**Chapter 6**

**Sakalava “Pirates”**

As early as the sixteenth century, merchants in northwestern Madagascar sold slaves, food, and luxury items to passing dhows in return for precious metals, guns, and cloth. Europeans were largely ignorant of these exchanges prior to the nineteenth century, when they began to note the bustling trade between the Antaloatra and Swahili, Indian, and Arab merchants, particularly in slaves.[[1]](#footnote-1) Europeans were also struck by the scope of the slave trade within the Indian Ocean during the nineteenth century. One British abolitionist stated that he was “utterly astounded to learn that a traffic I supposed entirely restricted to the coast of Africa and the new world, was in much more active progress between East Africa and the northern shores of the Indian Ocean.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Europeans concluded that this trade had been around for centuries, based upon a “small but constant” trickle of slaves from northwest Madagascar.[[3]](#footnote-3) It seems more likely that this trade underwent a revolution during the nineteenth century, when it increased in scope and magnitude dramatically.[[4]](#footnote-4)

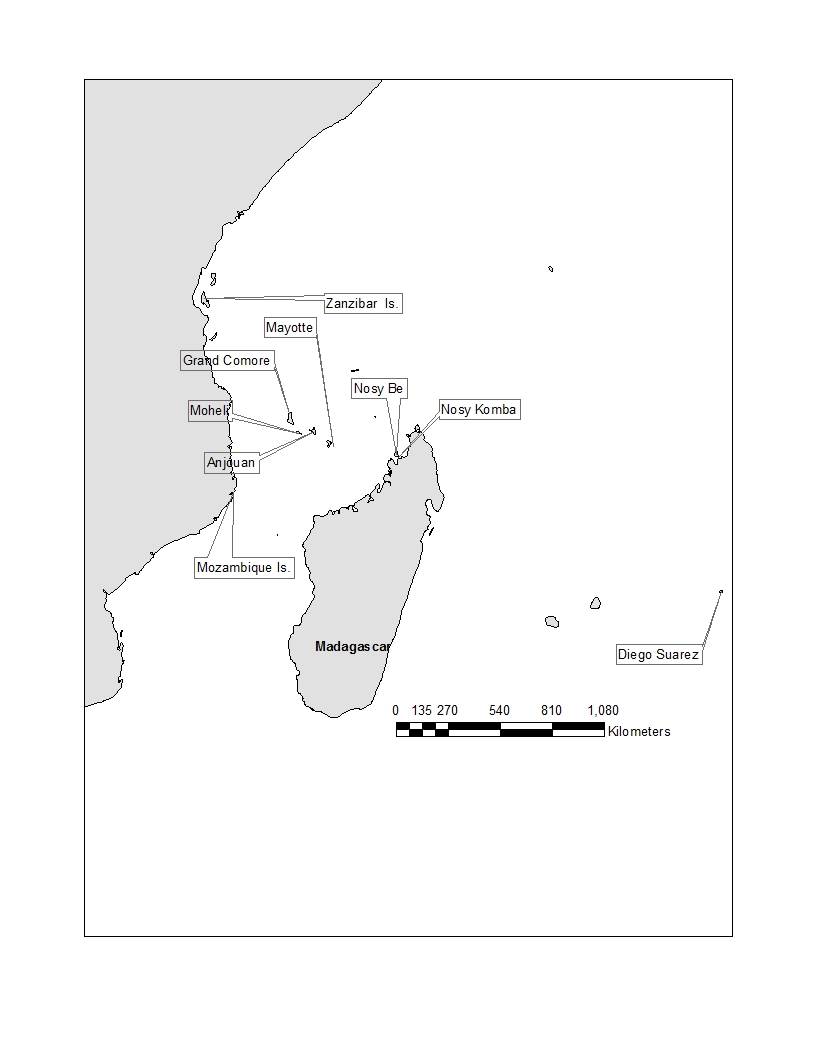
Economic ties between Madagascar and the rest of the southwest Indian Ocean fluctuated over the centuries in response to external and internal political changes. Following the conquest of the northwest coast during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Sakalava rulers established a system of overseeing and profiting from the trade.[[5]](#footnote-5) The nineteenth century brought competing imperial powers to the coast. Sakalava leaders attempted to present themselves as the “traditional” leaders of the northwest and exert their power, via the slave trade, across the southwestern Indian Ocean region. A land-based empire started to become an oceanic one, through similar mechanisms that powered the expansion of Sakalava influence across Madagascar prior to 1800.[[6]](#footnote-6) The Sakalava acquired commercial allies within the Indian Ocean but violence accompanied this commercial expansion.

 Due to heightened demands for resources in Madagascar by the late eighteenth century, Sakalava leaders turned to the ocean in search of new sources. Slaves were particularly sought after by the French in the Mascarenes and the Portuguese for the Americas, as well as within Madagascar for use by the Merina and Sakalava.[[7]](#footnote-7) During the nineteenth century, British, French, Omani, and Sakalava leaders pursued plans of imperial expansion across the ocean, plans that included forceful interventions into local politics and exchange networks. The British took control of portions of the Indian subcontinent as well as Mauritius and the Cape of Good Hope. The French formed their first lasting colonies on the islands on Madagascar. The Omani sultan moved the center of his empire to Zanzibar.

The Sakalava also tried to develop new connections within the southwestern Indian Ocean. Beginning in 1790, warriors from the coasts of Madagascar attacked coastal communities in the southwestern Indian Ocean region, particularly the Comoro Islands and East Africa. Even though these attacks were probably not under the direct command of Sakalava monarchs, the raids were similar to those conducted by the Sakalava decades earlier across northern and eastern Madagascar. Sakalava leaders intervened militarily in the region to make themselves more economically and politically influential. In East Africa and the Comoros, the Sakalava used violence to enforce trading agreements and to assist trading allies. Following these attacks, the west coast of Madagascar became an important transshipment point for commodities from East Africa to the Middle East. In response to political shifts in the region, the Sakalava Empire established stronger ties with the Islamic world, particularly East Africa.

These attacks became associated with the Sakalava by the 1820s.[[8]](#footnote-8) The British used the attacks and the resulting upheaval in the region as arguments for the abolition of the slave trade in the Indian Ocean.[[9]](#footnote-9) Despite British perceptions, various descriptions by Portuguese, French, English, and Comorian observers make clear that Sakalava leaders were not responsible for the attacks. In fact, the Sakalava queen of Boina had warned the Portuguese against at least one of the raids.[[10]](#footnote-10) European comments on Sakalava violence, particularly British comments, probably did not accurately depict the frequency with which Sakalava aggressively pursued their commercial goals.

During the nineteenth century, following the cessation of the attacks, the Sakalava became involved in a precarious struggle. They tried to maintain their control over commerce from the western Madagascar region in the face of encroaching imperial states. The turn of the century marked the start of the decline of the Sakalava Empire within Madagascar but it also marked a period of expanding Sakalava commercial influence in the Indian Ocean. Sakalava-controlled ports became centers for the shipment of slaves in the ocean from Mozambique to Zanzibar and the northern Indian Ocean. Unfortunately, for Sakalava leaders, this new slave trade conflicted with British attempts to abolish the slave trade in the Indian Ocean. As Sakalava leaders came into frequent conflict with British, Merina, and French rivals, the Sakalava Empire crumbled.



