**Chapter 1**

**On the Shores of the Onilahy River**

Between 1580 and 1680, the people of southwestern Madagascar faced new challenges following to the expansion of global trading opportunities. Prior to 1580, communities in this portion of the island relied upon a combination of cattle herding, fishing, and agriculture for survival, but were primarily pastoralists. They stayed in contact with other Malagasy communities through trade, but large regions of extensive agricultural production were located at least a hundred miles from the coast.[[1]](#footnote-1) When European traders began sending ships to India and Indonesia frequently during the seventeenth century, many of them stopped to purchase food in St. Augustine’s Bay, located in southwestern Madagascar. This new trade introduced new political and economic pressures to communities near the bay. These decentralized communities could not dominate exchanges with European merchants. Communities of the southwest lacked the resources to trade and the military to defend themselves from competitors, including the Sakalava. A combination of disorder in the region and new economic opportunities tempted the Sakalava to seize control of the trade in the southwest by the start of the eighteenth century.

In Africa, the introduction of global trade resulted in dramatic political and economic changes, almost from the very beginning.[[2]](#footnote-2) Trade had a similar impact in southwestern Madagascar. The pressures introduced by trade between inhabitants of the southwest and Europeans followed more closely the experience of many African societies than societies around the Indian Ocean. Scholars emphasize the engagement of Europeans with pre-existing modes of trade in Asia and describe how Europeans failed to monopolize the movement of commodities across the ocean.[[3]](#footnote-3) In northwest Madagascar, a region with a long history of trading within the Indian Ocean, this was certainly true, as Europeans faced challenges inserting themselves into exchange networks in this region.

The winds that brought yearly storms to the northwest coast carried merchants and migrants to the shores of the island as early as the tenth century and increasingly during the fifteenth century. These traders, sailing in relatively small *dhows*, came in search of food, slaves, cloth, and precious raw materials.[[4]](#footnote-4) They traded with the ports’ inhabitants, who usually described themselves as the *Antaloatra*, meaning the people from the ocean, from afar.[[5]](#footnote-5) The Antaloatra were Muslims, spoke some Swahili and/or Arabic, and shared certain cultural practices with the people of the Swahili coast of East Africa.[[6]](#footnote-6) The Antaloatra and their Swahili trading counterparts controlled oceanic trading within the southwestern Indian Ocean region. The Antaloatra lived in stone houses, constructed and worshipped in stone mosques, and wore long robes of (usually foreign) cloth.[[7]](#footnote-7) These physical markers served to set them apart from other groups living in Madagascar, as did their economic activity: oceanic trade. Antaloatra used their appearance as both a mark of their social superiority and as an expression of their economic links to Indian Ocean traders. The name Antaloatra signaled their origins from across the ocean, although most spoke Malagasy and married individuals of Malagasy descent.

In many ways, Antaloatra constructed their identity as a trading group much as other groups in Madagascar emphasized their fishing or agriculturalist occupations.[[8]](#footnote-8) As with Swahili merchants, the Antaloatra purported to be uniquely suited to mediate between ocean and land-based exchanges in Madagascar. Pre-modern trade in the southwestern Indian Ocean region was not egalitarian or peaceful. Antaloatra merchants controlled the imports of foreign items and prevented other groups from doing so.[[9]](#footnote-9) Nor was this trade static, as archeologists have shown. Prior to the seventeenth century, no single port dominated trade, nor did a single state rule these ports. Different trading ports experienced varying degrees of success with obtaining the necessary provisions for the coastal inhabitants and for sale to traders.[[10]](#footnote-10) As a result, at least a dozen ports were located in northern Madagascar by the late fifteenth century, according to the Arab geographer Ibn Mājid.[[11]](#footnote-11) As in East Africa, powerful merchants probably controlled these ports and had limited control over inland populations, with whom they both fought and traded.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Due to the existence of networks linking northern Madagascar with groups in the Indian Ocean, Europeans failed to dominate trade in this region. Sources attest to Portuguese attempts to establish trading forts, as they had on the Island of Mozambique, and convert the Malagasy to Christianity.[[13]](#footnote-13) Antaloatra first expressed only apathy towards visiting European merchants, but showed concern when the Portuguese tried to become a permanent presence on their coast. The growing antagonism between the two groups resulted in the murder of a Portuguese priest sent to convert the Malagasy towards the end of the sixteenth century.[[14]](#footnote-14) Following several more conversion attempts, Portuguese appear to have traded occasionally in the Malagasy ports of the northwest and halted efforts aimed at forming a more lasting relationship.[[15]](#footnote-15) The Portuguese blamed an implacable hatred of Christians and the strength of the “commercial sphere of the Arabs” for discouraging the Muslims on the island from trading with Christians.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Southwestern Madagascar, however, was not a part of these Indian Ocean trade networks during the sixteenth century. Communities lacked direct contact with oceanic trade until the arrival of European ships. The communities, reliant on their cattle for survival, supported themselves by herding livestock and trading for goods from neighboring communities. Despite being isolated from direct contact with global trade networks on the island, they were engaged in long-distance land-based trade. When Europeans arrived in the region, however, they introduced new pressures, as more and more ships entered the ocean and visited new ports and regions.

