

MADAGASCAR AND THE SLAVE TRADE (1810-1895) (1)

by
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INTRODUCTION

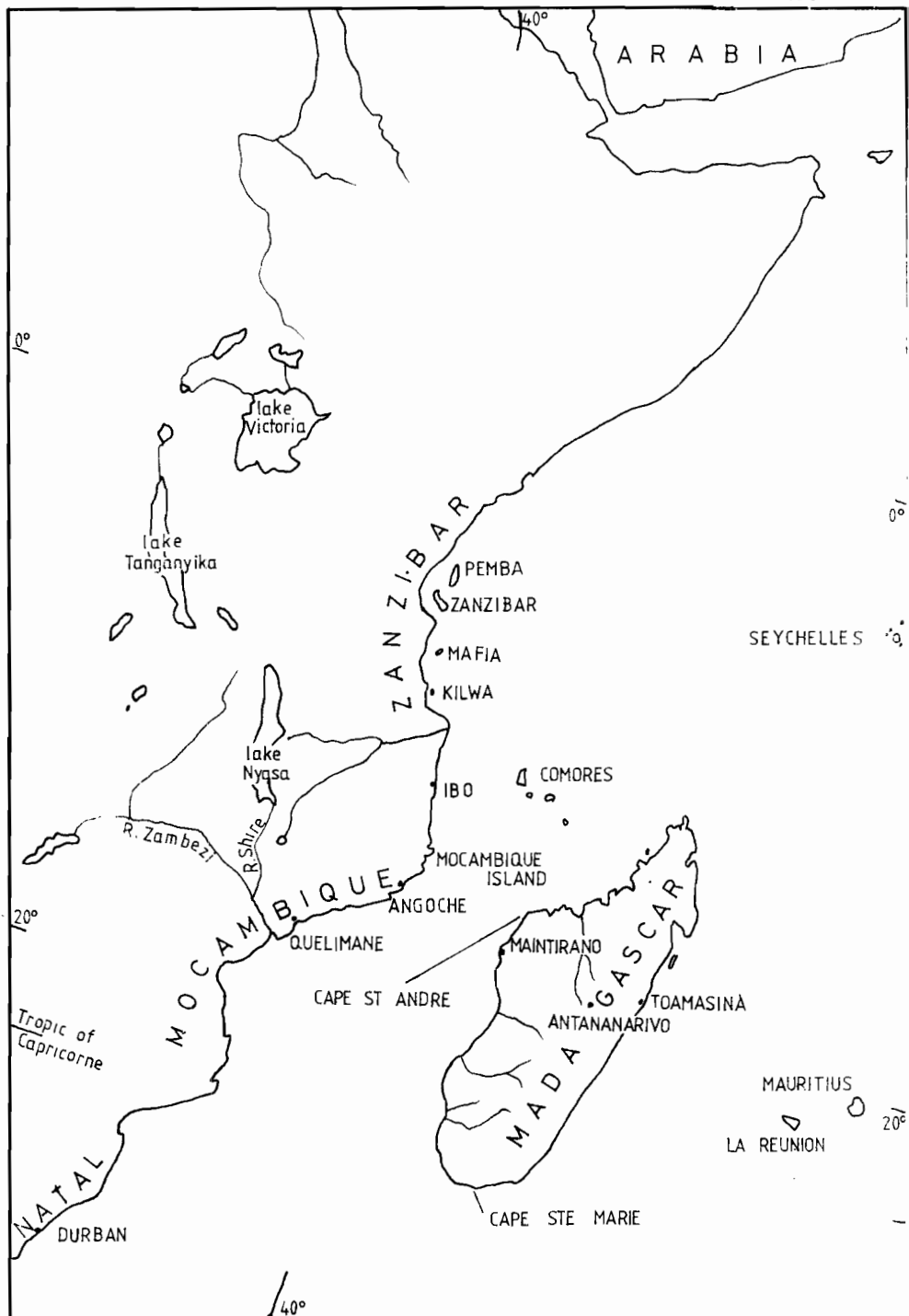
The large Indian Ocean island of Madagascar played an important part in the slave trade of the Western Indian Ocean in the nineteenth century. The history of the traffic in Malagasy slaves to the plantation colonies of La Réunion and Mauritius in the eighteenth century has been well documented by scholars like Toussaint and Filliot, and considerable attention has also been paid to the export of slaves up to the period of the second Britanno-Merina treaty of 1820 in which Radama I, the Merina sovereign, pledged to end slave exports from

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- (1) I wish to acknowledge the assistance of the Leverhulme Trust, whose funds enabled me to spend a two-year period of research in Madagascar; also Torbjorn Refvem and Nils Himyr, who gave me considerable assistance with the Norwegian sources. The following abbreviations are used throughout the article: *AAM* – Archives of the Académie Malgache, Antananarivo; *AAM* – Antananarivo Annual and Madagascar Magazine (journal of the L.M.S. in Madagascar); *AHVP* – Archives Historiques de la Vice-Province S.J. de Madagascar, Antananarivo; *BAM* – Bulletin de l'Académie Malgache; *CFM* – Correspondance respecting Sir Bartle Frere's Mission to the East Coast of Africa, 1872-3; *FJKM* – Archives of the *Fiangonana Jesosy Kristy Madagasikara* (Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar); *FLM/NMS* – Archives of the Norwegian Missionary Society in Madagascar; *FO* – British Foreign Office Records concerning Madagascar (copies in the *Archives Nationales*, Antananarivo); *G:M* – Manuscript of Alfred Grandidier, *Souvenirs de Voyages 1865-70* inedited (1916), Association Malgache d'Archéologie, *Documents Anciens sur Madagascar*, VI; *RA* – Raombana, *Annales* (1853), and Raombana, *Histoires* (1853) – original text, edited by Simon Ayache and deposited in the *AAM*; *USC* – Despatches of U.S. Consuls in Tamatave, Madagascar, 1853-1906. *National Archives*, Washington.

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MADAGASCAR AND THE SLAVE TRADE 1810-1895



Madagascar(2). The island's continued role as supplier of slaves to foreign markets however, and the phenomenal growth of an internal slave market after 1820, has been largely neglected, though it contributed to the unique nature of the Western Indian Ocean slave trade in the nineteenth century(3). Madagascar formed an integral part of this slave trade area which persisted and grew in volume despite the concluding of anti-slave trade treaties with local powers. Two British commissioners were appointed to South Africa specifically to report on slaving activity in the area, but the British government responded little until spurred into action by the disclosures of the Frere Commission of 1873(4). This article attempts to fill the gap in knowledge of the Western Indian Ocean slave trade in the nineteenth century by tracing the rise of the Malagasy slave trade, the organisation of this trade, and the reasons for its ultimate collapse.

A small and scattered population in an island over 2 1/2 times the size of the British Isles had ensured the early development of domestic slavery in Madagascar, as a device to control and manipulate existing manpower resources. Captives from raids on neighbouring tribes constituted the slave population, with any surplus going to meet the demand for slaves from foreign traders on the coast. These were initially Arabs and Indians, though they were joined by European merchants from the start of the sixteenth century. Indeed, the foreign trade of Madagascar, unlike that of East Africa, commenced and developed with the export of slaves. This led to the emergence of markets and the circulation

(2) Auguste Toussaint, *La route des îles - Contribution à l'histoire maritime des Mascareignes* (Paris, 1967); J.M. Filliot, *La traite des esclaves vers les Mascareignes* (Paris, 1974); for the east coast trade up to the 1820s, see Jean Valette, *Études sur le règne de Radama Ier* (Antananarivo 1962) and «Etude de la correspondance de Jean René et Sir R.T. Farquhar», *BAM* 45 (1967), 71-98; also, L. Munthe, G. Ravoajanahary, and S. Ayache, «Radama Ier et les Anglais: les négociations de 1817 d'après les sources malgaches («Sorabe» inédits)», *Omaly sy Anio*, n° 3-4 (1976), 9-104. For some aspects of the slave trade of the north-west coast before the rise of the Merina empire, see E.A. Alpers, «Madagascar and Mozambique in the nineteenth century: the era of the Sakalava raids (1800-1820)», *Omaly sy Anio*, n° 5-6 (1977) p. 37-53.

(3) The only works covering slavery in Madagascar after 1820 in any depth, deal only with the institution of slavery, and not the slave trade; see J.B. Piolet, *De l'esclavage à Madagascar* (1896), E.C. André, *De l'esclavage à Madagascar* (Paris 1899), and B. Domenichini-Ramiaramanana and J.-P. Domenichini, Aspects de l'esclavage sous la monarchie merina, *Omaly sy Anio*, n° 15 (1982), p. 53-98. The slave trade of the Western Indian Ocean was of far greater dimensions and of a radically different structure in the nineteenth century than in previous centuries, as Alpers stresses for East Africa; E.A. Alpers, «The French slave trade in East Africa», *Cahiers d'études Africaines* X, 37 (1970), 80-125, *Ivory and slaves in East Central Africa* (London, 1975) ch. 7, and «The East African slave trade», *Historical Association of Tanzania* 3 (1967); See also, W.F.W. Owen, *Narrative of voyages to... Africa, Arabia and Madagascar* 2 vols (1833), and notes 39 and 40 of this article.

(4) CFM, FO 84 856 X/J 7300 PRO.

of money in the interior of the island (5). By the start of the nineteenth century, Malagasy slaves were being exported to supply both a long-distance and regional slave network, based upon the Atlantic, Arabian, Indian, and Mascareigne demand. The long-distance trade comprised three major routes. The first, which eventually drew British government attention to the area, directed slaves across the Atlantic to the Americas, mainly to Brazil. This traffic slowed to a trickle by the early 1860s, as the United States and Brazil dropped from the market. The other long-distance routes, older and less known than the Atlantic traffic, continued to flourish. One connected Madagascar, via the Comores and north-east Africa, with the markets of the Red Sea and Persia. The other, with a smaller but more regular flow of slaves, ran directly to Western India. Moreover, the demand for plantation slaves on the Mascareignes after Labourdonnais had placed the islands' economy on a sound footing in the mid-eighteenth century ensured the persistence of a regional slave trade well into the latter half of the nineteenth century, despite the negotiating of anti-slave trade treaties with the Merina crown in 1817, 1820, and 1865 (6).

The emergence of Britain as the dominant power at the close of the Napoleonic Wars, and the rise of the Merina empire in Madagascar in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, profoundly affected the pre-existing slave network. In 1810, the year that Radama I ascended the throne of Imerina, on the central plateau of Madagascar, the British laid siege to and captured the French Mascareigne islands and their outposts on the adjacent Malagasy coast. The posts had served to facilitate the flow of slaves, rice and cattle vital to the plantation islands. In 1814, the British returned La Réunion to the French, but retained Mauritius because of its strategic value in safeguarding the route to India.

Farquhar, the first British governor of Mauritius, quickly became immersed in the problems of the local creole community, and despite a nominal adherence

(5) André, *De l'esclavage*, 1-21 ; R.P. Callet, *Histoire des Rois* (1974 éd.), I, 62-3, 655, III-IV. 267 ; See also, A. Thompson, «The role of firearms and the development of military techniques in Merina warfare c. 1785-1828», *Revue française d'histoire d'Outre-mer*, LXI, 224, (1974) 417-20, and for East Africa see Alpers *East African*, 5-25, and Freeman-Grenville, *The French at Kilwa island* (Oxford, 1965).