Map 6: Madagascar, the Comoro Islands, and East Africa

**Sakalava “Pirates”?**

Around 1790, armed warriors began attacking the people of the Comoro Islands and Mozambique. These violent attacks destabilized communities in both regions over the next thirty years. The warriors arrived in large canoes known as *lakana* or *laka*, likely fitted with outriggers and a sail.[[11]](#footnote-11) The canoes used in the raids were quite large and held up to sixty men.[[12]](#footnote-12) The organization and scale of these attacks shocked European observers. A British naval commander found these incursions “very remarkable” from a “nation of savages,” as he assumed that they were ignorant of military techniques and lacked navigational knowledge. That the warriors could assemble such large fleets, according to the European, was “so strange an event in modern history as scarcely to be believed.” He stated that the British navy should be mortified that they were “even then excelled, in numbers at least by African savages!”[[13]](#footnote-13)

The motivations and identities of the attackers have remained uncertain, despite the existence of several sources, both European and Comorian, describing the attacks.[[14]](#footnote-14) Portuguese colonial rulers struggled to repulse the canoe raiders from Mozambique. Comorian islanders also fought multiple battles against the invaders. Their records have provided descriptions of the range of the attacks but less information about the raiders themselves. They appeared to have acted without a coordinated purpose or goal in mind. Likewise, the writers did not describe them as Sakalava or Betsimisarka. Sources referred to them as “Malagasy” or, in Comorian sources, the “Wabuki,” a term in use since the sixteenth century to describe the non-Muslim (not Antaloatra) people inhabiting Madagascar.[[15]](#footnote-15)

The raiders initially targeted communities in the Comoro archipelago, which consists of four islands: Grande Comore (Ngazidja), Anjouan (Ndzwani), Mohéli (Mwali), and Mayotte (Maore). Their first recorded attacks were against populations in the Grande Comore in 1792 but the raiders also targeted the other islands.[[16]](#footnote-16) There has been no credible explanation for the start of the raids, although commercial, political, and religious connections between Madagascar and the Comoro Islands had been existence for centuries. Leaders on the Comoro Islands regularly sent ships to purchase slaves and food on the shores of Madagascar.[[17]](#footnote-17) Comorians and Malagasy frequently moved within this area, migrating and maintaining familial ties throughout the region.[[18]](#footnote-18)

In addition, the leaders of the Comoro Islands, much like the Swahili and Antaloatra, were proud of their links to communities living on the shores of the Indian Ocean. For instance, in 1612, the king of Mohéli told Europeans that he recently had visited Mecca on pilgrimage. He and other Comorian rulers traced their ancestry to the Middle East. [[19]](#footnote-19) They also maintained connections with leaders in the region. In 1703, a British captain visited Anjouan and described the frequency with which ships from Mukha, Surat, Ormuz, and Muscat visited the island. Before leaving, the sultan of Anjouan gave the captain a “letter of recommendation to Bona Sultan Zoff the Arabian king at Muscat” to carry on his voyage to the northern Indian Ocean.[[20]](#footnote-20)

For several centuries, communities on the Comoro Islands relied upon imports of food and slaves from Madagascar, selling these imports to both European and non-European ships during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[[21]](#footnote-21) Populations in the Comoros were relatively small and leaders on the islands likely imported slaves from Madagascar for resale to slave traders. As late as 1794, the French still bought slaves for their Indian Ocean possessions from merchants in Anjouan.[[22]](#footnote-22) The supplies of slaves coming from northwestern Madagascar probably became more limited during the late eighteenth century, as the Merina exported fewer slaves from the interior of Madagascar. As a result, the Sakalava and Comorians now had a shortage of slaves for use locally and for sale to visiting traders. In fact, Malagasy raiders attacking the islands might have been in search of slaves, or so speculated Europeans during the nineteenth century.[[23]](#footnote-23)

Given the timing and specific actions of the raiders, however, it appears more likely that the attacks were prompted by political conflicts within the Comoro Islands. Muslim sultans governed the islands.[[24]](#footnote-24) Throughout the early modern period, sultans on Anjouan repeatedly tried express their dominance over the other, more fertile, islands in the group.[[25]](#footnote-25) In 1601, an Anjouani sultan claimed that he had ruled over the neighboring islands for centuries.[[26]](#footnote-26) A century later, in 1704, a British captain met with a “governor” on Anjouan. During the meeting, the sultan described the Mohélians as his tributaries for the past four hundred years. He complained that he had not received tribute from them in years.[[27]](#footnote-27) Constant power struggles strained relationships between Comorian leaders. In 1750, the captain of an English East India Company ship, the Warren, attempted to buy rice and cattle at Mohéli, and then Anjouan. He angered the leaders of both islands for trying to purchase food from both islands.[[28]](#footnote-28)

These conflicts were not just between island leaders. Just a few years prior to the raids, rebellions in Anjouan disrupted the trade within the region. The EIC ship the Walpole visited Anjouan in 1786. He reported that, “There was a great scarcity of bullocks and poultry owing to the country people having rebelled against the king.”[[29]](#footnote-29) These rebellions were indicative of struggles on the island, perhaps between the leaders who managed oceanic trade and the people who produced the crops for export.[[30]](#footnote-30) These disputes may have represented an opportunity for rival leaders in the Comoros and they may have asked the Malagasy for assistance. Traditionally, sultans in the Comoros sent their soldiers in canoes to attack their enemies and this was the strategy used by the Malagasy raiders. This may not have even been the first time the Malagasy intervened on behalf of their Comorian trading partners.[[31]](#footnote-31) Some historians have speculated that the raiders were mercenaries, hired by leaders in the Comoros, but the attacks got out of hand.[[32]](#footnote-32)

**The Attacks**

When the raids began during the 1790s, they targeted communities on Anjouan. There were few sources describing these attacks until a sultan on Anjouan attempted to draw the British into the conflict. In 1796, the eldest son of the sultan visited British officials in Bombay. He begged the British government to take control of the island and protect the islanders from Malagasy soldiers. The prince reminded the British of the long history of peaceful trade between British traders and the people of Anjouan. In return for granting the island to the British, the prince asked for a ship with several hundred guns and instruction on the use of these weapons.[[33]](#footnote-33) The British, perhaps consumed with struggles elsewhere, ignored this plea for assistance.