The arrival of new commodities on the ships had less of an impact than the arrival of European sailors and soldiers in southwestern Madagascar. Feeding and provisioning the crews of these ships placed new pressures upon local communities and their environments, even though Europeans failed to form colonies on Madagascar. Enticed by access to oceanic trade, new leaders began to violently seize control of littoral regions by developing centralized states within Madagascar. Global trade and the instability that accompanied it allowed the Sakalava to invade and conquer the people of the southwest.

The story therefore begins in the southwest of Madagascar. Our knowledge of this region comes from only a few sources: mythic histories, archeological studies, and European observations of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Europeans described the diversity of the inhabitants of the island and their participation in trade networks, both internal and external to the island. They referred to Malagasy beliefs and political practices as primitive and baffling. The mythic beginnings of the Malagasy communities were collected as oral traditions during the nineteenth century. These traditions were also found in Arabico-Malagasy manuscripts known as the *sorabe*.[[17]](#footnote-17) Archeological studies have bridged these two sets of sources and supported stories of migrations and exchanges connecting various groups on the island.[[18]](#footnote-18) With these sources, we can try to understand the negotiations that occurred between Malagasy and Europeans during the first half of the seventeenth century.

**The Land and the People**

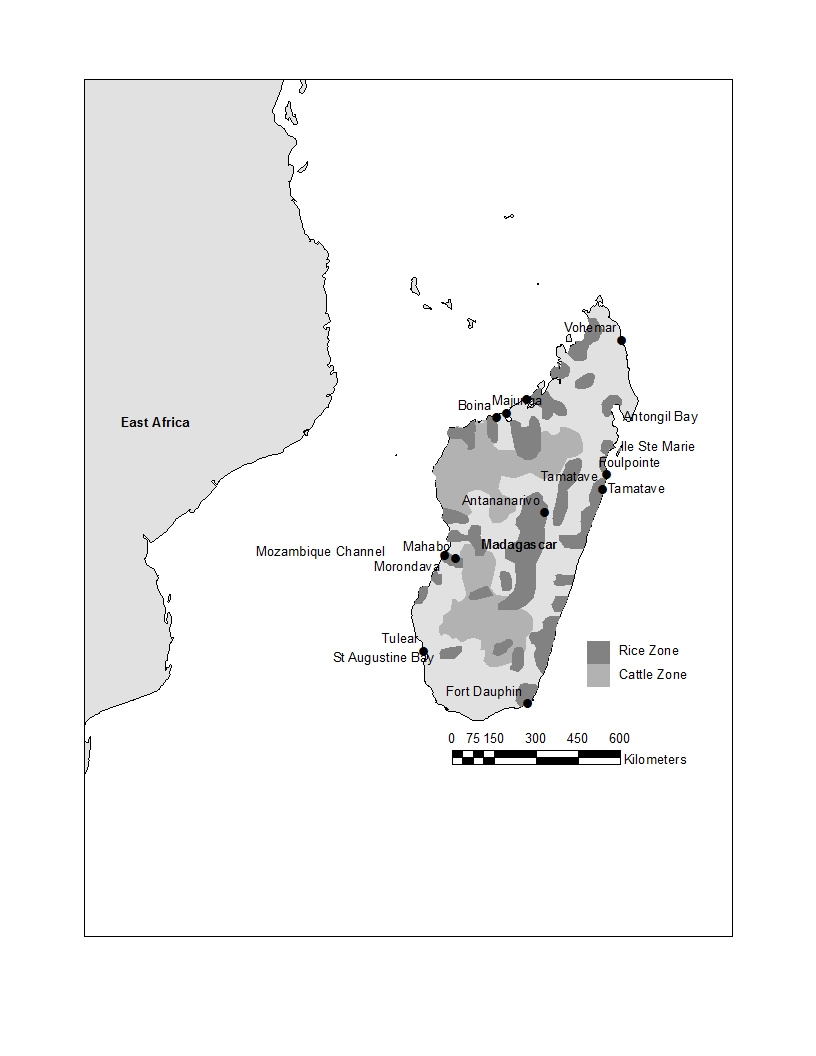
When Europeans first visited the shores of Madagascar, they were struck by the differences between the Antaloatra-controlled, cosmopolitan ports of the northwest and the seemingly isolated communities elsewhere on the island.[[19]](#footnote-19) European merchants that stopped in Madagascar were unaware that the first Madagascar settlers probably arrived along the southwestern coast during the first centuries CE.[[20]](#footnote-20) They likely sailed across the ocean in outrigger sailing canoes. The first migrants may have taken a direct route from present-day Borneo, but some scholars suggest that they first visited East Africa before deciding to explore the large island of the moon, Madagascar, to their south.[[21]](#footnote-21) The settlers, first arriving in the early centuries CE, found a land uninhabited and home to strange and unusual wildlife.[[22]](#footnote-22) The island had broken away from East Africa around 160 million years ago, and then from India. During the last 88 million years, the island's environment had developed in relative isolation, at least until the arrival of the Malagasy.[[23]](#footnote-23)