(6) RA, 67-74 ; CFM ; Toussaint, *La route des îles* ; N. Hafkin, *Trade, society and politics in N. Mozambique, c. 1753-1913*, Ph. D. (Boston University, 1973) ; P.D. Curtin, *The Atlantic slave trade* (London 1970), 231-284, see also, Mabel Jackson, *European powers and south-east Africa, 1796-1856* (London 1942), and G.S. Graham, *Great Britain in the Indian Ocean, 1810-50* (Oxford 1967).

to Britain's commitment to end the slave trade, felt obliged to allow the influx of cheap labour, which was indispensable to the plantation economy. His first step was to supplant French with pro-British agents on the east coast of Madagascar. For instance, the main agent appointed at the chief east coast port of Toamasina (Tamatave) was Jean René, a renowned slave trader who proceeded to offer Arab slavers a permanent depot there, before the anti-slave treaty of 1820 was signed (7). The role of these agents was to generally stabilize exchange values which, since the boom in the regional demand for slaves and the intense competition for control of trade routes, had fluctuated wildly. Slave prices had risen sharply during the first years of the nineteenth century as the war disrupted supplies, but they dropped quickly following the resumption of peace in the area from 1810 (8).

Farquhar next sought an indigenous Malagasy power with which to negotiate. By 1815, his choice had fallen upon the Merina whose small but expanding plateau kingdom, by virtue of its position in the centre of the island, could subdue surrounding peoples and enforce security of trade and agriculture. Farquhar considered agricultural development to be of particular importance for it could provide the basis of a legitimate commerce to eventually replace the slave trade. Official missions to Imerina in 1816 and 1817 led to the signing of treaties wherein Radama I's pretensions to rule the entire island were recognized by the Mauritian government. At the same time they promised to supply him with military aid and monetary compensation for revenue lost through the ban on slave exports (9).

The terms of the treaties, as both Radama I and Farquhar realized, formed a theoretical blueprint for future rather than for immediate action, for the traffic in slaves would necessarily have to continue until Mauritius had tapped alternative labour supplies, and Madagascar had successfully switched to legitimate foreign trade. Moreover, this had to be achieved in a way that would not weaken the power bases, or compromise the personal fortunes of the two rulers. Contrary to popular belief, Farquhar's interest in the slave trade was far from benign. *Belombre*, the largest slave run plantation on Mauritius, was owned by Farquhar's family, and he constantly pressed the interests of local planters in London, claiming that «without the slave trade or some other substitute these colonies promiseshortly to be annihilated» (10). In 1818, General Hall, Farquhar's replacement, was removed after only a year's service for incurring the wrath of local dignitaries by suspending the Chief Justice, the Attorney General, and others for corruption and involvement in the slave trade. Farquhar returned to

(7) W. Ellis, *History of Madagascar* (London 1838) II, 243, 246-7 ; Munthe et al, Radama Ier, J. Valette, *Etudes*.

(8) See fig. 1.

(9) J. Valette, *Etudes*, 8-10.

(10) S.P. Oliver, *General Hall and the export slave-trade from Madagascar. A. statement and a vindication*, AAMM 12 (1888), 678 ; Graham *Great Britain*, 58-72.

the island to popular acclaim, but was severely criticized by European anti-slave trade campaigners when he released Dorval, a notorious slaver, who was captured in 1822 after having landed a clandestine cargo of slaves. As a pragmatist, Farquhar resented metropolitan criticism and decried anti-slave trade campaigners for their «philanthropic plans for drawing money from the people in furtherance of their wild and visionary schemes for the general emancipation of the negroes» (11).

In Imerina, on the other hand, all the upper classes lived off slave labour, it being reported in 1817 that, «their land was tilled, their houses built, and their timber obtained by slaves» (12). With only a small area of Madagascar as yet under his control, Radama I viewed the first treaty of 1817 with scepticism. As a Merina historian noted later in the same century: the king :

«had not the least idea of abiding by the Treaty which he had made, for it was plain to Him, that it was not in his power to carry into execution the Treaty which He had made, no port being under his subjection and that therefore there was no use of refraining from selling slaves to the European merchants who come up to Antananarivo for the purpose of buying slaves for to export them» (13).

Toamasina, the main export centre for slaves from Imerina, submitted to Radama I's army in 1817, and the increased slave traffic that followed was the direct cause of over one hundred good new houses being erected between 1817 and 1820, to accommodate some of the fifty five European and creole slave traders who inhabited the port. The Merina king immediately capitalised on the growing traffic by increasing the export tax from one to 2 1/2 Spanish dollars for every slave leaving Toamasina. This represented for him a maximum annual income of 25,000 dollars (14). When the treaty was renegotiated in 1820, the compensation was fixed at 20,000 Spanish dollars per annum. This sum would indicate an annual outflow of from 6,000 to 10,000 slaves at 1820 market prices in the Merina capital of Antananarivo. Hastie, the British agent in Imerina, argued that the compensation was too generous, and that annual slave export earnings in Imerina did not exceed 1,200 Spanish dollars, representing an annual outflow of from four to six hundred slaves. This figure however, only tallies with 1810-17 prices, for after 1817 prices rose temporarily as a result of a smallpox epidemic, before falling rapidly again as supplies were renewed. Indeed by 1820, sources on Mauritius were claiming that four thousand slaves were being illegally imported into the island each year (15). Ironically, the compensation for revenue lost by the Merina crown was raised from an official Mauritian tax on the sale of

(11) Oliver, *General Hall*, 688, and Oliver, *Sir Robert Townsend Farquhar and the Malagasy slave trade*, *AAMM* 15 (1891), 319-21.

(12) Ellis, *History II*, 175.

(13) *RH*, 93-4.

(14) Ellis, *History II*, 219, 231, 247 ; also see fig. 1.

(15) Oliver, *General Hall*, 678 ; *History II*, 16, 198 ; *RH*, 82 ; N. Leminier, «Notes sur une excursion faite dans l'intérieur de l'île de Madagascar en 1825», *Bulletin de Madagascar* 292 (1970), 797.

gunpowder which, alongside arms and cloth, constituted the major commodity of exchange used by creole traders for Malagasy slaves (16).

By 1820, Radama I's British trained army had established a marked superiority over the forces of neighbouring tribes, and had gained control of the main trade route to Toamasina where indirect rule was maintained by René. Following this, a series of military campaigns subjugated the Bezanozano and Betsimisaraka middlemen to the east, forcing them into imperial servitude. Not until after the reorganization of the army in 1822, were the Merina able to overcome the stubborn resistance of the Boina Sakalava, and in 1824 capture the major west coast port of Mahajanga (Majunga). This campaign was two-pronged, one expedition sweeping across Iboina, the northern Sakalava kingdom, whilst the other penetrated Vonizongo. From the early 1820s, up to ten or more military expeditions were launched each year against other peoples in the island. They were used as a means of personal enrichment by military chiefs, as well as to extend imperial frontiers, for the sovereign encouraged his officers to loot cattle and slaves in lieu of wages. Like another emperor, Menilek of Ethiopia, later in the century, Radama I reaped a handsome proportion of the selling price of any booty. The marked military advantage gained from the firearms and training supplied by the British enabled the Merina to rise to power and raid other tribes for slaves. Hastie remarked that one of the chief aims, if not the aim, of such Merina campaigns was to capture slaves for the internal market, whilst the motto of Queen Ranavalona I, Radama I's successor, became, «*ataovy manify izy, ka baboy ny fananany sy ny vady amanzanany*» (kill them, take their property and make slaves of their wives and children) (17).

With the ban on slave exports, the Merina were faced with the problem of how to dispose of war captives. It was finally decided to kill all male captives above the age of ten years, but even with the retention of only female and child prisoners, the domestic slave market became saturated. As the price per head fell to a rock bottom two to three dollars, slave ownership rapidly expanded in Imerina, spreading even within the slave caste itself. As a result, the population of the imperial capital blossomed from an estimated ten to twelve thousand in 1820, to twenty to fifty thousand by 1833, when it was calculated that two-thirds of Antananarivo's inhabitants were slaves. Slave prices stayed extremely low until 1827, when they started to rise gradually to reach a mid-century price plateau of around thirty-five to thirty-eight dollars per slave. As early as 1834, the internal slave markets of Imerina had become so saturated that a slave revolt was feared. Bankrupts joined war captives on the market as interest rates soared,

(16) Farquhar to Earl Bathurst, Pt. Louis, Mauritius, 18 nov. 1817, in Ellis, *History II*, 192-5.

(17) D. Griffiths, *The persecuted christians of Madagascar* (London 1841), in W.E. Cousins, *Madagascar in the year 1840*, *AAMM* 19 (1895), 342-4; see also, *RH*, 132, and Ellis, *History I*, 347, II, 329-30, 348, 359. For east Africa comparisons see, Alpers, *East African*, 1825, and R. Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, 1968), 100-05.

a phenomenon that was repeated on mainland Africa in the nineteenth century. In Madagascar, the rise in interest rates was due to the chronic shortage of imported dollars as the ban on slave exports grew more effective and no legitimate trade substitute appeared. Creditors pushed interest rates to the limit in order to bankrupt their debtors and then recoup their losses through the legal redress of selling them on the slave market (18).

As slave labour became a necessity to the economy of the emergent Merina empire, the market surplus of slaves soon became absorbed. Agricultural production in Imerina, as in many African societies, had always relied upon both traditional slave and *free* labour, but the imperial campaigns drew much of the latter category out of production and into the army. Apart from the 12,000 men required to maintain a standing army, there was a constant drain of free agricultural labour under the system of *fanompoana*, or compulsory imperial service, to replenish garrison quotas which were perpetually deficient as a result of battle casualties and the ravages of malaria (19). As the imperial force was almost exclusively of Merina formation, and military service was unremunerated, the only type of agricultural investment consisted of slaves channelled back to the Merina heartland from the prisoner colonies of frontier garrisons. Similarly commerce, which had become increasingly important to the imperial economy after the seizure of the main ports, came to rely upon forced or slave labour. All travellers and goods were carried, and cattle driven, by slaves, for the Merina authorities refused either to improve the road network or adopt mechanical or animal draught transport (20). A large internal demand for slaves was thus created by the rising, British-backed, Merina empire from the 1820s onwards.

The needs of the imperial Merina economy clashed immediately with those of the Mascareignes. In the first instance, Merina troops progressively occupied all the major east coast ports, ousting the vestiges of French occupation forces and establishing a monopoly of trade on that side of the island. This altered the terms of trade decisively in favour of the Merina, who then exacted payment for cattle and rice exports exclusively in firearms and specie (21). Even more important, the ban on the export of slaves and the absorption of much of the free male population into imperial service, deprived the plantation islands of desperately needed labour just as they were shifting over to sugar production on a massive scale. Sugar production on Mauritius for example, rose dramatically

(18) See fig. 1 ; Ellis, *History I*, 138 ; *GM*, 32 ; Leminier, *Notes*, 795 ; Pankhurst, *Economic History*, 88.

(19) *RH*, 112 ; J.C. Anene, *Slavery and the slave trade from Anene and Brown ed. Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (1966), 93-5.

(20) For the application of slave labour in the Merina empire, see Gwyn Campbell, « Labour and the transport problem in imperial Madagascar, 1810-95 », *Journal of African History* XXX, 3 (1980) ; Ellis, *History I*, 83-6, 193-4, 282-99, 329, 338 ; *GM*, 32.