The attacks then spread beyond Anjouan and into the neighboring islands. In 1797, a fleet of “Betsimisaraka” warriors attacked Mayotte, reportedly targeting a region inhabited by settlers from Anjouan. The raiders destroyed a village on the island the following year.[[34]](#footnote-34) Several more attacks occurred during the first decades of the nineteenth century. It appears that the Malagasy attacked communities on both Anjouan and Grand Comore in 1802, and then Grand Comore in 1808, 1810, and 1814.[[35]](#footnote-35) They may have raided the islands on other years as well. The warriors burnt the homes of the Comorians and stole their cattle and slaves. In the wake of these attacks, Comorians built defensive walls around their settlements, but many inhabitants also fled into the interior of the islands. They also travelled to other islands and even to the east coast of Africa to escape the Malagasy raiders. Many villages in Mayotte and Anjouan were deserted after the first years of these attacks.[[36]](#footnote-36)

According to one account, the raiders came from various locations throughout the island, but they met before sailing to the Comoros Islands together. The people described themselves as Betsimisaraka, Sakalava, Antankara, and Antavaratra (the latter two groups from the north).[[37]](#footnote-37) The leader was a king known as *Fohiloha* and the warriors came in large canoes known as *lakandrafitra*.[[38]](#footnote-38) Starting around October, the year being unspecified, different chiefs on the east coast of Madagascar gathered warriors. They each sent armed canoes of thirty to thirty-six men to the north. These canoes met more warriors at Vohémar and then rounded the northern end of Madagascar. They halted at Nosy Be on the northwest coast, an island over a hundred miles from Vohémar. The canoes from the east met many more warriors arriving from the west coast. The attacking force was reportedly comprised of four to five hundred canoes, carrying a total of 15,000 to 18,000 men.[[39]](#footnote-39) This description does not provide further information about the destination of the warriors.

The chronicle of a leader on Grand Comore, Said Bakari bin Sultani Ahmed, provides an account of the conduct of the warriors when they arrived at the island. Said Bakari described the struggle against the Malagasy invaders as *Kupijana na Wabuki*. Around 1798, the Wabuki (Malagasy), arrived at Fumbani, a town on Grand Comore, but Comorian soldiers repulsed the warriors. According to his account, the Malagasy attacked the town of Ikoni on the island on three separate occasions, in roughly 1808, 1810 and again in 1814.[[40]](#footnote-40) The Comorians repeatedly repulsed the Malagasy attackers and forced them to flee.[[41]](#footnote-41)

When the warriors arrived at the island, they would establish a base where they stayed for seven or eight months before returning to Madagascar.[[42]](#footnote-42) From there, they undertook raids on nearby communities, stealing food and slaves, returning to Madagascar several months later with their spoils. During the final attack on Ikoni, the Malagasy developed a plan for their defense. The Malagasy built a stockade and a rock fortress, known as a *manda*, around their encampment.[[43]](#footnote-43) They attacked the islanders, capturing and enslaving those who could not fight, and killing the others. In this final invasion, the Malagasy captured many elites, male and female, and demanded ransom for their release. Then the Malagasy returned to Madagascar in their canoes.[[44]](#footnote-44)

As with the earliest attacks, these attacks provoked the leaders of the Comoros to seek outside assistance. In 1800, the sultan Abdulla of Anjouan asked the English for help in this “unjust war” with Madagascar.[[45]](#footnote-45) Again, in 1807, he attempted to cede all four Comoro Islands to the British, but they dismissed his claim to the throne.[[46]](#footnote-46) Despite the English dismissal of Comorian complaints, other European groups became drawn into conflicts with these Malagasy warriors. On one of these return trips in 1805, the Malagasy canoes encountered a Portuguese ship visiting Anjouan. A fleet of twenty-five canoes, each holding about twenty or more armed men, approached the ship. The Portuguese, thinking the men were friendly, allowed them to board the ship. The Malagasy killed almost all of the crew and stole trading goods from the ship.[[47]](#footnote-47) Portuguese rulers in Mozambique were determined to seek retribution. In 1806, the Portuguese sent a ship to visit Anjouan and then to Cap d'Ambre, the northernmost point of Madagascar. The Portuguese failed to see any threatening Malagasy in canoes and returned to Mozambique.[[48]](#footnote-48)

Malagasy warriors began attacking East African communities around 1800, further antagonizing the Portuguese of Mozambique. Due to the timing and similarities of the raids, all of these attempts appeared linked. Portuguese sources described the attacks on Mozambique. According to one account, three boats of about sixty people arrived on the coast of East Africa in 1800. The men waited for the monsoon winds to change and allow their crossing of the channel, but they had no food to eat. They resorted to robbing coastal communities for food, also stealing slaves. This source does not explicitly describe the visitors as Malagasy, although these men traveled in canoes of the type used in Madagascar, not the dhows sailed by Swahili and Comorian traders.[[49]](#footnote-49) It seems unlikely that Malagasy traders would have been travelling to Mozambique, over three hundred miles from Madagascar, in canoes, although it was possible. More likely, these raiders were linked to the Comoro attacks, especially given subsequent events. It appears the Malagasy were expanding their range of influence from beyond the Comoro Islands to the East African coast.

In 1808 and 1809, “Sakalava” canoes landed at coastal villages throughout East Africa, from Ushanga to Tungui. The Malagasy had crossed the Mozambique Channel, a wide body of water with unpredictable currents and comparatively distant from the west coast of Madagascar. It may have taken these fleets several weeks to cross the channel. After they arrived, the Malagasy began attacking local villages, but they faced losses in their numbers due to deaths in these battles and an outbreak of the small pox among the Malagasy. During their trip to Mozambique, the Malagasy took eight hundred Africans hostage. Swahili traders paid ransoms for some of these captives, but to do so, they had to travel to the Sakalava trading port of Bombetoc, located on the west coast of Madagascar.[[50]](#footnote-50)

After these attacks, warnings of future raids reached the Portuguese colonial leaders in Mozambique. In 1814, the sultan of Anjouan warned the Portuguese of another attack on Mozambique, although the warning proved ungrounded.[[51]](#footnote-51) The following year, however, different “Moors,” likely traders frequenting the ports of Mozambique, the Comoros, and Madagascar, told the Portuguese that the “Sakalava” were sending forty canoes to attack the coast. The Portuguese prepared for battle and attacked the raiders while they were on Quirimba Island, three hundred miles to the north of Mozambique Island. The Malagasy suffered many losses in this attack and retreated to Madagascar. Despite the Portuguese victory, many Mozambicans fled inland in fear of future attacks.[[52]](#footnote-52)

In 1816, another fleet, reportedly consisting of a hundred fifty canoes reached East Africa. The Portuguese heard that the fleet was moving south following their attack at the island of Kilwa to the north. The fleet reached Mozambique six months later, but now consisted of seventy-one canoes. The fleet was led by “Prince Sicandar of Anjouan” who told the Portuguese that he was headed to battle with the Shaikh of Sancul, a Swahili sultan living on the African mainland near Mozambique Island. The Prince explained that they had simply gotten off course and that they meant no harm to the Portuguese or their subjects. The Portuguese leaders refused to believe the Prince and attacked the raiders.[[53]](#footnote-53) If the Prince was from Anjouan, this Comorian leader may have led the attack with the help of Malagasy mercenaries.

The second half of this attacking fleet, likely separated in the crossing of the channel, consisted of an estimated five hundred canoes. A “Moor” named “Nassiri” commanded this fleet. His force also attacked Kilwa before disembarking near Mozambique Island. These raiders left after the Portuguese refused to leave their fortress on the east coast. Later that year, Portuguese colonial officials observed about thirty-eight canoes attacking villages along the east coast. When the canoes came close to Zanzibar Island, the Zanzibari sultan sent ships to fight against the “Sakalava” intruders who were armed, not with firearms, but with spears, perhaps due to convenience. The Zanzibari soldiers defeated the invaders. After their defeat, the leader of the raiders swore to the sultan that they would not return. He also promised they would cease attacking the “Umani [Omani] and Portuguese coasts of East Africa.”[[54]](#footnote-54) The raiders appeared to target specific leaders in East Africa, not Europeans, and only halted when challenged by African leaders. There were no more recorded incidences of raids conducted by warriors in canoes.