Europeans also did not know that the Malagasy were aware of the wider world. The first settlers of the island had sailed across the ocean and likely arrived at southwestern Madagascar. In coming to the island, the Malagasy brought beliefs and material objects to remind them of their origins in Southeast Asia and East Africa. Historians, anthropologists, and linguists debate the origins of the Malagasy and their cultural practices.[[24]](#footnote-24) Attempts to uncover the origins of the Malagasy began as an effort to categorize the islanders. Many historians now wish to understand how the proto-Malagasy managed to cross the Indian Ocean during the first centuries C.E. They also describe the Malagasy as having absorbed beliefs and material objects from locations around the ocean’s littoral.[[25]](#footnote-25)

Malagasy called the ocean *ranomasina*, meaning salty water, and being salty, *masina*, took on a religious significance in their communities. Masina meant the inseparable power and strength that certain beings and things possessed.[[26]](#footnote-26) Saltiness, therefore, signified power.[[27]](#footnote-27) The water itself, in rivers and along coasts, enabled the trade and migration that linked disparate populations on the island.

Following their arrival, the settlers spread throughout the island and began shaping the landscape. The indigenous flora and fauna of the island had never experienced any threats from humans before. The southwestern portion of Madagascar was much damper at this time and was home to giant tortoises, the elephant bird (the largest bird ever recorded), at least fourteen species of lemur, and the pygmy hippo. Many of these animals were extinct by the time Europeans arrived at the shores of Madagascar.[[28]](#footnote-28) Hunters targeted these animals and farmers eliminated their habitats through the introduction of new species of animals and the cultivation of new plants.[[29]](#footnote-29) Cattle ate the plants previously consumed by the indigenous animals. Introduced crops such as rice took away land from indigenous plants. The land also dried up during this time, producing the arid landscape to which the Malagasy living in the southwest adapted.

Prior to the seventeenth century, the Malagasy hunted, bred animals, and worked iron, all activities that shaped their landscape.[[30]](#footnote-30) The growing population on the island produced slow but steady changes to the natural landscape of Madagascar.[[31]](#footnote-31) Most scholars studying environmental history do not examine the impact of non-European societies and their surroundings prior to European colonization.[[32]](#footnote-32) Yet Madagascar provides a striking example of a non-European “settler colony” interacting with and changing its environment.[[33]](#footnote-33) Many scientists have begun to examine the long history of environmental change on the island, perhaps because Madagascar is currently home to a number of endangered species.[[34]](#footnote-34) Meanwhile, many advocates would benefit from a study of the historical basis for practices such as slash-and-burn agriculture now seen as environmentally harmful.[[35]](#footnote-35)



Map 2: Approximate zones of cattle herding and rice growing,

based upon twentieth century practices

Archeologists have concluded that southwestern communities herded cattle by the eleventh or twelfth centuries CE, allowing for the expansion of human populations in this region by the following century.[[36]](#footnote-36) The cattle, known also as zebu, could survive in tropical environments. The cattle came from Southeast Asia on ships much like the ones that carried the settlers of Madagascar. Migrants imported zebu, distinguished by a large hump on their shoulders, to East Africa, where they interbred with indigenous cattle breeds. [[37]](#footnote-37) These cattle subsequently came from East Africa and spread throughout Madagascar by the twelfth century.[[38]](#footnote-38)