(21) *R4*, 269 ; Fontoynt et Nicol, *Les traitants français de la côte Est de Madagascar de Ranavalona Ière à Radama II, Mémoire de l'Académie Malgache* (Tananarive 1940), 24.

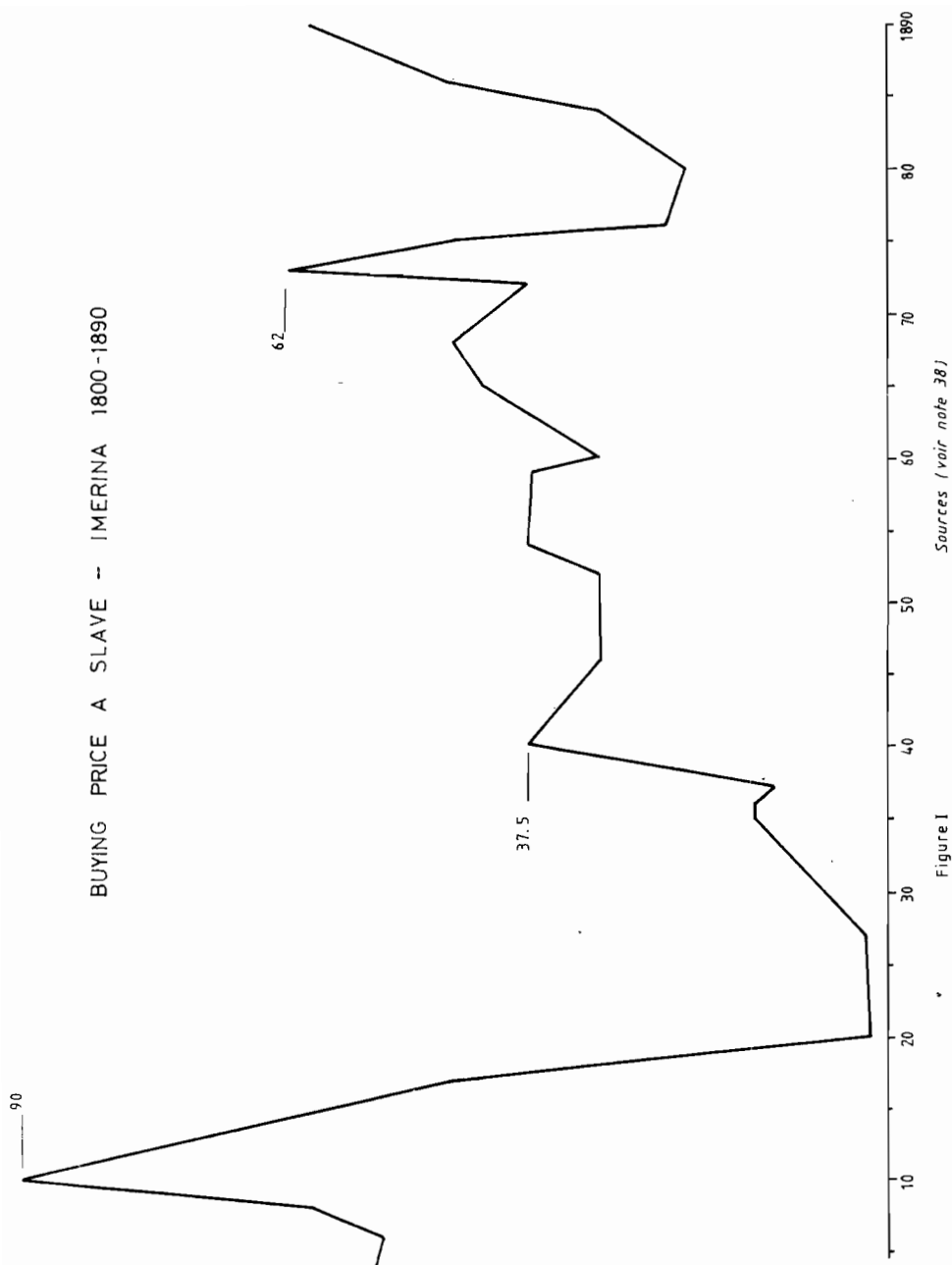


Figure 1

from 18,359 kg in 1836, to 58,600,000 kg in 1858, and reached 68,500,000 kg by 1860. Its population also boomed from 104,700 in 1840, to 174,189 in 1860. This was contrary to the situation on the plantations of the Zanzibar coast, where the supply of slaves generally exceeded the demand (22). Mascareigne traders demonstrated their hostility to the Merina ban on slave exports as early as 1821, when they landed a force of seventy-nine men on the coast opposite the French controlled island of Nosy Boraha (Ste Marie) to capture Malagasy hostages whom they released on the sole condition that they serve the foreigners as *engagé* labour. Creole animosity toward the Merina regime increased by 1825, as the imperial forces gained overall control of the eastern seaboard and effectively cut any clandestine supplies of slaves from that quarter to the Mascareignes. Creole grievances were supported by the French Marine who in 1829, asserted France's historical pretensions to the coast by bombarding Toamasina, Marofototra (Foulepointe), Fenoarivo (Fénérive), and by occupying Antsiraka (Pointe à Larée) opposite Nosy Boraha (23). In 1830 however, political tumult in France led to the withdrawal of the invasion forces and fleet, leaving creole aspirations frustrated yet again.

The 1829 attack tipped the political balance within the Merina court in favour of the conservative xenophobic party, heightening the latter's resolve to conquer the entire island and inaugurate a nationalist programme of economic self-sufficiency. This was indeed a continuation of the policy adopted by Radama I, who barred foreigners from freehold ownership of land in his empire, and prevented transport improvements lest they facilitate a French attack (24). On ascending the throne in 1828, Ranavalona I renounced the British treaty and by 1836, had forced most foreigners out of Imerina. The only ones permitted to remain were those who materially promoted imperial aims, as did Laborde through the manufacture of arms. All remaining foreigners were expelled however, in the aftermath of the 1857 plot to overthrow the crown, though not before most had made their fortunes (25).

A state of perpetual rebellion on the imperial frontiers and a constant fear of European intervention led to a massive increase in military recruitment. The 1829 attack had coincided with a spate of colonial rebellions against Merina rule following the death of Radama I in 1828, so Ranavalona I launched a series of punitive expeditions against the rebels. The hardest hit were the Boina Sakalava

(22) Rantoandro-Andriamarintsoa, *Le gouvernement de Tamatave de 1845 à 1865 ; développement économique* (Université de Madagascar, 1973), 111-12 ; Peter Burroughs, « The Mauritius rebellion of 1832 and the abolition of British colonial slavery », *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* IV, 3 (1976), 243-265 ; for an east African comparison see, Graham, *Great Britain*, ch. V.

(23) Ellis, *History II*, 464, *Madagascar in Notices statistiques sur les colonies françaises IV* (Paris 1840), AHVP M. 711, 26, 8.

(24) Ellis, *History I*, 378. .

(25) E. Prout, *Madagascar : its mission and its martyrs* (London, 1863), 90-1 ; N. de Lastelle to Pakenham, Antananarivo, 2 Déc. 1875, FO 84 1369 ERD/1142 PRO.

who, following the 1836–7 campaigns, fled in their thousands to the offshore islands, especially to Nosy Be. On the east coast, some three to four thousand Betsimisaraka implicated in the French assault, were forced to seek refuge from the Merina on the French held island of Nosy Boraha. Imperial Merina assaults on other tribes grew more ruthless, it being estimated that from 1828–40, over 100,000 men were slaughtered, and over 200,000 people enslaved. Harsh treatment of slaves led many to flee to the refuge of forests and mountains, where they formed themselves into armed bands to raid trade caravans. The number of such brigands grew so alarmingly that by 1835, imperial troops were being despatched to parts of the eastern forest to hunt them down. Raombana, a contemporary Merina historian, claimed that by 1853, over 24,000 slaves and freeman had become refugees from imperial rule, and blamed the British for having initially encouraged despotism in the Merina court and backing the sovereign with military aid (26). Moreover, the demand for slaves increased to replace army deserters, runaway slaves, and refugee christians whose religion was proscribed by the Queen.

By 1840 the rebel Boina Sakalava were militarily exhausted and, spurned in their political overtures to the Sultan of Zanzibar, they turned reluctantly to the French for protection against the Merina. A series of treaties followed which induced creole planters to move to the islands of Mayotte and Nosy Be, from where they were able to draw slave labour from those parts of the Malagasy mainland free from Merina control (27). This movement away from the east and towards the west coast was confirmed following the Franco-British bombardment of Toamasina in 1845, after which all external commerce was suspended by Ranavalona I. Trade was resumed after the payment of an indemnity to the Queen by the Mauritian Chamber of Commerce, but continued to be fettered by monopolies. The major monopolies were favourites, and between the sovereign and William Marks, an American at Mahajanga, in the export of wax, gum, precious woods etc. For these foreigners, the bulk of their wealth consisted of slaves: Delastelle, for example, possessed six thousand when he died in 1856 (28). Other merchants tried to break these monopolistic arrangements; in 1847, for instance, a British officer named O'Connor led a Sakalava force against Merina troops on the north-west coast in an attempt to force the ports open to

(26) RA, 25; RH, 11; Ellis, *History I*, 13; II, 25-6, 517-8, 522; J.J. Freeman and D. Johns *A narrative of the persecution of the Christians in Madagascar* (London, 1840), 26; Thompson, *The role of firearms*.

(27) The French claimed Mayotte and Nosy Be in 1841, and declared Anjouan (Johanna) a protectorate; Graham, *Great Britain*, 80-3; R. Coupland, *East Africa and its invaders* (Oxford, 1956), 439-458.

(28) N. de Lastelle to Pakenham, FO 84 1369 ERD/1142 PRO; RA, 25-6, 379, 451; Edmond Samat, *Notes* (1852) in *BAM* (1932), 57; Finkelmeir to Davis, *Tamatave*, 31 Mars 1870, USC II, 519; Guillaïn, *Documents sur l'histoire, la géographie et le commerce de la partie occidentale de Madagascar* (Paris 1845) II, 217-8; D.A. Segre, «Madagascar: an example of indigenous modernisation of traditional society in the nineteenth century», *St. Anthony's Papers* 21 (1969), 79-81.

free trade. Before he could succeed, he was assassinated on the orders of Bangala, son of king Andriantsoly of Mayotte who feared a loss of authority to the foreigner (29). The movement of traders to the west coast was reinforced by the consequences of the abolition of slavery on Mauritius in 1835, and on La Réunion ten years later, though it was not enforced in the latter colony until the French Republic of 1848 was proclaimed. The enforcement led to revolt by the Arab and Sakalava communities on the French islands in the Mozambique Channel, whilst French creole opinion, led in parliament by Laverdant, pressed for an immediate military takeover of Madagascar. Simultaneously, Mauritian planters, backed by several non-Merina chiefs in Madagascar, demanded that the British government intervene to secure the recruitment of Malagasy labour to replace the more costly and unsuitable Indian coolies (30).

