING, on account of what he had heard, RECEIVED HIM with MUCH HONOUR.

When this Lucas Marcos had been despatched by the King, very contented with his gifts, there happened to arrive another Ethiopian, with whom the King was no less pleased. He was at Setubal when he learnt that a ship had arrived at Lisbon from the Castle of Arguim, on which there was a Prince from the country of Jalof, called Bemoy, accompanied by relatives and nobles of that region. The King, who, as we will see, had already heard much about him, sent word to Lisbon that he was to be well entertained, and escorted thence with honour to the Castle of the Town of Palmela. There he stayed some days, during which time he and his people were properly clothed and given riding animals, that they might go before the King; for he was treated in every respect as a sovereign Lord, accustomed to our civilization, and not as a barbarous Prince outside the law. He was similarly treated on the day of his arrival at the Court, for D. Francisco Coutinho, Count of Marialva, went to meet him, accompanied by many noblemen. On that day the King and the Queen displayed great ceremony and pageantry, each of them with their household: the King in the state room on a high dais with a canopy of rich brocade, accompanied by the Duke of Beja, D. Manuel, brother of the Queen, counts, bishops, and

¹ The remainder of the chapter deals with the voyage of Diogo Cam to the Cape. Chapter v, which describes the mission of Pero de Covilhã and Afonso de Paiva to the East, has also been omitted, as it is not immediately concerned with the affairs of West Africa. Lucas Marcos was an Abyssinian priest, sent from Rome to Lisbon in 1488. He was then despatched with letters to 'Prester John'.

other notable persons; with the Queen were Prince Afonso her son, and many noblemen of the Court and their ladies in ceremonial dress. As the account of Bemoy's speech on this occasion given by Rui de Pina, chief Chronicler of this Kingdom, in his Chronicle of the King, is as brief about the fortunes of this Prince, as it is copious in praises of the King, and in describing the astonishment of Bemoy at the sight of his state, we shall omit that eloquence, and continue with our purpose, which is to relate the causes of his exile, and what happened at his coming, because this is what concerns history. When the trade of Guiné was first established between our men and the people of this region of Jalof, which lies between these two remarkable rivers, Çanagá and Gambea, there was a very powerful king in those parts called Bór Byrão, who, although of the gentile blood of the Princes of Guinea, had become a Moor through contact with the Azenegues. Among the children he left when he died, by several wives (as was their wont), were Cybitah and Cambá, who were sons of one wife, and Byrão of another, who had been married to another man, by whom she had had this Bemoy. And because in that country when the king dies the people usually choose for their ruler the son they like best, they elected Byrão as their king. He, on assuming the government of the country, did not favour his brothers Cybitah and Cambá because they were his rivals in the kingdom on the side of his father, but showed great regard for Bemoy, his brother on his mother's side, who was not a rival for his inheritance. To Bemoy, on account of the hatred of the others, he gave the whole rule of his state, according to their custom, and completely abandoned the government and gave himself to pleasure, so that the people recognized and obeyed Bemoy alone. He, being a prudent man, seeing that our ships which carried on trade with that coast enriched the country with horses and other needful goods, and that the control of these affairs would make him more powerful, left the interior and came to the ports visited by us. He followed this prudent policy in dealing with them: if a horse died on board, he accepted its tail as sufficient proof, and paid for the horse; because he said that when it was taken on board it was already his property, and that it was not just that men who came