Some scholars suggest the Malagasy reliance on cattle herding demonstrates their common ancestry with communities in East Africa, with whom they may have maintained trading links from the ninth century onward.[[39]](#footnote-39) Trade networks within Madagascar, however, were more important for the pastoral communities of southern Madagascar.[[40]](#footnote-40) Archeologists have shown that the Malagasy of southwestern Madagascar even possessed commodities obtained from the northern ports of the island. These commodities included imported Islamic and Chinese ceramics, such as celadon, glass, and glass beads prior to the sixteenth century.[[41]](#footnote-41)It appears that humped zebu cattle, along with sheep and goats, constituted a form of moveable wealth in southern and western Madagascar. Malagasy exchanged this livestock for pottery or food sources with neighboring groups.[[42]](#footnote-42) By the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, simultaneously a mark of status and source of food, the possession of livestock allowed herders to support their families in arid regions and supplement their riverside agriculture.[[43]](#footnote-43)

The agriculturalists grew rice in the more fertile and temperate center of the island.[[44]](#footnote-44) Rice farming may have arrived in Madagascar with these first settlers, who grew it on land cleared by human-set fires, or *tavy*.[[45]](#footnote-45) Pastoralists probably rarely used fires to clear plant life in the south and west, where they used different strategies to make use of the land.[[46]](#footnote-46) The burning of wood to heat iron and allow the cultivation of rice in central and eastern Madagascar, however, created expanses of deforested grassland by the time Europeans arrived.[[47]](#footnote-47)

The people of the highlands began storing their rice harvests in silos around the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This period was also marked by an increase in social differentiation in the interior of Madagascar.[[48]](#footnote-48) Traders sold surplus rice to other communities, such as the herders of the south in return for cattle. [[49]](#footnote-49) They also sold the food to the northern ports of the island that would buy the rice with prestige goods obtained through Indian Ocean trading.[[50]](#footnote-50) Elites who could export rice and other commodities used their wealth to build elaborate tombs by the seventeenth or eighteenth century.[[51]](#footnote-51) These centuries also marked an increased in irrigated agriculture in the center of the island. The highlands supported a relatively higher population density elsewhere on the island.[[52]](#footnote-52) In addition to retaining or exchanging war-captives, communities in the highlands appear to have sold slaves to northern ports, where traders sold the slaves to passing Indian Ocean merchants.[[53]](#footnote-53)

Traditions gathered on Madagascar have described “intense internal population migrations.”[[54]](#footnote-54) For instance, these histories tell of several groups who passed through the southwest on their way elsewhere in the island. These groups included the *tompon-tany* (original owners of the land), the Tandavake (those who lived in caves), and the Masikoro of the valleys. More contemporarily, besides the pastoralists, groups in the southwest have included the Vezo fishermen, the Mikea forest foragers (perhaps related to the mythical Kimosy in oral traditions), and the Bara who were agriculturalists in interior.[[55]](#footnote-55) All of these groups intermarried with the pastoralists of south and western Madagascar. They had common cultural practices and religious beliefs. Migration and trade, these traditions seem to suggest, tied various populations of Madagascar together, even as the disparate landscapes they inhabited separated them.

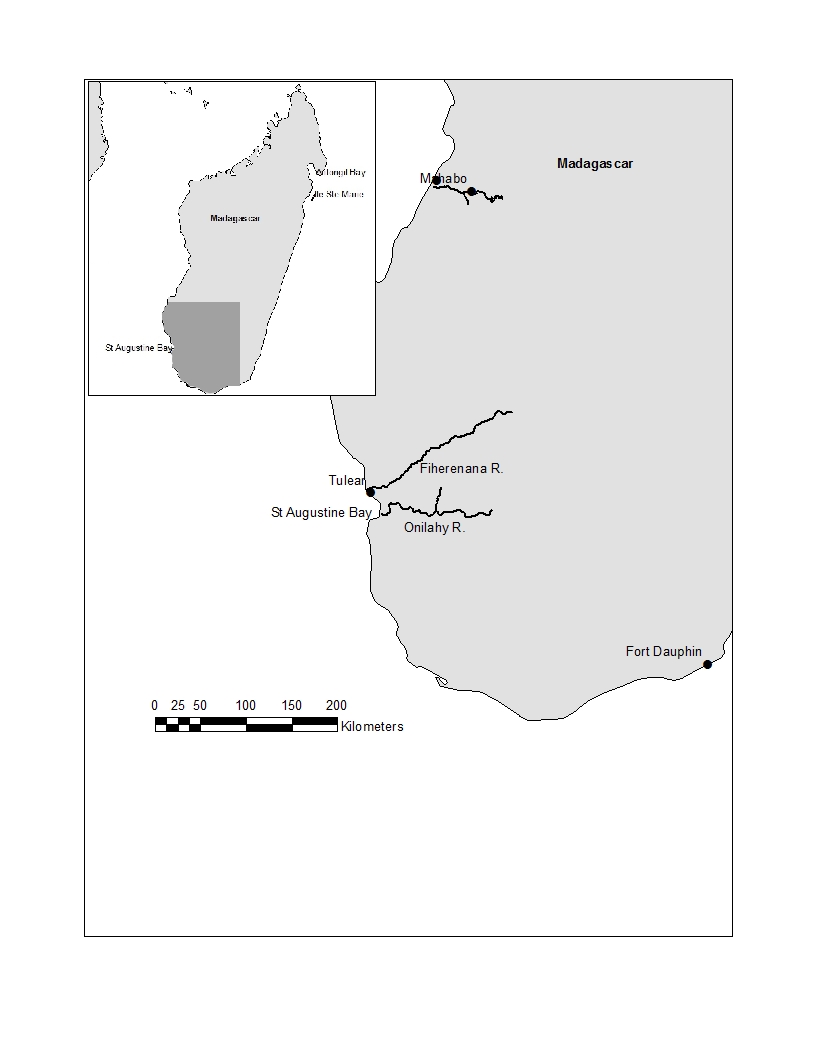
Malagasy traditions, collected during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, may have overstated the importance of these connections, due to the pressures of Merina and French colonization. Historians studying pre-colonial African societies have written about the challenges in using oral histories and traditions, particularly those collected during the colonial period.[[56]](#footnote-56) These traditions represented a way of understanding not the past, but how the Malagasy perceived their history. Malagasy traditions described the mythic beginnings of communities on the island. Almost all Malagasy groups preserved a story of their arrival on the island and clashing with an already resident people, the *tompon-tany*, the *Vazimba*. Traditions described the Vazimba as lacking rice, cattle, and iron-working technology.[[57]](#footnote-57) Rice cultivation gradually encroached into Vazimba land, according to oral traditions. While respecting the deep connections between the Vazimba and the island environment, agriculturalists took control of land previously held by the Vazimba, expanded their rice fields, and supported large numbers of dependents.[[58]](#footnote-58)