In face of the cool metropolitan response to their demands, many planters chose to continue importing Malagasy and east African slaves under the guise of the *engagé* or contract system. In contrast to the Merina, who traded principally in female and child slaves, the demand on the Mascareignes was mainly for males. As early as 1842, a *Free Labour Association* had been formed on Mauritius for the recruitment of Betsimisaraka from Nosy Boraha, whilst the following year French authorities had negotiated with the Sultan of Zanzibar for a regular supply of east African *engagés* for La Réunion. Competition for labour between merchants of French and British nationality was severe. For instance, Alphonse, one of the famous Samat brothers from La Réunion, refused a request from British authorities to supply them with *engagés* from his base in Baly Bay, below Mahajanga on the west coast of Madagascar, stating that, «il en eût été autrement si le gouvernement français eût eu besoin d'auxiliaires, je pourrais me charger d'en avoir de 6 à 8 000» (31). Initially some labour was recruited from the south-east coast near Taolanaro (Fort-Dauphin), and on the south coast between Cape Ste. Marie and St. Augustine's Bay, but until the second half of the nineteenth century the majority were taken from the independent regions of the north-west, where,

«ce trafic infâme par la manière dont il s'exerçait généralement, jetait sur toutes ces plages une foule de navires attirés par l'appât d'un gain fabuleux l'engagé qui s'achetait 20 à 90 piastres, se revendait à la Réunion jusqu'à 200 et 240 piastres (32)».

(29) *Rapport* d'Alphonse Samat à l'Amiral Laguerre, sur son amitié avec le roi Rabouky de Baly, 21 Nov. 1852, *AHVP* C. 28e.

(30) *AHVP* 36b, C. 28f ; *GM*, 10 ; A Resident, *Madagascar past and present (London 1847)* 231-2 ; Prud'homme, « Considérations sur les Sakalaves », *Notes, reconnaissances et explorations VI* (1900), 271 ; Burroughs, *The Mauritius rebellion*.

(31) *Rapport* d'A. Samat ; *Report on the slave trade*, 25 april 1844, *FO* 84 515 ERD/1144 PRO N. 18 ; Segre *Madagascar*, 69 ; R.W. Beachey, *The slave trade of eastern Africa* (London 1976), 30 ; Guillain, *Documents II*, 273-82 ; Coupland *East Africa* ch. XIV ; R.E.P. Wastell, *British imperial policy in relation to Madagascar, 1810-96* Ph.D. (London University 1944).

(32) P. Jouen aux supérieurs en France, *AHVP* C. 28i ; *GM*, 10 ; *Annales maritimes et coloniales II*, 46 (1931), 91-108.

Creole traders on the north-west coast found their activities hindered by the entrenched position of the Antalaotra middlemen above Maintirano, and by Merina hostility to the export of potential manpower from the island. In order to bypass them and establish direct commercial contact with indigenous suppliers, creole traders started to move down the coast below Maintirano, helping to stimulate the external trade of the area to a previously unparalleled degree. Some traders, like Desmorels at Toliara (Tuléar), had been exploiting the commercial potential of south-west Madagascar since the early years of the nineteenth century, but the real expansion of foreign trade commenced in the 1830s and 1840s. In 1835 for example, a Merina expedition was shocked to discover twenty-one foreign ships at anchor in St. Augustine's Bay. These decades also witnessed the arrival of the Samat and Rossier brothers, and individual traders like Achille Lemerle and César Pepin, all of whom were heavily involved in the regional slave trade (33).

The export of slaves from the west coast naturally conflicted with the Merina slave network, in which imperial forces foraged south and west in search of captives to meet the insatiable domestic demand for slaves. Most Malagasy slaves sold on the Imerina markets were war captives, so that military garrisons frequently formed lines of trade along which slaves were channelled to the interior, as well as constituting minor slave marts in themselves. As Mullens, a visiting L.M.S. director, commented of the garrisons along the Antananarivo-Mahajanga route in 1873, «the number of masters of various grades, doing nothing, living without pay, and living on what they can squeeze out of slaves and clients below them, is countless (34). Such sources proved insufficient to meet demand, so that the Merina had started to import large numbers of east African slaves into the island from mid-nineteenth century. It was this flow that attracted the attention of the British authorities to the Malagasy slave trade, as they investigated the causes of the east African slave trade in general (35). Despite strong British pressure on the Merina court, the deep vested interests of top Merina officials prevented any effective action being taken until the emancipation measure of 1877. When the proposal was made public in 1874, the price of slaves plummeted, and as many of the top imperial officials owned up to three thousand slaves each, Rainilaiarivony, the Merina Prime Minister, was obliged to increase security to prevent an internal rebellion breaking out. An estimated 150,000 slaves were freed in 1877, to the initial delight of the labour-starved creole community on La Réunion who believed, in tones reminiscent of

(33) RA, 369 ; Ellis, *History II*, 519 ; Samat, *Notes*, 62 ; GM, 9, 23-4 ; P. Deniau, *Lettre*, Toulia, 4 Sep. 1847, AHVP C. 35 ; Ludvig Larsen, *Livet for Døden* (Christiania, 1894), 296-8 ; R.L. Ader, *Les traitants de Nosy-Ve, Tuléar à la fin du XIXe siècle, Etudes Tuléariennes 2* (Déc. 1970) ; Abbé Guerret, *Trois mois autour de Madagascar* (Douai, 1883), E. Génin ed., 52-4.

(34) Joseph Mullens, *Twelve months in Madagascar* (London, 1875), 318 ; J. Richardson, *Lights and shadows* (Antananarivo 1877), 30-57 ; also see notes 20 and 26.

(35) CFM — Granville's correspondence, 31 Oct.-9 Nov. 1872.

Farquhar's pronouncements earlier in the century, that,

«Il est certain pour tout le monde, que l'existence de la Colonie est intimement liée à l'immigration. Si par une circonstance quelconque, on ne pourrait plus introduire des travailleurs étrangers, il est incontestable que nos terres ne seraient pas cultivées et que toutes les positions quelles qu'elles soient, seraient pour le moins gravement compromises (36)».

Their expectations of a cheap and plentiful supply of Malagasy manpower were dashed by Rainilaiarivony however, when he restricted the newly *liberated* slaves to specially designated villages, where they formed an imperial labour reserve. As the imperial demand for labour was only temporarily met by this reserve, whilst the emancipation greatly exacerbated the shortage of manpower in the private sector, a strong clandestine trade in slaves recommenced in the island from the 1880s, contrary to official British belief (37). The emancipation did however postpone for a few years the crisis which threatened the Merina economy as the prices of staple export commodities fell with the onset of the world depression in the 1870s. Also the west coast and Merina slave networks, though illicit, remained remarkably stable until the crisis broke with the outbreak of Franco-Merina hostilities in 1882.

The nature of the slave trade in western Madagascar has been grossly neglected by historians. The first reason for this is the widely held belief that the history of nineteenth century Madagascar is the history of the unification of the island. This view was first propagated by the protestant missionaries who reached the island in the early nineteenth century, and who worked almost totally within the confines of the Merina empire. Their views, which reflected those of the imperial Merina establishment, have been current ever since, with the result that

298 ; H.W. Little, *Madagascar, its history and people* (London, 1884) ; 38 *Madagascar Times*, July-Nov. 1886 ; E.O. Mac Mahon, «First visit of a European to the Betsiriry tribes» *AAMM* 15 (1891) ; Mullens, *Twelve months*, 324 ; Piolet, *De l'esclavage*, 362 ; M. Rasoamiamanana, *Aspects économiques et sociaux de la vie à Majunga entre 1862 et 1881, Thèse* (Université de Madagascar, 1974), 81 ; A. Resident, *Madagascar*, 82,86,144 ; *RH*, 70-110 ; Samat *Notes* ; Thompson, *The role of firearms*, 224 ; A. Walen, *Masinandraina*, mss. *FLM/NMS*, Bks.420A.

(36) *Le Monteur de La Réunion*, 30 Janv. 1877 ; Ch. Finfelmeier to Hunter, Tamatave, 3 Nov. and 30 Dec. 1874, and Robinson to Hunter, Tamatave 11 Aug. 1876 and 28 Janv. 1877 in USC II ; Rainilaiarivony to Pakenham, Antananarivo, 24 May 1876, FO 84 1449 ERD/2270, and to Earl of Derby, 28 Dec. 1876, FO 84 1449 ERD/2270 ; R.K. Kestell-Cornish, *A short cruise on the north-western coast of Madagascar*, *AAMM* 3 (1877), 273 ; also see fig. 1.

(37) Street in FO 84 1509 ; W.E. Cousins, «The abolition of slavery in Madagascar» *AAMM* 20 (1896), 446-50.

(38) The price of a slave in Imerina was, according to the author's calculations (see references below), approximately two-thirds more on the west coast, and one-third less than on the east coast, which reflects the availability of supplies ; sources for fig. 1 : R.L. Ader, *Tuléar et sa région économique*, Thèse 3e Cycle n.d., 43 ; *AHVP* C. 28f, C. 35, sect. II 34d ; André (1897) 155, *Archives de Maurice*, HB 16 13 ; *CFM*, 18 Janv. 1873, Ellis, *History*, 2.153, Freeman & Johns *A narrative*, 191 ; Fontoyonot & Nicol, *Les traitants français* ; FO 84 1249 ERD/1142 PRO and 84 833 ERD/1144 PRO ; D. Griffiths, *Hanes Madagascar* (Machynlleth, 1840), 73,80 ; *GM*, 1-33 ; Larsen, *Livet*,

historians have tended to concentrate exclusively on the history of the rise and expansion of the Merina. Only relatively recently has there been a slight movement away from orthodoxy to chronicle the history of other peoples inhabiting the island (39). The second reason is the lack of historical evidence dealing with the commerce of the area. This is largely explicable in terms of the illicit nature of the west coast trade which consisted mainly of the exchange of slaves for firearms and cloth. Participants kept secret any records of their transactions, for they feared the retribution of British anti-slave trade patrols, and the hostility of the Merina court. The latter were hostile to the drain upon its potential labour reserves that slave exports represented, as it was to the import of arms to fuel colonial rebellions. Also, British authorities laboured under the illusion that the Merina were the only people in Madagascar capable of the organization needed to manage a slave network on any large degree, with the result that they totally ignored the coast south of Cape St. Andre and believed that the slave trade suffered a lethal blow from the 1877 emancipation. Lastly, the sources that do shed light upon the slave trade in nineteenth century Madagascar have been largely neglected by historians (40). The northern slave complex was dominated by the Antalaotra, a generic term for the Islamic traders of Arabic blood who had settled in Madagascar. They were subdivided into the Hounzati, a group living in Boina but originally from Malindi, and the Mozanghi, an indigenous islamised tribe settled in Mahajanga. This latter town had boasted a population of six thousand Arab and Indian traders and their families at its commercial zenith in the 1780s and 1790s, but they were largely dispersed by the Merina conquest of 1824, so that by 1869 only seven to eight hundred families were

(39) See Ellis, *History*, which was largely wrought from manuscripts supplied by the early missionaries, especially Griffiths. The *unification theory* has been popularised by major historians of Madagascar, notably Deschamps Hubert, *Histoire de Madagascar*, Paris 1972, and *Tradition and change in Madagascar, 1790-1870, Cambridge History of Africa V.* (1976), 393-417, and more recently reiterated by Simon Ayache in his article, *Pouvoir central et provinces sous la monarchie Merina au XIX^e siècle. Un thème de recherche* (mss. kindly lent the author by S. Ayache). Pioneering work was done on the Sakalava in the first half of the nineteenth century by Vincent Noel. « Ile de Madagascar : recherches sur les Sakalava », *Bulletin de la société de géographie* (1843), and Guillaumin, *Documents* (1845), but only very recently has the provincial history of Madagascar become the subject of serious and regular attention by historians ; see for example, Ader, (*Tuléar* and *Les traitants*), and Manassé Esoavelomandroso, *Problèmes de police et de justice dans le gouvernement de Tamatave à l'époque de Rainandriamampandry, 1882-95, Etudes Historiques* (Université de Madagascar, 1974), and *La région du Fiharegna à la veille de la conquête française*, paper presented at the *Colloque d'Histoire*, Toliara 1979).