**A New Era**

These raids produced disorder throughout the southwestern Indian Ocean region. People formerly living along the Mozambique coast fled inland, at least temporarily. Even after the defeat of the invaders, they feared future attacks. Comorians fled to the East African coast and sought protection in Omani-controlled Zanzibar.[[55]](#footnote-55) They left major sections of Mayotte deserted.[[56]](#footnote-56) The people who remained fortified their cities in defense of future attacks and these walls are still visible on the islands.[[57]](#footnote-57) In 1819, the Portuguese heard rumors that a hundred-canoe fleet had left Madagascar. They later received a report that a cyclone destroyed all of these canoes while they were crossing the Mozambique Channel.[[58]](#footnote-58)

From the perspective of all the other turmoil of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, these raids were small, short-lived, and undertaken by only a few thousand warriors. The numbers of slaves captured in the raids were also small in number. Perhaps for this reason, the raids did not profoundly alter the commercial relationships between the Sakalava and communities on the Mozambique coast or in the Comoro islands. Communities in these regions were accustomed to sea battles and struggles for control of commerce and political leadership.[[59]](#footnote-59) In fact, attacks of this kind may have been a more common feature of the landscape of the southwestern Indian Ocean than has been assumed.[[60]](#footnote-60)

The attacks nevertheless marked the start a new era in terms of relations between the Sakalava and the British. The British expressed an interest in creating a peaceful, commercially productive zone in the southwest Indian Ocean.[[61]](#footnote-61) The raids proved that the Malagasy, without European oversight, were incapable of guaranteeing the smooth flow of commodities from and within the region. These excursions coincided with the British resolutions of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to abolish the slave trade in the Atlantic and Indian oceans.[[62]](#footnote-62) When the rulers of the Comoros complained about the raids, the British quickly linked them to a score of evils associated with the slave trade in the Indian Ocean. Sakalava and Betsimisaraka leaders came under attack for their participation in the raids and the slave trade. In British eyes, the Sakalava went from trading partners to bandits. The Sakalava were described as “a nation of pirates,” as they had disobeyed maritime laws. One European explained that the “subjects of the Queen of Pembetoc [Bombetoc]” had attacked the Comoro Islands in search of slaves to sell to the French.[[63]](#footnote-63)

What role did Sakalava leaders play in the attacks? The evidence suggests only indirect leadership by the Sakalava. Although the warriors had leaders, none of them described themselves as Sakalava nor were the leaders using names of Sakalava monarchs. Instead, the leaders of the attacks seem to have varied from year to year. The raiders were skilled in ocean travel, suggesting they came from the northern portion of Madagascar. Malagasy along the west coast of the island used outrigger canoes for river travel within the island or for short fishing expeditions, but these canoes tended to be relatively small. Scholars have suggested communities on the east coast of Madagascar built the large canoes, similar in proportion to the canoes used by fishermen for killing whales.[[64]](#footnote-64) Malagasy from both coasts probably participated in the raids. The Sakalava Empire had integrated Malagasy populations through a commercial system that stretched from the west coast to the northeast of the island. Networks enabled by the Sakalava Empire may have helped warriors coordinate the attacks from both sides of Madagascar.

Between 1780 and 1808, the Sakalava queen Ravahiny controlled the northwest half of the empire. In 1805, she sent a warning to the governor-general of Mozambique that a fleet of six hundred canoes had left her coast to attack the east coast of Africa. She insisted that these ships, of twenty to twenty-five tons each, carried her people, but were not under her command.[[65]](#footnote-65) We can speculate that she may have sent similar warnings to the Comoro Islands. Why did she send this warning? Ravahiny had developed closer commercial ties with leaders in the Comoros and East Africa during this period, perhaps prompting her to send the warning to Mozambique. Even during the time of these raids, the leaders in the region continued to trade with the Sakalava state, which would have been unlikely if the Sakalava leadership was directly involved in the attacks. Trade in the Sakalava-controlled northwest ports flourished towards the end of the eighteenth century, despite the growth of the Merina state. Sakalava concentrated on defending their territory against the Merina, especially as they slowly incorporated previously independent highland states that had been Sakalava trading partners.[[66]](#footnote-66) The entire west coast, however, remained peaceful and prosperous under Sakalava control. Wars between the Sakalava and the Merina on the empire's borders did not disrupt commerce.[[67]](#footnote-67) During this period, however, the Sakalava searched for new allies and commercial partners and they found them among the Muslim rulers of the Comoros and East Africa.

By 1820, the Sakalava Empire appeared strong and prosperous to passing Europeans, due, in part, to the strengthening of these alliances.[[68]](#footnote-68) The northern Sakalava-controlled territories supplied cattle for export to Merina markets, to the east coast, and to passing European ships.[[69]](#footnote-69) In St. Augustine's Bay, the inhabitants struck hard bargains with Europeans, bartering “with a judgment matured by experience.”[[70]](#footnote-70) Sakalava ports also received increased numbers of ships from the Atlantic. By 1816, American ships, particularly whalers, frequented northwest Madagascar.[[71]](#footnote-71) Their watering and refueling in Sakalava ports increased the flow of money, goods, and firearms to the Sakalava Empire. The French also steadily increased their presence in and around Madagascar. They relied upon the island for food and small numbers of slaves.[[72]](#footnote-72) When the British took control of Mauritius in 1815, however, they engaged contract laborers and attempted to halt Sakalava exports of slaves.

Despite the existence of these other traders visiting their ports, the Sakalava came to depend upon trading networks that linked them with Comorian, Swahili, Arab, and Indian merchants. Ravahiny was responsible for overseeing the expansion of Sakalava economic influence and welcoming traders from all around the Indian Ocean to settle in her domains.[[73]](#footnote-73) She oversaw the administration of trade in the port of “Mouzangaye,” home of “Arab” and “Indian” merchants.[[74]](#footnote-74) There was no evidence of these traders living in such large numbers in the port cities until the middle of the eighteenth century.[[75]](#footnote-75) The queen oversaw justice and punished thefts in the port cities. She ensured that Indians accused of crimes were judged by other Indians, but oversaw the punishment of Sakalava thieves herself.[[76]](#footnote-76) The queen also determined guilt for crimes by using poison trials involving the consumption of a poisonous plant called *tanguin*.[[77]](#footnote-77) She appointed three leaders, “Arab sheiks,” to develop the trade in rice, slaves, and cattle from her ports.[[78]](#footnote-78)