For a long time, scholars treated such stories with incredulity, yet recent research has given credence to these traditions. Archeological studies note the expansion of rice farming began around the fourteenth century, suggesting a decisive shift towards agriculture occurred.[[59]](#footnote-59) Linguistic studies also confirm that different populations mingled in Madagascar.[[60]](#footnote-60) The Merina may have been more recent arrivals, suggests Otto Dahl, and introduced new agricultural practices, iron-working technologies, and vocabulary to the populations already on the island.[[61]](#footnote-61) Dahl even argues there may have been a distinct Vazimba language prior to the arrival of the proto-Merina.[[62]](#footnote-62) Furthermore, archeological studies seem to confirm the gradual settlement of various parts of the island, thanks to technological innovations that allowed for waves of migration throughout Madagascar.[[63]](#footnote-63)

Merina may have used the conquest tradition, even it were rooted in historical events, to assert their superiority over the “African substratum” known as the Vazimba.[[64]](#footnote-64) This tradition of conquest over technologically inferior groups has found its way into the myths of the Sakalava and other Malagasy in the southeast of the island.[[65]](#footnote-65) This early myth has also blended with Malagasy ideas of the divinity of the natural world.[[66]](#footnote-66) As settlers, the Malagasy represented their migrations to visiting Europeans as choices. These choices allowed those who led communities on the island to assert themselves as foreign and possessing ties elsewhere in the Indian Ocean. Leaders in southeastern Madagascar, the *Andriana*, claimed Arab ancestry from an Arab migrant named Darafify.[[67]](#footnote-67)

The following tradition from southern Madagascar neatly summarizes the choices made by the settlers of the island. The protagonist, Darafify, was originally from Mecca and travelled along the eastern coast of Madagascar in search of a home.[[68]](#footnote-68) Darafify boarded a ship in northern Madagascar, with his wife Ramaliavaratra and a red cow. He may have been from the Middle East but the shores of Madagascar attracted his interest. He decided to settle in the south of the island and the origin history traced how he reached this decision. Darafify and his companions sailed along the east coast of Madagascar and when they arrived at Sakaleona, the cow bellowed but “Darafify said, 'We will not stop here, for the kings who reign in this region cannot care for their people, as the Sakaleona is a river with two mouths.' At Fanantara, the cow bellowed again, but Darafify said, 'The Fanantara is a river of which the mouth is too close to the source, so the inhabitants will be not easy to govern.’” Darafify continued his criticisms of various coastal villages as they sailed along the southeastern coast of Madagascar. At one spot, a bank of rocks prevented the inhabitants along the river from trading. The site of the next town near a small river opening would encourage its inhabitants to revolt. In another region, profitable trade encouraged the rich to fight constantly with each other. Finally, Darafify, his wife, and cow arrived at the southern tip of the island, “the country of cattle *par excellence,*” and the three decided to settle there.[[69]](#footnote-69)