(40) See for example, Beachy *The slave trade*, 211, 262 ; J. Richardson, « Lettre au sujet de la libération des Mozambiques », *BAM* 18 (1935), 12-15 ; The author has utilised largely unexploited sources such as USC, RA and RH, *FLM/NMS* and *GM* in addition to more exploited sources like *FO* and *CFM* to shed light on the slave trade of the west coast and interior of Madagascar in the nineteenth century. For the British naval attitude see Captain Colomb, *Slave-catching in the Indian Ocean* (1873), London 1968, 298-503 ; see also, Haffkin *Trade*, 290-1.

left (41). The Antalaotra recovered much of their influence however, as Merina governors realized that they needed their political and commercial expertise. Thus for example, Ramanetaka, the first Merina governor of Mahajanga, cultivated the friendship of Mose Sama, a local Antalaotra dignitary. Moreover, the Antalaotra retained the cooperation of many of the independent Sakalava chiefs, into whose families they had frequently married, and whom they influenced to adopt Islamic customs (42). The Antalaotra position was reinforced from the 1830s by the expansion of the Omani trading empire which, like the Merina empire, was British-backed. After Zanzibar had become the base of Omani commercial operations, the Antalaotra became fully incorporated into the Swahili trade network, through their contact with Arab trading colonies on the Comores and the east African littoral. Muslim traders became the chief agents of the traffic in slaves on both sides of the Moçambique Channel from the middle years of the nineteenth century, sometimes leading slave caravans into the interior but more importantly managing the import and export of slaves on the coast. From coastal depots the slaves were either distributed for sale to the northern markets of Arabia and the Persian Gulf, or sold directly to white or creole slavers working the Atlantic or regional routes (43). The Antalaotra as middlemen retained such control over the external commerce of north-west Madagascar well into the second half of the nineteenth century, earning the antipathy of creoles like Edmond Samat who described them as a « caste maudite qui entrave beaucoup les Européens qui habitent ou qui passent sur cette côte » (44).

The role of the Antalaotra in Madagascar was remarkable because they managed a two-way traffic of slaves, buying from the Sakalava for export to the French plantation islands, and also importing from the Moçambique and Zanzibar coasts to supplement the regional French trade and supply the internal Malagasy market. Most of the east African slaves imported into Madagascar originated from the Shire Highlands and Lakes region, and were exported from the Moçambique coast, notably from the ports of Ibo and Mocambique, and the Angoxa and Loza rivers. In reference to slave origins, it is significant that the general term for imported slaves within the Merina empire was *Moçambique* whilst on the Sakalava coast, they were referred to as *Makua* (45). Many Portuguese officials, like da Costa, governor of Quillimane, who took bribes of up to seven thousand dollars on a single America bound slave vessel, were heavily

(41) See map. 2.

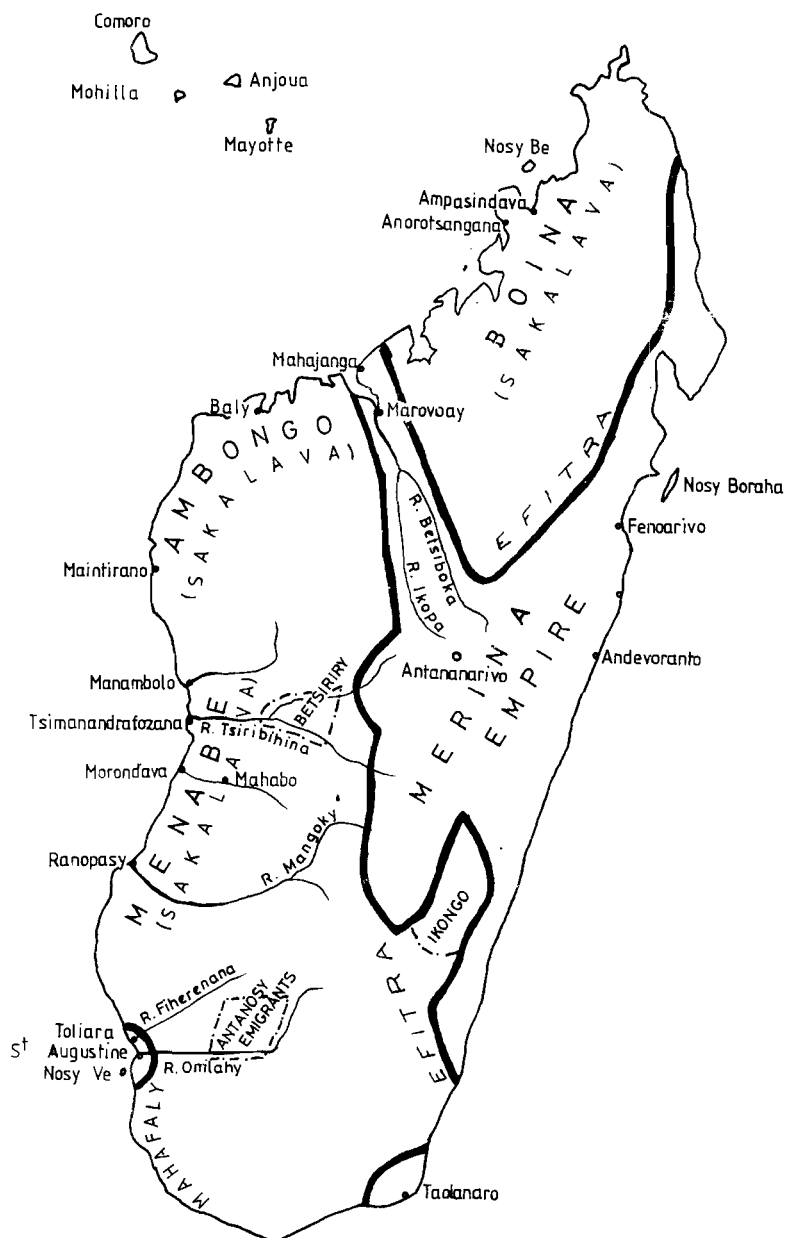
(42) Rasoamiaramanana, *Aspects*, 10-11, 35, 54 ; Noel, *Ile de Madagascar*, 19, 27-38, 93, 99 ; *GM*, 28.

(43) Rasoamiaramanana, *Aspects*, 19, 23, 25, 77-8 ; *GM*, 28 ; Guillaïn, *Documents I*, 89-100.

(44) Noel, *Ile de Madagascar*, *CFM*, For comparison of muslim slave traders in Africa, see eg. Pankhurst, *Economic History*, 83-127.

(45) Samat, *Notes*, 62 ; W.H. Hall, *Narrative of the voyages and services of the Nemesis*, 2 vols (London 1844).

MADAGASCAR AND THE SLAVE TRADE 1810-1895



Map 2

committed to the traffic in slaves (46). By the late 1850s however, the increasing efficiency of British naval patrols led to a change in the tactics of slave runners ; Arabe dhows replaced the old square-rigged slaving ships, and ran from the east African coast to Antalaoatra depots on the north-west coast of Madagascar. Frere commented of this trans-Moçambique Channel trade,

« After landing their Indian supercargo with the import cargo of cloth etc, at Madagascar, they [ie. the Arabs] stand over to the opposite Portugese coast, pick up a small cargo of slaves at the outposts with which they return to Madagascar, making sometimes more than one trip of the kind before it is time to return northwards. These dhows are said frequently to put into the Comoro islands for water and provisions, and sometimes clandestinely part with some of their slaves there but they generally put into the Sakalava ports or unfrequented harbours which abound on the Madagascar coast (47). »

The dhows, which ran south before the north-east monsoon from December to January to north-west Madagascar, and returned to east Africa and the Comores the following April to September on the south-east monsoon, were specially equipped to carry 250 slaves or more. Once they had reached the Malagasy entrepôts, the slaves were either fed into the regional slave networks, or transhipped to reach long-distance markets. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the coastal surveillance of British patrols had forced the main depots at Mahajanga and Marovoay to be switched to the lesser known ports of Ampasindava and Anorotsangana. This shift did not deter slavers however ; by the early 1870s Musa Mohammed Sahib, with Antalaoatra aid, was turning the sultanate of Angoche into « a commercial emporium for the slave trade to Madagascar », whilst the annual influx of slaves into Madagascar was estimated to be between six and ten thousand (48).

The continued success of the Antalaoatra slave runners stemmed firstly from the immunity they gained from British naval searches by flying French, and increasingly from the 1840s, American colours (49). This practice was unofficially encouraged by French authorities to facilitate the supply of labour to their plantation colonies. Even without such aids, an intimate knowledge of the coast-lines, winds and currents of the Moçambique Channel enabled Arab pilots to

(46) CFM, 3 April 1873, enclosure 2, and 29 May 1873 ; FO 84 515 ERD/1144 PRO ; N. Landmark, *Det Norske missionsselskab* (Kristiania, 1899), 169 ; J. Duffy, *A question of slavery* (Oxford, 1967), ch. III.

(47) CFM, 27 Feb. 1873 ; Beachey, *The slave trade*, 33-4.

(48) CFM, 12 Mar. 1873 ; FO 84 515 ERD/1144 PRO, and 84 1369 ERD/1142 ; Hafkin *Trade*, 52-5.

(49) Hafkin, *Trade*, 233-54 ; CFM, 27 Feb. 1873 ; For East African comparisons see, Beachey, *The slave trade*, 24-5 ; Kirk to Granville 5 Mar. and 3 April 1872 F.O. *Correspondence relating to the slave trade* ; Duffy *A question*, 65-8.

totally out-maneuvre British patrols. Moreover, ever mounting demand for slaves led to rising profits which ensured continued involvement in slave running despite the risks. On the regional routes however, profits were running as high as one thousand per cent by the second half of the nineteenth century. This induced many of the dhows that had formerly engaged solely in the coastal trade to specialize in the trans-Mozambique Channel trade, making multiple crossings in the same season (50).

The second reason for Antaloatra success was the collusion of high ranking Merina officials, both in the court and on the imperial periphery. As the Merina empire grew more extensive and the imperial bureaucracy more burdensome, it became increasingly difficult for central authorities to supervise the activities of officials on the frontier. Despite official government opposition to the slave trade, the desire to recompense themselves for assuming unremunerated responsibility in the imperial service led many Merina officers to illicit dealing in slaves, cattle and firearms. Even should their involvement in these illegal transactions be discovered, a massive and accepted system of bribery existed to procure for them immunity from prosecution, for as Grandidier remarked : « En effet à Madagascar, tout se vend et s'achète, les protections et les passe-droits comme les diverses denrées (51). » A striking example of such corruption was the case of Ramboamadio, a Merina officer at Mahabo near Morondava, who in 1874 was summoned to the imperial capital to answer charges of collusion with Tovonkery, the local Sakalava king, slave raiding in cash, and a handsome gift in cattle to Rainimaharavo, the Chief Secretary of State. The latter was himself head of a major slave syndicate and was responsible for the appointment of many Antaloatra and Indian slave dealers to imperial office on the west coast, before he was removed from office by Rainilaiarivony in 1879 (52). However, the Prime Minister was also heavily implicated in the slave trade, for it was under his patronage that the Andafiavaratra family came to dominate imperial offices in the main ports of the empire, where they openly tolerated, if they were not actually involved in, the slave trade (53). In the main slave ports of the north-west, the Merina garrisons actually *protected* the slavers. Pakenham, the British consul in Madagascar wrote a telling report of Anorotsangana in 1876 as :

(50) At the end of the 1830s the French granted British authorities the right to search their ships, so slavers started using the flags of other nations. Use of the American flag was particularly popular, even though from 1863, the British navy was entitled to search American vessels in Malagasy waters ; Curtin *Atlantic slave trade*, 79 ; Samat, *Notes*, 67 ; Beachey, *The slave trade*, 23 ; see also the correspondence of Stanwood in *USC*.