Between 1808 and 1822, under the leadership of Ravahiny’s successor, Tsimaloma, the northwestern trade continued to flourish, in spite of increasing Merina competition. The Sakalava continued to supervise the trade between Nosy Be and Diego Suarez with Surat and other ports in the northern Indian Ocean.[[79]](#footnote-79) By 1820, the town of “Mazangaye” [Moudzagaye or Majunga] was frequented by Arab, Swahili, American, Portuguese, Indian, and French traders.[[80]](#footnote-80) The influence of Islam in this region appeared to have increased, according to one French traveler, who described two Arab merchants who acted as “missionaries” from Muscat during the 1820s and 1830s.[[81]](#footnote-81) The ascendency of Omani influence in the southwestern Indian Ocean may have encouraged conversion to Islam among the Sakalava.[[82]](#footnote-82)

Sakalava merchants also changed their slave trading patterns and began to import slaves from East Africa. They used to purchase slaves from the highlands or obtain them through warfare. The Merina gradually halted the practice of enslavement, particularly among incorporated subjects, and, as a result, the Sakalava had difficulty obtaining supplies within Madagascar.[[83]](#footnote-83) As early as 1808, slaves from Mozambique arrived in Bombetoc, although this trade may have begun decades earlier.[[84]](#footnote-84) Hundreds of slaves were imported into northwestern Madagascar during the nineteenth century, although exact numbers are unknown. In 1876, one missionary observed that, in one northwest district, over two-thirds of the population was “African” or “Makoa.”[[85]](#footnote-85) Some of the slaves were used locally and were engaged in agriculture tasks and cattle-herding. These slaves developed their own “Makua” (also known as Makoa or Masombika) communities in northwest and western Madagascar, where they continued to speak Swahili. A century later, however, they had become part of Sakalava communities.[[86]](#footnote-86)

Europeans, especially British abolitionists, recorded information about the slave trade across the Mozambique Channel. The Sakalava imported slaves from Mozambique and then sold the slaves to Europeans passing by their shores, until the British attempted to enforce the restrictions on the slave trade. The Sakalava also used their links with leaders in East Africa and the Comoro islands to transform their ports into transshipment centers for slaves. States in Mozambique, in particular, began exporting large numbers of slaves by the late eighteenth century, to Europeans and, increasingly, to Arabs.[[87]](#footnote-87) As the need to evade British anti-slave trade patrols increased, the rulers sent their agents to Boina to coordinate the shipment of slaves from Mozambique to the Comoros, Zanzibar, and the Arabian Peninsula. Sakalava and Antaloatra traders in northwest Madagascar oversaw communication between traders throughout the region, controlled the movement of payment for slaves, and ensured that the slave trade within the region continued for the entire nineteenth century. [[88]](#footnote-88)

**The Anglo-Merina Treaty**

Changes during the nineteenth century increased commercial opportunities for the people of northern and western Madagascar, who emphasized their connections with Comorian, Swahili, and Mozambican communities. This period of increasing commercial interactions that enabled population movements across the ocean, also was a period of intense violence.[[89]](#footnote-89) Sakalava leaders and others throughout the southwestern Indian Ocean region participated in bloody battles for the domination of trade and experienced a drastic reduction of the territories under their control. The development of coastal states in Mozambique led to the massive export of slaves from East Africa to the Mascarenes and the Americas. The Omani sultanate firmly established itself as a global commercial empire by 1798, after fighting bloody battles for the control of coastal East Africa.[[90]](#footnote-90)

In the midst of these changes, the British aggressively pursued a plan to dominate global commerce. By 1814, following the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars, the British controlled portions of India and southern Africa, as well as Mauritius. Now that they possessed military and commercial bases on the shores of the Indian Ocean, the British focused upon gaining direct access to the trade within the ocean. They believed the slave trade hampered their access to valuable commodities such as gold, ivory, and cloth. To end the slave trade, British officials formed an alliance with the Omani sultan living in Zanzibar. By 1820, Zanzibar had become the main destination for slaves coming from Mozambique, via Madagascar. As one observer stated in 1871, Zanzibar was an “emporium for the sea-borne trade of Madagascar, Mozambique, the Comoro Islands, and the whole of the East Coast of Africa.”[[91]](#footnote-91) Zanzibari owners used their slaves as plantation workers, but many of the slaves were shipped north towards the Arabian Peninsula.[[92]](#footnote-92) British officials pressured leaders in Zanzibar to end this slave trade and the Omani sultan passed several decrees that would slowly abolish the trade. Arabs and Africans still managed to get around the slave trade ban and dhows continued to carry slaves from East Africa, to Madagascar, and then to Zanzibar through the 1890s.[[93]](#footnote-93)

Due to the role of the Malagasy in coordinating the slave trade, the British also pressured rulers on the island to sign treaties abolishing the trade. The British began by establishing a close relationship with the Merina king, Radama. Around 1810, after the British had assumed control of Mauritius, the British began trading in Tamatave, a port in eastern Madagascar. Radama provided merchants in Tamatave with food and other exports and he developed a close relationship with the British. In order to end the slave trade on the coasts of the island, the British agreed to assist Radama in seizing control of territory in Madagascar.

In 1817, Radama signed a proclamation for the abolition of the slave trade.[[94]](#footnote-94) In the treaty, he was described as the “king of Madagascar.” He urged his “brother, Jean Rene,” the “chief” of Tamatave, and other chiefs on the coast to end the slave trade. He also requested that they “abstain from any maritime predatory excursion whatever.” He warned against any future raids on the Comoro Islands or East African coast. He stated that the culprits would earn his “most severe displeasure, and of incurring the punishment due to pirates.” In so doing, the treaty implicitly targeted the Sakalava. The treaty did not just recognize Radama as the sole legitimate “King of Madagascar,” but also gave him the right to seize any slave ships operating around Madagascar and to punish slave traders as pirates. In return for signing this treaty, the British agreed to provide Radama with military assistance, in the form of training and materials, especially weapons.[[95]](#footnote-95)

The British observed in 1821 that Radama was overseeing the complete abolition of the slave trade and “adhering religiously” to his treaties and agreements with the British.[[96]](#footnote-96) With British military assistance, Radama extended his control first to the east and forced the ruler of Tamatave into recognizing Merina rule. Radama expanded his hold on rice-producing sections of the east coast of Madagascar and gained access to more laborers. The Merina government implemented strict labor-controls and taxation throughout the region. Producing exports and making the Merina Empire self-sustaining became one of the goals of its rulers.[[97]](#footnote-97) Radama set his sights next on the Sakalava-controlled territory to the north and west. Merina armies attempted to seize control of a number of Sakalava ports: Vohémar, Diego Suarez, Majunga, and St. Augustine's Bay. In 1824, Radama took control of the port of Majunga, previously a center of Sakalava trade. With the help of the British navy, he now controlled the previous center of the northwestern trade of the island and, from there, he could oversee the suppression of the slave trade.[[98]](#footnote-98)

Despite the seizure of Majunga, however, Radama still had not conquered the Sakalava Empire. The Sakalava identity would become an important rallying call for people oppressed by Merina armies and a means for people to retain their own history and beliefs in the face of conquest. Northwestern Sakalava ports, such as Bombetoc, remained centers of illicit slave trading and of Sakalava resistance. In response to the barriers placed to Sakalava imperial expansion, the Sakalava Empire turned inwards and focused on consolidating power within the homeland of the state. The transformation of the state represented, in many ways, a return an emphasis on the ties between Malagasy communities and the land they occupied.