This history described the appeal of living in southern Madagascar for the settlers. This tradition gained popularity in Madagascar because it spoke to the way people viewed their worlds and judged the value of their landscapes. Throughout southern Madagascar, communities survived through herding cattle and used rivers to trade and travel before Europeans first arrived in the 1580s. Darafify noted that the location of a community could mean the difference between success and failure. The history of Darafify mirrored the experience of the Malagasy in southwestern Madagascar, as they had chosen to settle in the south and developed methods for surviving in the region. European visitors failed to understand how they lived in this region, seemingly surviving with very little. Europeans did not understand the interactions between the Malagasy and their surroundings, as their early interactions with the people of the southwest make clear.

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Map 3: Southwestern Madagascar

**The Arrival of the *Vazaha***[[70]](#footnote-70)

*Vazaha* first visited the large southwestern bay during the mid-sixteenth century and then more regularly during the following century, as European monopoly companies entered into Indian Ocean trade. Their ships came into the round bay of Antantsoňo at the end of the Onilahy River. The vazaha probably came with translators from northwestern Madagascar. These translators would have called the merchants Portuguese, English, Dutch, or French. The vazaha began to refer to the bay as St. Augustine's Bay and the island as St. Laurence, Laurenço and Madagascar. Its people were the Malagasy or *Malgache.[[71]](#footnote-71)* The vazaha also devised new names for the prominent features of the land in the bay: the hill to the north became Westminster Hall (or “Abbey”), the river, Dartmouth, and the tiny islands in the bay included Tent Rock, where European sailors buried their deceased. Future ships used these landmarks to enter the bay safely.[[72]](#footnote-72)

Globalization transformed the region around St. Augustine’s Bay into an oceanic trading center. The Europeans they sought to barter for food and, occasionally, slaves all along Madagascar. European ships began visiting St. Augustine’s Bay around 1575, but then almost annually after 1614.[[73]](#footnote-73) The crews of these ships found themselves in an isolated bay, its shore covered with low scrub bushes and crossed with rivers stretching inland. When the starving crews boarded canoes and came ashore, they found a collection of huts and cattle. Communities inhabiting the land surrounding the bay numbered perhaps five hundred inhabitants. They agreed to exchange a dozen cattle in return for brass wire and handfuls of beads.[[74]](#footnote-74) Walking around the shoreline, the Europeans would have found fruit, wood, and sources of fresh water to fill their empty barrels. Recovered and renewed, the crews sailed on to their final destinations in India and the Arabian Peninsula. Over the following decades, encouraged by the safety of the bay and welcoming local communities, more ships began to visit the area. Their crews bought even more cattle and chopped down more trees, took fresh water and fruit, and interfered in local politics. Europeans labeled St. Augustine's Bay on their maps and European ships added a stop in the bay to their itineraries.[[75]](#footnote-75)

The Portuguese were the first to explore, trade with, and attempt to convert the island's inhabitants. Their early ventures, more out of convenience than any other reason, focused on the northwestern Antaloatra-dominated ports, with limited success. When Portuguese ships arrived in St. Augustine's Bay towards the end of the sixteenth century, the people of the southwest had probably already heard of the vazaha. During the seventeenth century, the English became the chief traders in the bay. Starting in 1591 and then in earnest in 1607, English ships arrived in the bay almost annually, sometimes in a fleet of three or four ships which halted in the bay for a month or more. Officials advised their merchant fleets to aim for St. Augustine's Bay, as it was easily recognizable shortly after entering the Indian Ocean and provided a good meeting place if storms separated the ships. Throughout the seventeenth century, communities along St. Augustine’s Bay began welcome the English traders warmly at this “fittest place of refreshing... where you shall find good harbor and plenty of victuals.”[[76]](#footnote-76)

In 1614, a fleet of four ships entered “Cape Augustine in St. Lawrence” and they anchored on the south side of the bay.[[77]](#footnote-77) The crew dispatched several canoes to examine the shore. They found the inhabitants reluctant to meet them and most of the Malagasy had fled from the bay. The Malagasy lived a distance inland in small huts made of “bark.”[[78]](#footnote-78) The captains focused on securing “fresh victuals and fresh water” onshore and gradually the inhabitants emerged to barter with the English. The master-mate of one of these ships, the Hector, described them as “very friendly” and said they accepted little pieces of metal in return for food.[[79]](#footnote-79) Another sailor in the same fleet described the natives' joy at receiving knives as a gift. Silver also bought milk from the Malagasy.