(51) Curtin, *Atlantic slave trade*, 269, 273-6 ; CFM, 29 May 1873 ; see also, J.A. Houlder, *Narrative of a missionary tour* (Antananarivo 1877) ; Morier to Braamcamp, 19 Aug. 1879, *F.O. Correspondence relating to the slave trade* ; Duffy, *A question*, 91-3.

(52) *GM*, 37.

(53) Pakenham to Granville, Tamatave, 3 Janv. 1874, *FO* 84 1397 and 19 Oct. 1876, *FO* 84 1474 ERD/2270 PRO ; Robinson to Hunter, Tamatave, 21 Oct. 1879, *USC* II, 52 ; *GM*, 22 ; Samat, *Notes*, 67 ; Colomb, *Slavecatching*, 319-56.

« a town of considerable importance on the West Coast of Madagascar, where the Slave Trade is carried on on a scale and to an extent little suspected. Like most military stations on the coast, it is divided into two sections ; the Hova [ie. Merina] military settlement, comprising the Fort, which is at some little distance inland, and the Commercial Town, including La Douane (Custom House) built along the sea shore. The latter possesses a large mixed population composed of Hova, Sakalava, Swahelis, Hindis from Kutch, and a large number of so called Arabs (as far as appearance goes — a most villanous set of men) ; and last but not least an undue proportion of Moçambique , the latter element however, had been carefully rusticated on our appearance (54).»

The third and most important reason for Antalaotra success in the slave trade was their alliance with the Indians. The commercial contact of Western India with East Africa was age-old ; Indian traders to the area had experienced much the same fluctuations of fortune down the centuries as their Arab counterparts. The commercial revival of the Indians in the nineteenth century, though less apparent, was more complete than that of the Arabs. Firstly, like the Omani, the Indian merchant benefited much from the *Pax Britannica* imposed by the British navy when it progressively cleared the Indian Ocean of pirates after 1815, and promoted free trade. As the majority of Indian traders in East Africa were from Bombay and the Malabar coast, they enjoyed the rights of British nationality, a fact that caused the British government great embarrassment after the 1873 Frere Committee revealed the extent of their involvement in the slave trade of the region (55). Secondly, intimate relations with large Bombay based companies, and close cooperation with other Indian traders in the area, guaranteed them sufficient capital and flexibility to survive trade fluctuations and to constantly extend their commercial frontier. This was in stark contrast to their Arab, creole and European competitors, who, with few exceptions, lacked substantial financial backing. In Madagascar, most of the Indians involved in the slave trade were Shiah Muslims, either Khojas or Bohras (56).

« In Madagascar and elsewhere the Indians assured me that though their oldest house was not more than sixty years standing, their caste had traded to the coast for ages previous... In Madagascar they assert that they have been, for at least a century, settled at Nosi Beh [Nosy Be] and other ports, and that they [the Bhora and Khoja] preceded the Hindoos on the African coast (57).»

(54) Rasoamiaramanana, *Aspects*, 40-54 ; Campbell, *Labour*.

(55) Pakenham to Earl of Derby, Tamatave, 30 Janv. 1877, FO 84 1474 ERD/2270 PRO 15
Kestell-Cornish to Pakenham, *Isoavan' Andriana*, 26 Sep. 1876, FO 84 1474 ERD/2270 PRO.

(56) CFM, Hafkin, *Trade*, 85-8 ; Coupland *East Africa*, chs.V,VIII-XI.

(57) CFM, Memo, Frere to Granville, Poona, 7 May 1873, incl. 1, n° 53 ; Coupland, *East Africa*, chs. X and XV.

Unlike the Antalaotra, the Karany, as the Indians were called in Madagascar, had little idea of permanent settlement in the island, though many claimed Merina in addition to British citizenship. They used their dual nationality to advantage ; for instance in 1869, a Bombay Indian and major slave dealer called Luckman living in Ampasindava, claimed immunity from British law by virtue of his Merina citizenship, and would doubtless have used his British passport in similar fashion to protect himself from any prosecution by the Merina, as did many fellow Karany (58). Though less numerous than the Antalaotra, the Karany were very influential. Twenty Indian merchants were counted in Toamasina in 1869, but the majority inhabited the west coast ports, with 150 to 200 in Mahajanga and 128 in Maintirano. The last named was the most important centre of the slave trade in Madagascar in the second half of the nineteenth century. Grandidier visiting the port in 1869, noted there the large number of slaves,

« dont on apporte constamment des cargaisons, Maintirano étant le principal marché de Madagascar où s'approvisionnent les Sakalava ainsi que les Merina ; pendant que j'y étais on attendait 10 boutres qui étaient allés chercher leur cargaison humaine un peu au sud de Quillimane, chez les Portugais (59). »

By the early 1880s, an estimated minimum of five thousand slaves a year were entering Madagascar through Maintirano, so that Frere's estimate of an annual import for the entire island of six to ten thousand slaves for the early 1870s is probably an underestimation, especially as slave exports from East Africa had slumped dramatically in the wake of the 1869/70 cholera epidemic (60). Antalaotra and Karany attempts to forge south of Maintirano before the 1882-5 war were foiled by the opposition of indigenous chiefs who were backed by the creole merchants already established in the south ; though Sakalava traders sent two convoys of between sixty and one hundred canoes each year from Maintirano to trade along the southern coastline (61).

From the north-west ports however, the Karany played the vital role of financing slaving activity along much of the western littoral and interior of Madagascar. As Muslims they made easy contact with the Antalaotra and islamised Sakalava. Like the Antalaotra, some held important positions in the Merina held ports, whilst Daosa, the Karany leader in Mahajanga in the 1860s, followed the example set by Indian traders working under Omani rule by financing the construction of a customs house in the port (62). They maintained

(58) *CFM, Memo*, 31 Mar. 1873.

(59) Pakenham to Lord Stanley, Tamatave, 4 Feb. 1869, *FO* 84 1307 ERD/1142 ; Report of Capt. Malcolm of H.M.S. *Briton*, 17 Aug. 1873, *FO* 84 1397 ; see also the *English Blue Book* II.8 n° 4, incl. 2 and 8, and n° 26.

(60) *GM*, 26-8.

(61) *GM*, 26

(62) *USC* — Stanwood *Memo* 2, 21 Aug. 1883 ; *CFM*, Frere to Granville, Moçambique, 27 Feb. 1873 ; see also note 84 of this article ; For details of the cholera epidemic, see R. Coupland, *The exploitation of East Africa* (London 1968), 53-6.



commercial contact with the firm of Jeyram Sew-jee, whose agents farmed the Omani customs, and with the Banians who were the chief financiers of the slave trade on the Mocambique coast after 1840. For their part, the Karany advanced credit to the Antaloatra, Sakalava and even the creoles, arranging «loans, advances and mortgages, on every kind of property, real and personal, and on various kinds of security ; by advances of goods for trade etc (63).» They were one of the major importers of Bombay cloth which, alongside fire-arms, was one of the chief commodities of exchange for slaves, and also constituted a form of currency in the south of the island (64). They further bribed Merina officials whenever necessary, and those who occupied imperial posts used their position to obtain official information on the proximity of British naval patrols and foreign travellers etc, which they then passed on to the Antaloatra. They were justifiably suspicious of voyagers like Grandidier, missionaries like Rostvig, and *legitimate* traders like Stanwood, all of whom kept detailed records of slaving activity on the west coast. Neglect of such records by historians and the fact that Karany kept a low profile has led to the role of the Antaloatra and the north-west coast in the Malagasy slave trade being overestimated, whilst that of the Indians and the south-west coast has been underestimated (65).

The southern slave trade network was of a more recent origin and was less stable than the northern network. Slave exports from the south had started with the arrival of the Portuguese in the early sixteenth century, and although the trade was given great impetus by the influx of creole traders from the 1830s, the basic pattern of exchange remained unaltered up to the commencement of hostilities in 1882. After negotiating a passage through the reef that characterized the south-west coast, the captains of slavers contacted local agents at the mouth of one of the larger rivers, notably the Onilahy and Fiherenana in St. Augustine's Bay, the Mangoky, Tsiribihina, Manambolo and Manambaho. These agents represented the local chief whose capital normally lay several days into the interior, thus forestalling any possibility of attack by the visiting ship (66). Thereafter, commercial contact was generally made through the medium of specialized agencies employed by both parties, consisting of translators, experienced traders and political advisers. Contracts took several weeks or even months to be finalised, and the process had to be lubricated by a constant supply

(63) *CM*, 22-3 ; Samat, *Notes*, 65-6.

(64) Rasoamiamanana, *Aspects*, 62.

(65) *CFM*, *Memos*, 31 Mar. and 7 May 1873, incl. 1, n° 52 ; *Report* (1844), *FO* 84 515 ERD/1144 PRO ; Hafkin, *Trade*, 232-52 ; Kirk to Granville, 25 Jan. and 5 Mar. 1872, *F.O. Correspondence relating to the slave trade* ; Jackson, *European powers*, chs. III and VI.

(66) *CFM*, *Memo*, 31 Mar. 1873 ; Fontoynont et Nicol, *Les traitants*. 24 ; *RA*, 269.

of alcohol and other *gifts* from the buyers, in addition to the customary fees exacted for anchorage, the right to commence trading, and to build a temporary stockade to store merchandise. The fee for the right to trade, called the *lilin-tany*, was a cause of endless dispute. It was due even from non-commercial travellers like Grandidier, who gives an idea of its extent when forced to pay king Toera of Menabe in 1869 :

1 – à Tinompo, la mère du roi, 2 – à la grande-tante du roi, Itsoaina, 3 – à Ngereza, le demi-frère du roi, 4 – au prince Tsimaroy, 5 – aux gardiens de tombeaux royaux de Maneva, 6 – aux gardiens des tombeaux royaux de Tombarivo, 7 – aux Antimalaka, préposés à la garde des reliques et objets du dernier roi, Vinany... 8 – aux chefs du village du roi, 9 – aux Lahimiorika (litt. : aux chefs qui vivent à la queue de la rivière)... 10 – aux Andevon-johary, aux femmes qui entourent le roi, qui le soignent, 11 – à l'Ombiasy ou devin, qui, sans tirer le sikily [ie. sikidy or rite of divination], à la seule inspection de nos bonnes figures, avait dit que nous pourrions être reçus par le roi dès le vendredi, 12 – aux fihitsa, aux soldats, aux gardes du corps du roi et 13 – à la nourrice du roi ainsi qu'à ses andevo-kely, ses serviteurs et aux gardiens des portes de l'enceinte royale (67).