so far to bring him what he needed should lose by it. Not only had he this manner of satisfying those he dealt with, but also in the service of King João, during whose time he lived, as a man who expected to profit by his friendship, he caused the ships, immediately they arrived in port, to be diligently dispatched; and in addition sent presents of the products of his country. Therefore the King, besides his desire to bring the Faith to all those Princes of Guinea in general, had an especial affection for Bemoy, because he was also told that Bemoy had the disposition, wisdom, and clear judgment to receive the evangelical doctrine. He always recommended the captains who went to trade in those parts to converse with Bemoy about the tenets of the Faith; sometimes he sent messengers with this request, bearing gifts and presents, and many offers to improve his state, in order to encourage him. But, either because at that time Bemoy did not deserve so much grace of God, or in order that his memory might be recorded more honourably in the chronicles of the kings of this kingdom, he did not accept baptism then, but always gave hope of it, by the contentment and pleasure with which he listened to the tenets of the Faith. This prosperity caused the death of his brother, who had entrusted to him the government of the kingdom, and his own exile; for the two brothers Cybitah and Cambá killed King Bór Birão by treason, and Cybitah, being the elder, took the title of king and began a cruel war against Bemoy. War needs men, especially if it is prolonged; so that, when Bemoy had lost some battles, his power began to wane. But relying upon his services to King João, he sent a nephew to him in a trading ship asking for aid in horses, arms, and men. To which request the King answered that if Bemoy desired help, he must receive baptism; then he would help him as his brother by law and Faith, and as a friend who had rendered him service; however, in order to comfort him and to encourage his conversion, he sent him five caparisoned horses for his use, and the Duke of Beja, D. Manuel, sent him one horse and harnesses for others. These were taken to him by Gonçalo Coelho, who was later Scrivener to the Treasury of the City of Lisbon, through whom we learnt the greater part of these affairs; with him went the

messenger who had been sent by Bemoy, as well as priests to instruct him in the Faith. On this voyage of Gonçalo Coelho, some people who sailed on the trading ships ventured inland with him, seeking to sell their goods better, for on account of the war, the usual traffic did not come so regularly to the sea ports. This going to and from the encampment of Bemoy increased so much, and Bemoy bought so many horses, on account of the war, without being able to pay for them, that many people gathered there, some endeavouring to get what he owed them, and others to dispose of what they had not sold in the sea ports. Bemoy, being a cunning man, saw that the delay in giving satisfaction to Gonçalo Coelho and the others was profitable to himself, for they assisted him in the affairs of the war; he therefore kept Gonçalo Coelho there for a year, in the hope that he would secure his conversion. Gonçalo Coelho penetrated this design, and perceived also that our men were losing over the goods sold on credit to Bemoy. He therefore wrote to the King about the poor results of his work, and the loss caused by his stay. When the King received the letter of Gonçalo Coelho, he instructed him to return at once, taking leave of Bemoy without offending him, and to tell the others that they must also return under threat of heavy penalties. When Gonçalo Coelho announced that they were leaving, Bemoy was very sad, because he foresaw his downfall, as he had received great help from them in war, and also because he recognized he must pay them what he owed in order to maintain his credit. However, seeing that he could not retain Gonçalo Coelho, he paid his debts with the help of his people, and sent the same nephew, who had come with Gonçalo Coelho, to the King with one hundred good slaves taken in the war, and a thick golden bracelet, a customary credential. Among other reasons he gave to excuse himself for not receiving baptism, was that the people who followed him were at war, and that if he changed his faith it would be necessary to make them all do the same. As it is difficult to force savage people quickly to change the rites and uses in which they are born, they would more readily desert him (Bemoy) than their rites and customs. Thus the opportunity would be lost for them to receive baptism later, when he hoped with God's help to be free of his

enemies. Finally it seems that God willed that matters should fall out thus, and that through these events Prince Bemoy should come to receive baptism, for he was beaten in a battle and abandoned by his men. He sought to save his life by fleeing for more than sixty leagues along the sea shore to our fortress of Arguim, where he embarked with the few who followed him, confident in the power and generosity of the King, from whom he had received so many messages and gifts, and so much honour. This confidence did not betray him; the King, remembering that he had always found Bemoy faithful in the days of his prosperity, and wishing also to secure his baptism, received him with much honour and pomp—for it is a great consolation to the miserable to be kindly received when they make their first petition. When Bemoy entered the room, the King took two or three steps from the dais, raising his cap slightly. As soon as Bemoy saw the King with his company, he threw himself on the ground at the King's feet, making as though he took the earth from under them and threw it over his head in token of humility and obedience. The King made him rise, and, returning to the dais stood leaning against a chair, while he commanded the interpreter to tell him to speak. Bemoy was a tall man, strong and good looking, forty years old, with a long and bushy beard, so that he did not seem a negro, but a prince worthy of all respect. He delivered his speech with such majesty of person, and with so many effects to arouse pity for his miserable banishment, that he was understood even before the interpreter translated his words. When he had finished his narrative, like a natural orator, placing all his hope in the generosity of the King, he was answered in a few words, but so agreeably that at once Bemoy showed another countenance, courage, and bearing; taking leave of the King, he kissed the Queen's and Prince's hands, asking them to be his mediators with the King. Thence he was taken to his lodging by the nobles who accompanied him.

