

Franco-Danish trade relations in the Indian Ocean in the 18th century

The French East India Company (Compagnie des Indes) had great difficulty in maintaining relations with Asia from the second half of the 18th century because of the permanent conflicts between France and Great Britain. During the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), the company went bankrupt and a new company dominated by merchants from the various ports of the kingdom took in charge the trade relations between France and Asia. However, the activity remained difficult due to constant pressure from the British and the Franco-English War of 1778-1783 (war of American independence). To supply the French islands of the Indian Ocean (Isle de France and Isle Bourbon) as well as the factories of the Coromandel coast, in particular Pondicherry, as well as to ship colonial products to Europe, the French regularly used the Danish Company (Asiatisk Kompagni) which benefits from the neutrality of the Kingdom of Denmark-Norway. This communication aims to present the trade relations between the two countries in the Indian Ocean, showing how a small country (Denmark) can take advantage of conflicts between great powers to develop its maritime activities.