Such taxes, similar to those raised on slave traders in mainland Africa, varied in amount and value according to different chiefs. For example, Stanwood, a trader and the American consul at Morondava, noted that : « Duties in the Sakalava ports are paid per ship a fixed amount in and out, no two ports are alike in this respect, Tullia (Toliara) being the highest and Maintirano the lowest, but none come up to the 10 % of the Hova [ie. Merina] (68). »

Even once an agreement had been reached however, it was frequently cancelled by the chiefs, or submitted by them for renegotiation. The main reason behind this was the lack of an organized body of middlemen, such as existed north of Maintirano, to arrange and guarantee contracts. Furthermore, whereas the Sakalava and Merina of Iboina possessed hierarchical and centralized polities, the tribes to the south had more decentralized political structures. This made the choice of trading partner more difficult for the foreign buyer, and often resulted in fractious commercial relations. A lack of capital and credit meant that suppliers were almost totally dependent upon fluctuations in the demand for slaves. As a consequence, slave raiding expeditions into the interior were launched only after the arrival of the first slaving ships of the season, though chiefs were rarely able to guarantee sufficient slaves even for later arrivals (69). Frustrated buyers

(67) Landmark, *Det Norske*, 160-301 ; Rostvig's correspondence, *FLM/NMS* Copibok, Tolia, 812 B ; L. Rostvig, *Sakalaverne og deres land* (Stavanger, 1886) ; *GM*, 26-8 ; Stanwood to Robinson, Andakabe, 28 Aug. 1884, and Stanwood memo 1., in Stanwood to Robinson, 13 July 1884, *USC* IV.

(68) eg. King Maromiantia established his capital fifteen leagues into the interior from the mouth of the river Manambolo – *GM*, 26 ; See also Alfred & Guillaume Grandidier ed., *Collection des ouvrages anciens concernant Madagascar* (Paris 1903), t. III & V ; Guillaïn, *Documents* II, 339.

(69) *GM*, 24-5.

frequently either tried to take local people by force for slaves, particularly if they had already spent considerable sums on trade *preliminaries*, or sailed, never to return, to the more stable markets of Iboina. Such action in its turn angered the indigenous suppliers, leading them to plunder ships or even to murder foreign agents at the slightest sign of hostility of non-compliance with trade regulations. For instance, the European trading post at Androka in Masikoro Bay, was constantly harassed by attacks from the neighbouring Mahafaly tribe, as similar agencies in St. Augustine's Bay were plundered by king Lahimerija of Fiherenana (70). The absence of a group of middlemen to regularize affairs also resulted in fierce rivalry between suppliers to the extent that all contemporary accounts refer to a state of perpetual warfare in the region (71). Moreover, as coastal chiefs raided the hinterland and even the fringes of the plateau for slaves, so they encountered and fought hostile Merina forces and slaving expeditions. However, Merina garrisons on the west coast, south of Mahajanga, were so isolated from the imperial heartland that they constituted more of a symbolic presence than an occupying force. Until 1890, the Merina controlled only two ports between St. Augustine's Bay and Mahajanga, at Ranopasy (Andrianopas) 140 miles north of Toliara, and at Andakabe near Morondava, sixty miles north of Ranopasy. Even at the latter port it was reported in January 1881 that «The Hova Governor of this province has within a month paid tribute to the Sakalava King at Tizibongy under the threat of a raid upon him if he refused compliance (72).»

A stabilizing influence was provided by the presence of creole traders like the Samat and Rossier brothers, who established close links with influential chiefs through intermarriage and the practice of *fatidra*, or blood brotherhood. By virtue of their control over the importation of gunpowder and firearms, and their influence with European officials, they attained prestigious positions as political advisers to, and protectors of, local chiefs. Also, like their Antalaoatra and Karany counterparts to the north, they frequently forged close ties with Merina governors in the provinces in order to further their illicit trade. They further petitioned their consuls in Toamasina and Antananarivo for known sympathizers to their cause to fill official positions on the west coast, whilst some slave traders, like Norden at Toliara, and Govers, who traded for some years at Maintirano, actually assumed quasi-consular standing (73). The influence of the Samat brothers was even more marked; Edmond gained security for French traders on the southern coast by concluding a *fatidra* with Queen Maharova of Menabe in 1866, whilst the Vezo tribe at Morondava

(70) *USC* — Stanwood to Robinson, Morondava, 1 Dec. 1880; For African comparisons see Beachey, *The slave trade*, 60; Pankhurst, *Economic History*, 84-9.

(71) The first ships from the Mascareignes generally arrived in June. *GM*, 8.

(72) *GM*, 9, 14.

(73) *GM*; Larsen, *Livet*; Rostvig's correspondence in *FLM/NMS* Copibok, Tolia; Stanwood's correspondence in *USC*.

regarded his brother Leo as *leur ami, et leur protecteur*. They were also on excellent terms with the Merina governors of Mahabo and Mahajanga (74). These creole traders therefore helped to establish an uneasy commercial peace in the area, which lasted until the outbreak of war in 1882.

The war, which finally shattered the balance of the slave trade relations, was the logical culmination on increasing Réunionnais pressure on the metropolitan government to force the Merina into permitting both an unrestricted emigration of Malagasy labour, and the freedom for foreigners to enter Madagascar and purchase freehold land. Creole attempts to establish viable plantations along the eastern seaboard of Madagascar had largely failed due to the insecurity of land tenure, the constant withdrawal of labour by Merina officials under the pretext of *fanompoana* (forced imperial service), and their own paucity of capital. The last was a great problem, especially when many creoles incurred high debts from the 1870s, as crop disease combined with the general decline of raw commodity prices on the world market to rock the basis of the sugar industry. This helped intensify their reliance on, and demand for, cheap labour, and drew large commercial concerns like Roux de Fraissance of Bordeaux, and Vidal et Roger of Marseilles into the dubious *engagé* trade from the west coast of Madagascar (75). The demand for such labour on the creole plantations of the east coast of the island was so intense that it diverted part of the slave flow to Imerina, and reports indicate that the Merina were forced to secretly reopen the south-east ports to slave imports in compensation for this loss (76).

Traditional trading relationships rapidly deteriorated on the west coast from the outbreak of hostilities in 1882 as creole merchants, in the firm belief of a French takeover, channelled an increasing supply of arms to the tribes hostile to Merina rule. In the space of twenty days in August 1883 for instance, 1,200 muskets alone were landed at *Nomoonoka*, a small inlet four days travel from the Merina fort of Manja, to fuel the Sakalava revolt (77). Merina authority in the region had always been weak, but was almost destroyed by the end of the war when creole traders began to openly flout it. In 1887 for example, a group of European and creole slave runners successfully intrigued with Razafintsalama, the Merina governor of Mahabo, for the removal of Rakoto, the governor of Andakabe, who since 1884 had been campaigning against their activity at

(74) Stanwood to Robinson, Morondava, 23 Jan. 1881, *USC* III, Robinson to Adeé, Tamatave, 22 Oct. 1884, *USC* IV ; see also, Richardson, *Lights*.

(75) Robinson to Adeé, 22 Oct. 1884, *USC* IV ; Campbell to Porter, Tamatave, 23 Aug. 1887, *USC* V ; *GM*, 27.

(76) *GM*, 9-20, 23, 28 ; Landmark, *Det Norske*, 273-82 ; Campbell to Porter, 18 Oct. 1887, and Campbell to Rives, Tamatave, 10 Feb. 1888 — *USC* V.

(77) Pakenham to Earl of Derby, Tamatave, 21 Feb. 1876, *FO* 84 1369 ERD/1142 PRO ; Robinson to Third Asst. Sec. of State, Tamatave, 22 May 1882, *USC* III, n° 98 ; Samat, *Notes* ; Guerret, *Trois mois*, 37-54.

Morondava(78). From the end of the war until the French takeover in 1895, slave raiding became so endemic that whole tribes fled from the area, and legitimate commerce collapsed (79). In turn, the war completed a process, begun by the completion of the Suez canal in 1869, of encouraging legitimate shipping from Europe to use the shorter route to the East, and bypass the more dangerous waters of the Moçambique Channel. The latter was thereby rendered safer for those slavers who survived the turmoil of the war years to take advantage of the post-war boom in demand (80).

The Karany took immediate advantage of the change in the conditions of trade to move south of Maintirano and seize control of the southern trade, much to the chagrin of the creoles whose relative paucity of capital had not enabled them to survive the vicissitudes of the war as well as the Indians. Whereas prior to the war there were no non-christian traders in the Toliara/Fiherenana region, soon after its conclusion the Karany had successfully challenged the creole monopoly, and came to dominate the import trade in cloth, gunpowder and slaves, as well as establishing themselves as major money-lenders (81). Maintirano however, as the focal point of the two-way traffic in slaves, retained its pre-eminency as slave *entrepot* for the entire west coast. Specially constructed villages were built in its vicinity to hold recently imported slaves until they had learned sufficient Malagasy to be introduced into the island mainland for sale either to coastal chiefs or to Merina dealers. It was also to Maintirano that slave exports, mainly Malagasy women and children captured in the interior, were directed to await distribution to the Mascareignes, the Comores, or even Arabia and Western India (82). Three shipping networks converged upon Maintirano. Firstly, European sail and steam ships of up to 450 tons ran from the west coast to the plantation islands, Moçambique and South Africa. The vast majority of such ships, including those belonging to respectable firms like George Ropes of Boston, McCubbins of Durban, and Oswald of Hamburg, were involved in arms and slave smuggling. Ropes' ships concentrated on the one port of Maintirano, but the four sailing vessels and one steam boat from Natal that were involved in Malagasy trade by 1884, covered the

(78) Campbell, *Labour*, Rainilaiarivony to Pakenham, Antananarivo, 24 July 1868, FO 84 1291 ; Robinson to Hunter, Tamatave, 28 June 1877, USC II, n° 26.

(79) Stanwood to Whitney, Andakabe, 30 June 1883, Stanwood to Whitney and Robinson Morondava, 1 Aug. 1883, and Robinson to Adeé, Tamatave, 22 Oct. 1884 – USC IV ; For comparison of arms smuggling in East Africa, see R.W. Beachey, « The arms trade in east Africa in the late nineteenth century » *Journal of African History* 3 (1962), 451-67.

(80) See the correspondence of Stanwood, 25 Aug. to 27 Dec. 1887, USC V.

(81) Stanwood to Campbell, Andakabe, 20 Aug. 1887, Whitney *Report*, Tamatave, 10 Sep. 1887, and Stanwood to Campbell, Andakabe, 17 Dec. 1887, USC V.

(82) Whitney *Report*, 10 Sep. 1887, USC V ; see also notes, 50-51.

entire west coast (83). Secondly, a large fleet of Indian and Arab owned dhows of from ten to forty tons plied the coastal and trans-Moçambique Channel trade. These could evade larger ships in coastal creeks and like the European vessels, often carried the American flag which was «looked upon as a kind of insurance policy against the risk of capture at sea», as the British navy was loathe to stop supposedly American ships (84). Finally, an annual fleet of larger dhows, ranging from sixty to one hundred tons each, sailed directly from Bombay and the Malabar coast to Maintirano (85). By the late 1880s, over ninety per cent of slave and arms dealers on the west coast were British, as the huge influx of Indians holding British passports augmented the number of British nationals from Natal (86).