Despite the warm welcome English traders eventually received, people of the bay would only trade their cattle for small beads or pieces of silver.[[80]](#footnote-80) Locals knew how to trade and demand commodities they found valuable, yet they probably had difficulty in figuring out the relative value of cattle to these Europeans who quickly killed and consumed ten or fifteen cattle at a time. Europeans desired to purchase a large number of cattle, in part due to their belief that fresh meat, especially beef, was the best cure for scurvy.[[81]](#footnote-81) Although many of the inhabitants seemed at ease trading with the Europeans, some of them were on their guard with the visitors and kept their distance during these early years.

Most early descriptions of St. Augustine's Bay revealed that the locals provided Europeans with very few commodities. They had only cattle to sell, in addition to very meager supplies of rice, wood, and fresh water.[[82]](#footnote-82) During years of plenty, people transported trading supplies up the rivers and into the bay.[[83]](#footnote-83) On other years, due to warfare, drought, or floods, groups avoided trading with the Europeans. At first, Europeans interpreted the lack of trading partners as hesitancy, ignorance, or even fear on the part of the Malagasy. When European sailors armed with guns came ashore, Malagasy fled in fear of the gunshots.[[84]](#footnote-84) On other occasions, promises of large supplies of provisions were promptly broken. Even worse, sometimes the ships would arrive and Europeans could not find any huts along the shoreline. Communities may have migrated elsewhere on the island in search of new pastures or sources of water. Malagasy remained in a location for several months and constructed huts from palm fronds and pieces of wood. These huts protected vulnerable populations but only lasted for a season or two.[[85]](#footnote-85)

Despite these challenges, the Malagasy became accustomed to trading with the English and other European groups. Very quickly, those near the bay learned a few words of English and stopped fleeing when the Europeans arrived with their guns. In clashes, spears carried by the Malagasy were usually more efficient and effective than rudimentary European firearms.[[86]](#footnote-86) When news of a ship's arrival spread, inhabitants along the Onilahy River would approach the bay with their herds or in canoes to bring goods for trade. Rather than exporting commodities elsewhere in the island, people now bartered their cattle, rice, callavances, and lemons for metal and red carnelian beads that the Europeans had brought from India or the Persian Gulf region.[[87]](#footnote-87) Malagasy met Europeans with milk and promises of ample provisions, at times taking their canoes up to the ship to sell to the sailors.[[88]](#footnote-88) Due to their increasing knowledge of European trading patterns, the Malagasy began raising their prices, taking advantage the European reliance on food, water, and wood from southwestern Madagascar. As one captain stated in 1614, it appeared that “if we had more [silver] chains, they would have sold us more cattle.”[[89]](#footnote-89)

Eventually European merchants also began to make sense of the organization of the decentralized communities of the southwest. According to European observers, the *Andriana*, local leaders, arbitrated disputes within communities and oversaw the defense of their subjects.[[90]](#footnote-90) In periods of uncertainty during the seventeenth century, the Andriana likely oversaw the construction of palisades, high wooden fences around a collection of huts, to protect their dependents. In later periods, groups built high *manda* (stone or earthen fortifications). These were named for famous warriors or military leaders.[[91]](#footnote-91) While not complete insurance against attacks, these constructions could protect subjects and supplies while Andriana tried to gather men to drive off enemies.[[92]](#footnote-92) Andriana provided guidance in times of crisis but the communities under their control, judging by European descriptions, were small.

According to the European observers, groups within Madagascar fought frequently for the control of resources along the Onilahy River, especially water and cattle, but these conflicts increased as the seventeenth century progressed.[[93]](#footnote-93) These attacks frequently took the form of cattle raids. During the mid-seventeenth century, Europeans noted the activities of cattle rustlers (*dahalo*), armed with spears and in small groups, waited in the trees or mountains to rush in and steal their neighbors' herds. [[94]](#footnote-94) Cattle thefts occurred regularly for years on end, destabilizing the region as young men stole cattle in retribution for previous cattle thefts.[[95]](#footnote-95) Sometimes warriors seized men, women, and children as war-captives or slaves. These cattle thefts ensured a balance of power, as periodic thefts guaranteed that a leader could not maintain large herds without the support of many dependents.[[96]](#footnote-96)