The next chapter traces how the Sakalava Empire fractured in response to these new pressures from the British, French, and Merina Empires. Even while the Sakalava divided into several distinct groups, Sakalava rulers preserved the memory of the empire as a potent source of unification and rebellion through the nineteenth century. With reduced resources and fewer opportunities to gain power locally and globally, the Sakalava ceased to be a cohesive and powerful empire.

1. The Portuguese archives may contain descriptions of this trade between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. Various historians have begun to explore the chronology of this trade, although few trace the shift from the late sixteenth century Portuguese-observed trade to the relatively abundant observations of the nineteenth century. For instance, Campbell entitled a chapter on trade patterns, “The Traditional Economy, 1750-1820,” in Gwyn Campbell, *An Economic History of Imperial Madagascar 1750-1895: the Rise and Fall of an Island Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Philip H. Colomb, *Slave-Catching in the Indian Ocean: A Record of Naval Experiences* (originally published in 1873; London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1968,), 21-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. “Report addressed to the Earl of Clarendon by the Committee on the East African Slave Trade”, January 24, 1870, in “BL 1/1 - State Papers Relating to East Africa, 1857-1874, Volume 1,” Zanzibar National Archives, f. 6 (henceforth ZNA). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This growth was a result of increasing slave trading across the Mozambique Channel. See Nancy Jane Hafkin, “Trade, Society, and Politics in Northern Mozambique, c. 1753-1913” (PhD diss., Boston University, 1973). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. For details, see Chapters 2 and 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. These mechanisms include intermarriage with conquered peoples, as well as the fati-dra ceremony. Sakalava commercial influence followed military intervention in the Indian Ocean, as it had within Madagascar. For details, see Chapter 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Pomeranz argues for the importance of raw materials for economic development during this period, see Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: Europe, China, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

   The highland state was named the Merina kingdom under the rule of Andrianampoinimerina, who first led the kingdom in 1795. When the state is described prior to this date, it will be called the Hova state. On details of this terminology, see Solofo Randrianja and Stephen Ellis, *Madagascar: A Short History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 112. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Henry Salt, a British traveler, states that he learned from Arab traders about “a nation of pirates on the north-east point of Madagascar, called by the Portuguese Sekelaves, but whose real name I have season to believe is Marati, which for many years back has been known to infest the Comoro Islands.” In the footnote, Salt clarifies: “this I learned subsequently from the Arabian traders. The Sekelaves, I was informed by Captain Fisher and others who visited that part of the island, are subjects of the Queen of Pembetoc, residing on the north-western side of Madagascar.” Henry Salt, *A voyage to Abyssinia, and Travels into the Interior of that Country, Executed under the Orders of the British Government in the Years 1809 and 1810* (originally published 1816; London: Cass, 1967), 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Despite the identification as the pirates by the English, most scholars now allow for some ambiguity in the identities. For instance: Gwyn Campbell, “The Structure of Trade in Madagascar, 1750-1810,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 26, no. 1 (1993): 14; Jean Martin, *Comores: quatre îles entre pirates et planteurs*, 2 vols. (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1983). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Edward Alpers, “Madagascar and Mozambique in the Nineteenth Century: the Era of the Sakalava Raids (1800-1820),” *Omaly sy anio* 5-6 (1977): 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Alpers has cited descriptions of the canoes as “laka” in Portuguese sources, although they are also called lakana. Edward Alpers, “Madagascar and Mozambique,” 42. Martin implies that they were *lakan-*drafitra, or canoes made of boards found primarily in southern Madagascar. Martin, *Comores*, 89. For recent description of their construction in western Madagascar, see Rita Astuti, *People of the Sea: Identity and Descent among the Vezo of Madagascar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 18-22. The use of outrigger canoes has been traced to Indonesia and East Africa. For linkages between the outriggers of Madagascar and those of East Africa and Indonesia, see James Hornell, “The Common Origin of the Outrigger Canoes of Madagascar and East Africa,” *Man* 20 (1920): 134-9. In western Madagascar, Malagasy built canoes with a single or double outrigger. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. They could be as large as 10 by 1.2 meters. Gwyn Campbell, *An Economic History,* 38. Scholars have speculated that these canoes had been used on the east coast of Madagascar in whale hunting. Gevrey refers to them as *pirogues*, or canoes, and likens them to those of eastern Madagascar. Alfred Gevrey, *Essai sur les Comores* (Pondichery: A. Saligny, 1870), 106, 212. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. James Prior, *Voyage along the Eastern Coast of Africa, to Mosambique, Johanna, and Quiloa; to St. Helena; to Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, and Pernambuco in Brazil, in the Nisus Frigate* (London: Sir Richard Phillips and Co, 1819), 58-60. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The Portuguese sources are summarized by Alpers, “Madagascar and Mozambique.” The other sources are Gevrey, *Essai sur les comores* and Said Bakari Bin Sultani Ahmed, *The Swahili Chronicle of Ngazija*, ed. Lyndon Harries (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 1977). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Ahmed, *The Swahili Chronicle*, 22. On Buki as a term for non-Muslim Malagasy, see a description by Ramusio of Madagascar in 1550 in which he states that the Arabs and Swahili called the Malagasy “Bouki,” COACM, 1: 99. Buki does not seem to be a Malagasy word but rather the Swahili term for Madagascar. Interestingly, one Swahili dictionary defines Malagasy as *Mbuki* and an inhabitant of the western coast of Madagascar as *Msakalawa*. See *The Kamusi Project*, an online “living Swahili dictionary,”