CHAPTER VII

How PRINCE BEMOY RECEIVED BAPTISM, and was NAMED D. JOÃO BEMOY: and of the CEREMONIES ORDERED BY the KING in his honour: and of the CONVERSION of THOSE who ACCOMPANIED HIM.

After the day of his arrival, Bemoy was several times with the King in private, who was content both with his conversation and person; for his questions and answers revealed him to be endowed with a very clear intelligence. Among all this, that which interested the King more was what Bemoy said about some Kings and Princes of those parts, mainly of one whom he called the King of the peoples of Moses¹, whose state began beyond Timbuktu and extended towards the Orient,—a king neither Moor nor gentile, with customs in many ways like those of Christian peoples. From this the King concluded that he was the Preste João, whom he so eagerly wished to reach. The importance attached by the King to this information was very advantageous to Bemoy. The King's first care was to entrust him to the theologians, that they might expound the Faith and prepare him for baptism. He received this sacrament on the evening of the third of November, fourteen hundred and eighty nine, in the house of the Queen, his godfathers being the King, the Queen, the Prince, the Duke of Beja, a commissary of the Pope and the Bishops of Tangier and Ceuta, who also sponsored two of his principal nobles. He received the name of João. Next day, after this spiritual honour, which is eternal, he received the worldly honour of knighthood, the coat-of-arms given to him being a golden cross on a red field, with the

¹ The Mossi, a pagan negro people, appear to have entered the savannah region south of the great bend of the Niger, and to have established two kingdoms in the twelfth century. Their determined and successful resistance to Islam, and their use of the cross as a decorative motif no doubt contributed to the belief that they were Christian. The power of the state lay in their numerous and well-trained cavalry. They had raided Timbuktu in 1333. A résumé of their characteristics, with further references, is given in Gautier, E. F., *L'Afrique noire occidentale*, ch. v.

Portuguese escutcheons as border. In return for this honour he engaged himself to subject to the King every state he might conquer or possess; and through the Commissary he sent to the Pope his official submission, like any other Christian prince. After him twenty four of his noblemen received baptism, for which ceremony the house of the exchequer of the said town was hung with tapestries. During the celebration of the baptism of D. João Bemoy and his men, there were continual tournaments, bull-fights, farces, and great evening-parties, so pleased was the King with his conversion. D. João Bemoy wished to give displays after the manner of his country, for some of his men were very good horsemen. They rode in the presence of the King, standing, turning, sitting down and getting up again, all during one race: with one hand on the saddle-bow they jumped to the ground, with the horses at full speed, and returned to the saddle as naturally as if the horses were still. Also, at full speed, they picked up, from the saddle, stones placed on the ground, and performed many other entertaining tricks, showing themselves to be more nimble on horseback and on foot than the Alarves of Africa, who are very proud of these accomplishments. When these ceremonies came to an end, the King began to consider the question of restoring Bemoy to his state. After taking council, it was decided that the King should send with him twenty caravels equipped with people and munitions, to aid him, and also to build a fortress at the mouth of the river Çanagá. The King did not desire to erect this fortress solely to help the Prince, but resolved to do so when he learnt of the country and the course of the river, hitherto considered to be a branch of the Nile: but before we continue with the narrative of the fleet, we must speak of this river, as well as of this province of Jalof, that it may be perceived how prudent and right the King was to send so great and costly an expedition.