A second major characteristic of the post-1885 period was the emergence on the fringes of the *efitra* or Wilderness, of what one nineteenth century observer referred to as *slave republics* (87). The *efitra*, which encircled the central plateau isolating it from the coastal provinces, was a kind of *no-man's land* consisting of undulating hills to the west and forests to the east. It had become depopulated as a result of the ravages of the Merina war parties and counter-attacks from hostile tribes, so that Grandidier could write of the south-west part of it : «ces endroits déserts et sauvages sont redoutés par les Malgaches, car il ne se passe pas d'année où les jirika, des brigands, soit Sakalava, soit Bara, n'y viennent piller des bœufs et même enlever des habitants pour les vendre comme esclaves (88).» Refugees from imperial Merina rule had formed communities in the *efitra* as early as the 1820s and 1830s, but it was only in the latter part of the nineteenth century that veritable refuge states emerged (89). Two *slave republics* arose, one filling the plain between the Mahajilo and Mania rivers, and the other occupying a portion of the south-eastern forest, to the east of the independent Tanala kingdom of Ikongo. They were composed mainly of refugees from imperial *fanompoana*, escaped felons, and runaway slaves. For example, of the forest republic it was written :

«All slaves who have fled, not only from these [ie. Tanala] areas, but also from other regions, have come together in an intimate bunch in the woods, at

(83) Rostving, *Sakalaverne*, 244 ; S. Pickersgill, *North Sakalava-land*, AAMM 8 (1893), 29-43 ; Stanwood to Robinson incl. in Stanwood to Bayard, Andakabe, 31 Oct. 1886, USC IV ; Esoavelomandroso, *Fiheregna*, Prud'homme, *Considérations*, 29.

(84) Stanwood, *Memo* 2, 21 Aug. 1883, and Stanwood to Robinson, 28 Aug. 1884 — USC IV ; See also note 62.

(85) Stanwood to Robinson, Morondava, 13 July 1884, USC IV ; Stanwood to Pickersgill, Andakabe, 18 Aug. 1887, USC V ; Kirk to Granville, 3 April 1872, F.O. *Correspondence relating to the slave trade*.

(86) Stanwood, *Memo* 2, Stanwood to Third Asst. Sec. of State, Andakabe, 11 Feb. 1884, and Stanwood *Commercial Report*, 31, Dec. 1886, USC IV.

(87) Stanwood *Commercial Report*, op. cit., S.M. Le Lyes, *Relation, Annales maritimes et coloniales* XIV, 139 (1821), 652-664.

(88) Stanwood to Campbell, Andakabe, 25 Aug. 1887, USC V.

(89) A. Walen, *Madagaskars sydostkyst* (Stavanger, 1888).

an isolated spot at the source of the Faraoni river, where they have created their own state with its own government (90).»

Moreover, their military power was formidable ; for instance, having defeated the warrior kingdom of Ikongo, the forest republic then allied with them against the Merina (91). These communities lived mainly from commerce, which for the forest republic entailed selling natural products such as India rubber and wax to foreign traders on the east coast. The western republic however, dealt almost exclusively in slaves, as did the third *middleman* community of Antanosy emigrants, who had fled the impositions of Merina rule around Taolanaro (Fort-Dauphin) to seek sanctuary in Bara country far to the west (92). The Antanosy operated a two-way trade, selling captives for export, and also importing slaves for the Merina market, but the Betsiriry republic further north specialized in exporting slaves. They raided the plateau for Merina and Betsileo captives, whom they kept pending the rise in coastal demand, when they were shipped down the Tsiribihina to the Antalaotra and Indian slave dealers at Tsimandrafozana. As McMahon, an S.P.G. missionary visiting the Betsiriry, noted in 1891 :

« We saw great deal of the slave trade, which, I am sorry to say, goes on continually, in the west of Madagascar... women and children stolen away from the centre of the island are in request, and numbers of them are to be found in every Sakalava settlement ; some are slaves, others are concubines, and all waiting till the Arabs, or half-breed Mozambique Arabs, should come and exchange guns and powder for them (93).»

The organisational strength of the Indians and the existence of such middleman *slave republics* did not prevent the rapid deterioration of security, and consequently of trade, on the west coast. Indigenous chiefs, feeling the situation slipping out of their control, tried to improve their bargaining position by exacting impossibly high and arbitrary taxes and bribes, severely punishing those traders who refused to pay. King Tompomanana of *Manombo* for example, raised his *lilin-tany* from five hundred francs in 1880 to 3,500 francs in 1886, and up again the same year to 4,500 francs. Two years later, he pillaged the

(90) *GM*, 41.

(91) Jouen, *Notes*, *AHVP* C.28h ; Also see note 26.

(92) Walen, *Madagaskars*, 24-6 ; Piolet, *De l'esclavage*, 458-9 ; Those slavers in the extreme south-west of the island were mostly creoles of French nationality : Rostvig, *Export of slaves from the south west coast of Madagascar*, letter to the *Natal Mercury*, 7 Aug. 1886 — *FLM/NMS* Bks 812B.

(93) L. Besson, *Voyage au pays des Tanala indépendants de la région d'Ikongo* from, *Les voyageurs français à Madagascar pendant les trente dernières années*, A. Grandidier ed. (Paris 1894).

(94) The Antanosy emigrants fled sometime between 1856 and 1866. Under their leader Zaomanery, they established a capital at Kiliarivo (Salobe), 120 km. east of St. Augustine's Bay, and 300 km. west of Taolanaro, on the plain between the Taheza and Sakamare tributaries of the Onilahy river : *GM*, 10-11 ; Richardson, *Lights*, 40.

trading posts of Jacquelin, a creole merchant, of 6,000 francs worth of goods for the non-payment of a tax (94). Such action by local chiefs resulted in a steady exodus of foreign traders from the area by the late 1880s, and intensified their demand for a French takeover (95). The 1882-5 conflict had also rung the death knell of the imperial Merina economy, which had already been badly hit by the payment of the Lambert indemnity of 1865, the perpetual deficit in the balance of trade, and the onset of the world depression in the 1870s. After the war, the necessity both of paying a further indemnity of £ 400,000 to the French, and of expending all remaining resources on shoring up crumbling imperial defence, meant that the Merina regime came to rely even more heavily on an unremunerated labour force to keep the economy functioning (96).

By the early 1890s however, all attempts to revive the imperial economy had failed. As a direct result of the oppressive *fanompoana*, huge numbers of subject peoples had become alienated from, and in many instances risen in revolt against, Merina rule. Imperial garrisons lay under constant siege as Bara and Sakalava war-parties increased the intensity and penetration of their forays into the plateau. Internal trade and agriculture ground to a standstill as the inhabitants of the interior fled, following the pattern set earlier by tribes on the west coast. Deserted villages helped enlarge the *efitra* which, in the eleven years following the outbreak of the 1882-5 war, widened from twelve to twenty miles on the western side of the plateau (97). Merina slaving expeditions were curtailed by hostile forces, and though the *fanompoana* was intensified in an attempt to compensate for dwindling supplies, it only had the effect of further reducing the imperial labour reserve as an increasing number of subjects escaped to the ever-expanding area beyond Merina control (98). Creole demands for intervention were finally acceded to by the French parliament, and Antananarivo was seized by French forces in 1895. In 1896, the new colonial regime undermined the basis of the slave trade by abolishing slavery as an institution in the island, backing this measure up with naval and military surveillance (99). In vastly reducing the slave trade, the French crippled many Antalaotra and creole merchants, and Merina functionaries, whose total capital was often bound up in slaves. However, the financial and organisational resources of the Karany enabled

(95) McMahon, *First visit*, 280, Richardson, *Lights*.

(96) Robert David, *Nosy-ve, islette australe et vice-résidence de France de 1888 à 1897* (Tananarive 1939), 18 ; also see *Report of Rostvig to Capt. Aldrick of H.M.S. Fawn Tuléar*, 25 Nov. 1882, *FLM/NMS* Tolia Copybok, 632-45.

(97) See, Stanwood to Campbell, Andakabe, 27-31 Dec. 1887, *USC V* ; and Rostvig's corespondence in *FLM/NMS* Copybok Tolia (1882-92), 812 B.

(98) E.W. Dawson, *Madagascar : its capabilities and resources* (London 1895) ; Cousins, *The abolition* ; The Lambert indemnity was for 180,000 dollars : Wastell, *British imperial policy*, 370.

(99) Mondain, *Un voyage*, mss, *FJKM*.

them to survive the collapse of the slave trade and make a successful transition to legitimate commerce, much to the annoyance of the creole community which had hoped to reap the benefits of French intervention. It is also somewhat ironic that despite the official French stance, the refusal of tribes like the Sakalava to submit to manual labour for the new regime, and the cost of importing foreign coolies, led the French to re-adopt an oppressive system of forced labour (100).

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- (100) *Isandra : ny distry Soatanana*, mss. *FLM/NMS* 57-1 ; *Letter* to Rainilaiarivony, 10 Sep. 1890, *FLM/NMS* Bks 270 H ; Borchgrevink to Rainilaiarivony, Antsahananta, 14 Mar. 1894, *FLM/NMS* Bks 279 G ; R.P. Fontaine, *Lettre*, Fianarantsoa, 2 juin 1891, in *Les missions catholiques* (1891), 409-11 ; E.F. Knight, *From Fort-Dauphin to Fianarantsoa*, *AAMM* 19 (1895), 363-70, and 20 (1896), 396-401.
- (101) Laroche pronounced the decree abolishing slavery on 27 Sep. 1896. The slave trade in Madagascar did persist, but in a vastly reduced way : Cousins, *The abolition*, 446-50 ; Walter Marcuse, *Through western Madagascar, in quest of the golden bean* (London 1914), 116, 223.
- (102) Marcuse, *Through western Madagascar* ; L.M.S. Slawewski, *French policy towards the Chinese in Madagascar* (1971), 78-100 ; Hafkin, *Trade*, 363-402 ; André, *De l'esclavage*, 71-2, 193-214 ; Piolet, *De l'esclavage*, 472-9.

S U M M A R Y

The distinguishing feature of the Malagasy slave trade in the nineteenth century was the co-existence of two competitive slave networks, the one feeding Malagasy slaves to meet the demand of long distance and regional markets in the Western Indian Ocean, and the other channelling Malagasy war captives and east African slaves onto the markets of Inerina. The export of slaves from Madagascar had long existed, but the import of slaves was a new and distinctly nineteenth century phenomena, the result of the rise of the Merina empire whose economy was based on a huge, unremunerated, and servile labour force. As the empire expanded, so its labour requirements grew, to conflict sharply with the increasing demand for labour on the neighbouring plantation islands as they shifted over to the production of sugar. Creole merchants found themselves obliged to find alternative labour supplies, and from the 1830s were moving rapidly down the coast of Madagascar, where they purchased slaves from chiefs independent of Merina control. Until the outbreak of the Franco-Merina war of 1882-5, the slave trade networks remained remarkably stable, despite its competitive elements. This was due largely to the presence of the Arab Antalaotra, an experienced body of middlemen, and the Indian Karany who supplied the capital for the trade. The war effectively broke the power of the Merina regime, and as the imperial economy crumbled, so security of trade collapsed across the islands. Though the disruption of legitimate commerce initially spurred the slave trade, it also strengthened creole calls for French intervention. This occurred in 1895, and the following year the French authorities abolished slavery in Madagascar. This, and the effective military occupation of the island by the French, reduced the Malagasy slave trade to a trickle by the first years of the twentieth century.