    http://kamusiproject.org <accessed 2 March 2010>. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Martin, *Comores*, 1: 101-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. On Comorian dhows, see Captain Stanes, “A Journal of a voyage to Muscat and Surrat,” 1703, “Add. 24931,” ff. 96; a slightly different copy of the account by Stanes can be found in “Sloane Ms. 3145.” [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Pre-sixteenth century Arabic documents frequently refer to the land of this part of the indian Ocean as “al Qumr,” of the moon, used interchangeably for the Comoro islands, Madagascar, and even East African islands. See Ahmad ibn Majid al-Najdi, *Arab navigation in the Indian Ocean before the coming of the Portuguese* G. R. Tibbetts, ed. (London: Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1972), 433-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Richard Cocks, letter to the Right Worshipful Sir Thomas Smith, Knight, Governor of the East India Company, 12 January 1612, in *Letters Received by the East India Company*, ed. Frederick Charles Danvers (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1896), 1: 215; “Relâche de John Saris à L’île de Moheli”, 1611, COACM, 1: 480. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Stanes, “A Journal of a voyage to Muscat and Surrat,” ff. 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Remarks on the principal bays and harbors of île Dauphine, 1670 , “COL C/5A/1”; the ship journal of the Lion, 1615, “IOR/L/MAR/A/XVIII”; the ship journal of the Hart, 1627, “IOR/L/MAR/A/XLIX”; the ship journal of the Hector, 1614, “IOR/L/MAR/A/XX”; the ship journal of the Hopewell, 1628, “IOR/L/MAR/A/XLVI.” Food like rice and meat was also sold to non-European traders: see records of visits to the Comoros, COACM, 2: 361; the ship journal of the Discovery, 1626, “IOR/L/MAR/A/XLIII” and “IOR/L/MAR/A/XLIV. Two useful collections of European sources concerning the Comoros: Anne Molet-Sauvaget, ed. *Documents anciens sur les îles Comores: 1591-1810* (Paris: Institut des langues et civilisations orientales, 1994); Anne Molet-Sauvaget, ed. *Documents anciens sur les îles Comores: 1591-1800, Supplement / II* (Paris: Institut des langues et civilisations orientales, 1996). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. In this case, these slaves were intended for the Seychelles, which the French had just begun to settle. Letter, 1794, “COL C/4/146-147.” [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Martin, *Comores*, 1: 86; Gevrey, *Essai sur les Comores*, 212-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. On the exercise of power in the Comoros, see Sultan Chouzour, *Le pouvoir de l'honneur: tradition et contestation en Grande Comore* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994). Robineau argues the raids were an extension of this practice: Claude Robineau, “L'Islam aux Comores: Une étude d'histoire culturelle de l'île d'Anjouan.” in *Arabes et Islamisés à Madagascar et dans l'océan Indien* (Revue de Madagascar, distribué par Hachette-Madagascar, 1967), 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. On the production of the various islands, see Claude Chanudet and Jean-Aimé Rakotoarisoa, *Mohéli: une île des Comores à la recherche de son identité* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. “Relâche aux îles comores et maurice de Jacques van Heemskerk (1601-1602),” COACM 1: 272; see also: “Relâche aux isles comores de l'Amiral G. Spilberg”(1601-2), ibid., 1: 319. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Captain Stanes, “A Journal of a voyage to Muscat and Surrat,” ff. 90, 113. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. The ship journal of the Warren, 1749, “IOR/L/MAR/B/571 A.”

    The English had developed a close relationship with the leaders of Anjouan. See letter, 1676, Letter book, “IOR/E/3/88,” f. 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. The ship journal of the Walpole, 1786, “IOR/L/MAR/B/293O.” [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Martin describes them as disputes from peasants and slaves against their ruler in Domoni, on Anjouan. He describes the disputes as protests against taxes during the 1770s and 1780s. Martin, *Comores*, 53. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. In 1700, the kings of Comoro were at war with those of Anjouan and, again in 1715, French traders noted the constant wars among the islands: the ship journal of the Pearl, 1700, and the ship journal of the Deux Couronner, 1715, both in “MAR 4 JJ/111.” A French traveler observed in 1713 that the king of Anjouan was at war that that of Mohéli: Jean de La Roque, *A Voyage to Arabia Felix*, trans. Dominique de Moulins and Carl Phillips (New York: The Oleander Press, 2004), 13-14. In 1713, the French also confirmed that the people of Anjouan at war with those of Mohéli and Mayotte: the ship journal of the Lis, “MAR 4 JJ/94.” When a French ship visited Anjouan in 1736, the king of Mayotte was there, having been dethroned by his brother and asking the Anjouan king for assistance: the ship journal of the Appollon, 1736, “MAR 4 JJ/98.” One French captain described the king of Anjouan as master of Mayotte, although he also says the people of Moheli fight against the Anjouan soldiers. The ship journal of the Penthiere, 1743, “MAR 4 JJ/116.” [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Chiefly in Martin, *Comores*, 1: 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. “Memo relative to the offer of the King of Baba to cede the Island of Johanna to the Company,” 1796, Home Miscellaneous, India Office Records, “IOR/H/511,” British Library, f. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. *Chroniques mahoraises*, ed. Jean-François Gourlet (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001), 40-2; Gevrey, *Essai sur les Comores*, 210-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Ahmed, *Swahili Chronicle*, 98; Martin, *Comores*, 1: 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Gevrey, *Essai sur les Comores*, 212-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Martin, *Comores*, 1: 83. It seems likely that Antankara was ruled by Lamboine, a Sakalava ally and tributary, during the eighteenth century. See Chapter 4. The Antavaratra probably came from the northeast coast. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Ibid, 89; Ahmed, *Swahili Chronicle*, 100. It has been suggested that an individual from eastern Madagascar, a celebrated warrior, was named Fohiloha. See G. S. Chapus and Andre Dandouau, *Manuel d'histoire de Madagascar* (Paris: Larose, 1961), 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. The details are derived from a description of M. Ep. Colin, *Annales des voyages*, tome 13, Malte-Brun and cited in Gevrey, *Essai sur les Comores*, 210-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Ahmed, *Swahili Chronicle*, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. The attackers were targeting the Sultan Ahmed of Grande Comore. The Comorians, according to the chronicle, were assisted by slaves the sultan had imported from East Africa and armed with guns. Ahmed, *Swahili Chronicles*, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Martin, *Comores*, 1: 90. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Ahmed, *Swahili Chronicle*, 100; on the building of manda on the west coast of Madagacar, see Chantal Radimilahy and Barthélémy Manjakahery, “Archaeology of St Augustine's Bay, Lower and Middle Onilahy Valley, Southwestern Madagascar,” *Studies in the African Past* 5, no. (2006): 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Ahmed, *Swahili Chronicle*, 52-3, 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Abdullah, king of Joanna, letter to EIC governor in Bombay, 10 July 1800, India Office Records, Home Miscellaneous “IOR/H/473,” f. 241-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Letter on events in Anjouan, 1807, “IOR/H/511,” f. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Ahmed, *Swahili Chronicle*, 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Alpers, “Madagascar and Mozambique,” 40; Martin, *Comores*, 1: 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Alpers, “Madagascar and Mozambique,” 38-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Ibid., 40-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Ibid., 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Ibid., 42-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Ibid., 43. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Ibid., 44-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Comorians continued migrating to Zanzibar throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. See Anne K. Bang, *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea: Family Networks in East Africa, 1860-1925* (London: Routledge, 2003), 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Gevrey, *Essai sur les Comores*, 212-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Martin Ottenheimer, *Marriage in Domoni: Husbands and Wives in an Indian Ocean Community* (Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, 1985), 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Alpers, “Madagascar and Mozambique,” 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Conflicts on the East African and Comoro Islands not involving Europeans have been described by archeologists and historians at length. On warfare in East Africa between Zanzibar i and Omani officials with East Africans, see the chronicle of Pate: Marina Tolmacheva, *The Pate Chronicle* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1993), 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Examples of canoes being used with warfare in Madagascar: on the east coast: the ship journal of the Duc d’Anjou, 1737, “MAR 4 JJ/76”; on the use of dhows in warfare in the Comoros, see Stanes, “Add. 24931,” f. 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Such ideas are repeatedly expressed by British abolitionists with increasing frequency towards the end of the nineteenth century. See, for instance, Bartle Frere’s records during his visit to Zanzibar, 1872-3, especially: Frere, letter, March 10, 1873, “AA 1/10,” ZNA, f. 192. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. On the impact in Madagascar in particular, see Gwyn Campbell, “Unfree labour and the significance of abolition in Madagascar, c. 1825-97,” in *Abolition and its aftermath in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*, ed. Gwyn Campbell. (Routledge, 2005), 66-73. Richard Allen argues that British abolitionist efforts in the Indian Ocean dated back to 1777: “Europeans and the movement of unfree laborers in the Indian Ocean, 1600-1850,” paper given at the conference for the Zanzibar Indian Ocean Research Institute, Zanzibar, August 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Salt, *A voyage to Abyssinia,* 76-79. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Campbell, *An Economic History*, 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Alpers, “Mozambique and Madagascar,” 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Mayeur, voyage to Ancove, January 1777, “Add. Ms. 18128-18129,” 1: 166. See also Conrad P. Kottak, “The Process of State Formation in Madagascar,” *American Ethnologist* 4, no. 1 (1977): 140-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Lacombe, *Voyage,* 2: 108. About the Sakalava leader giving his daughter to marry Radama, the Merina king, as well as the Sakalava trade with Arabs; ibid., 2: 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. See the following visits to western Madagascar: the ship log of the Aurora, 1801, “IOR/L/MAR/B/228 A”; the ship journal of the Preston, 1801, “IOR/L/MAR/B/307 B”; the ship journal of the Henry Dundas, 1801, “IOR/L/MAR/B/331 F”; Capmartin, voyage to St. Augustine’s Bay, 1804, in “Add. Ms. 18128-18129,” 1:63-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. On the development of this cattle trade, see Chapter 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. William MacIntosh, *Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa*, 2 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1781), 2: 394 [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. For instance, see the ship journal of the Amphitrite, 1816, *Fonds de la Marine, Séries modernes, Service Hydrographique,* “MAR 5 JJ/427,” French National Archives, Paris; the ship journal of the Cybèle, 1818, “MAR 5 JJ/415.” [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Allen, “The Constant Demand of the French.” [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Dumaine, visit to the west coast, 1793, in *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de L'isle de Madagascar* , ed. B. Froberville, Add. Ms. 18128-18129, 1: 295 [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. On the trade of “Mouzangaye,” see memoir, written by Desroches, 1816, in *Pieces Diverses Relatives à Madagascar,* ed. B. Froberville, “Add. 18135,” British Library, f. 36; Samuel Copland, *A History of the Island of Madagascar* (London: R. Clay for Burton and Smith, 1822), 2-18. In 1824, the British described the port as home to a “horde of Arabs, moors and Indians, who till now held the principal chieftain of this part of the island in complete subjection...” See the extract of a political letter, 1 December 1824, Board's Collections, “IOR/F/4/905,” British Library, ff. 77-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Early Portuguese sources describe Muslims living in the northwest, but in 1764, a British captain visiting “Managaro” observed the presence of “native Mores” and those of “Surate, Johana, Mosenbeck, and the Commoro islands. It is the sanctuary allowed for the Mores, by the king of this country.” See the ship journal of the Fly, 1763, “IOR/L/MAR/B/597 B.” [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Blanchy discusses the migration of Indians to northwestern Madagascar by around 1700: Sophie Blanchy, *Karana et Banians: Les communautés commerçantes d'origin indienne à Madagascar* (Paris: Harmattan, 1995), 51-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Tanguin trials were also used half a century later by Merina rulers to root out Christianity on the island. See the “tagena, or poison water” ritual in Lyons McLeod, *Madagascar and Its People* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969, originally published 1865), 87; François Callet, *Histoire Des Rois, Traduction Du Tantaran'ny Andriana*. 5 vols. (Tananarive: Éditions de la Librairie de Madagascar, 1953), 3: 204; André Coppalle, *Voyage dans l'intérieur de Madagascar et à la capitale du roi Radama Ier: Un peintre découvre la Grande Île, 1825-1826*, ed. Éric Poix (Besançon: Éditions la Lanterne magique, 2006), 116-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Dumaine, visit to the west coast, 1793, “Add. 18128-18129,” 1: 296-7; on Ravahiny, see Desroches, 15March 1816, “Notes sur Madagascar,” “Add. 18135,” f. 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. B. F. Leguével de Lacombe, *Voyage à Madagascar et aux îles Comores (1823 À 1830)*, 2 vols. (Paris: Louis Dessart, 1840), 2: 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Ibid., 2: 75-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Ibid., 2: 104. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Gevrey, *Essai sur les Comores*, 216-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Prior to around 1810, large numbers of slaves acquired through Merina wars of expansion were exported from the highlands to the east coast, for sale to the French from the Mascarenes. This trade came to a halt in part due to the lack of any other viable enemies in Madagascar. Randrianja and Ellis, *Madagascar*, 119-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. The order of 1808, in “Add. 18135,” f. 194. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Robert Kestrell-Cornish, *Journal of a Tour of Exploration in the North of Madagascar* (London: The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1877), 17-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. On the Makua, see Edward A. Alpers, *Ivory and slaves: changing pattern of international trade in East Central Africa to the later nineteenth century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 8-15; Hafkin, “Trade, society, and politics,” 19-28. On Mozambique slaves working for the Sakalava, see Joseph S. Sewell, *The Sakalava: Being notes of a Journey Made from Antananarivo to some Towns on the Border of the Sakalava Territory, in June and July, 1875* (Antananarivo: Abraham Kingdon, 1875), 12. See also some “Makoa” tales included in *Contes de la côte ouest de Madagascar, recueillis et traduits par N. J. Gueunier* (Antananarivo: Ambozontany, 1991?), example: 78. On the Makua becoming Sakalava, see Chapter 7. Few sources describe how these slaves were employed during the nineteenth century or provide details about the conduct of the slave trade within Madagascar. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. On the rise of the Swahili coastal rulers, see Hafkin, “Trade, society, and politics,” 8-28. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. See the letter captured by the Portuguese, written by traders in Boina to Mozambican rulers in 1878, quoted in Ibid, 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. As was the case elsewhere in Africa, see, for instance, Richard J. Reid, *Political Power in Pre-Colonial Buganda : Economy, Society & Warfare in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: James Currey, 2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. This year marked the first commercial treaty between the sultanate in Muscat and the British. In 1813, Sultan, or Sayyid, Said moved to Zanzibar and fully asserted Omani power on the East African coast. See Norman Robert Bennett, *Arab versus European: Diplomacy and War in nineteenth-century East Central Africa* (New York: Africana Pub. Co., 1986). [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Minutes from evidence taken before the Select Committee, 20 July 1871, in the correspondence of Lt Col CP Rigby, Consul at Zanzibar, “AA 12/2,” ZNA, ff. 150-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. On this development, see Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977). [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Bennett, *Arab versus European,* 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. 'Proclamation of Radama, King of Madagascar, for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 23 October, 1817', in *Hertslet's commercial treaties: A collection of treaties and conventions, between Great Britain and foreign powers...* vol. 3 (London: Butterworth, 1841), 240. See also the other treaty between Radama and Great Britain in 1817, in ibid., 1: 354; the proclamations and additional articles released by Radama in 1820, in ibid., 3: 240-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Farquhar, letter, 8 December 1821, “IOR/F/4/913,” ff. 272-273. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Campbell, *An economic history,* 7-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Extract of political letter, 1 December 1824, “IOR/F/4/905,” ff. 9-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)