Europeans sought trading agreements and alliances with the Andriana. These local chiefs agreed to provide Europeans with trading goods, but had little idea of the implications if they failed to fill trade orders. The Europeans, it seemed, did not mind interfering in local struggles if they thought it could improve their access to provisions. European ships were equipped with much larger crews and larger stores of arms than East African or Arab trading vessels. The communities of St. Augustine’s Bay took advantage of European demands for food to request military support and imports of firearms.[[97]](#footnote-97) European captains could send dozens of men to assist in conflicts and these men would easily outnumber opposing forces. In return, leaders would provide Europeans with cattle or slaves obtained in these raids.[[98]](#footnote-98) European military support could give leaders a decisive advantage in battles. Europeans directly intervened in local politics in support of trading allies, which changed the dynamics between communities and increased the frequency of regional wars. As a result, cattle raids into the interior of the Onilahy River probably increased over the course of the seventeenth century, as the Malagasy developed a new economy around the export of cattle and new military practices involving direct or indirect European assistance.[[99]](#footnote-99)

In fact, the Malagasy appeared so obliging that the English decided to form two colonies on the island in 1645, one based at St. Augustine’s Bay, the second on the northwest coast.[[100]](#footnote-100) The English settlers established a fortified camp along the southern side of St. Augustine’s Bay, near present-day Soalara.[[101]](#footnote-101) The colonists, expecting a fertile paradise, complained about the “extreme barrenness of the soil” and the difficulty in keeping their cattle safe from thieving Malagasy.[[102]](#footnote-102) The colonists likely exaggerated these difficulties, since Malagasy communities managed to survive by growing crops along riverbanks and herding their cattle. The English, however, were unaccustomed to the landscape and relied upon the Malagasy to herd their “wild cattle.” When the Malagasy sold the English cattle, however, they stole them back after a short period.[[103]](#footnote-103) The English sent soldiers to recover the cattle but the Malagasy quickly killed the men. The English were close to starvation because of these cattle thefts and their failures with cultivating crops. Tensions grew after the Malagasy set fire to the colony's forge and bellows.[[104]](#footnote-104) When ships sent elsewhere failed to return with food and viable trading goods for the bay, the colonists deserted the island. Of the 140 colonists, men, women, and children, who had left England, only twelve left Madagascar.[[105]](#footnote-105)

Unsurprisingly, the communities of the southwest were considerably less amenable to trading with colonists than with the occasional merchants that stopped on their shores. Inhabitants living along the Onilahy River and St. Augustine’s Bay likely had heard of the French colony in Fort Dauphin, which would end disastrously at the end of the eighteenth century due in part to French interference in local politics.[[106]](#footnote-106) The English were intent on creating a permanent settlement and this posed more of a drain on the natural resources of southwestern Madagascar than visiting ships. Following the failure of the colony, the English began establishing temporary settlements instead of permanent trading colonies along St. Augustine’s Bay. The Malagasy successfully turned away European colonists by protecting their own food stores.

Dispelling other threats within the island was more difficult for local leaders. Communities in this area could not gain access to enough food to dominate exports from the bay. Attempts to get more cattle for Europeans sparked wars between different groups around the bay. The Andriana likely led their subjects into war frequently to gain new food supplies, especially cattle, as well as secure fresh water sources, as these supplies declined throughout the seventeenth century. Despite the size of the bay, the shore itself only had enough wood for “two small boats and two or three houses.”[[107]](#footnote-107) European crews cut down wood, which would have exacerbated drought problems and the degradation of the environment. In addition, archeologists have shown that coastal leaders did not sell imported items from European merchants to inland communities.[[108]](#footnote-108) The growing monopoly these leaders had over imports probably increased the jealousy of the neighboring groups. These developments have led historians to conclude that the communities on the shores of St. Augustine’s Bay failed to respond quickly to the new demands introduced by global trade.[[109]](#footnote-109)

By the mid-seventeenth century, the inhabitants of the region were under attack by their neighbors. Their neighbors to the south and east led attacks on the communities living along the bay.[[110]](#footnote-110) Around the same time, soldiers of Sakalava state began invading the land near the bay, as the Sakalava sought to gain control of the lucrative trade. When the Sakalava pushed southward during the mid-seventeenth century, these small, decentralized communities could not resist becoming part of the Sakalava Empire.[[111]](#footnote-111) Weakened by internal wars and dwindling natural resources, the Malagasy living near the bay fell under the control of the Sakalava by 1700.[[112]](#footnote-112)

**The Consequences of Global Trade**

When Darafify decided southern Madagascar would be the perfect home for raising his cattle and building a community, his primary concern was with the landscape. Would it support large cattle herds? How would he rule over his subjects? Would they be able to trade with neighboring groups? The land of Madagascar could naturally support agriculture, Europeans insisted, and only the laziness of the inhabitants on the coasts prevented crops from flourishing.[[113]](#footnote-113) Rather than being “lazy,” the inhabitants of Madagascar had learned how to shape their environment to their needs. They grew crops in fertile areas and herded cattle in more arid regions.

European traders visiting the shores of Madagascar made no such calculations. Rather than desiring to trade for commodities in particular locations and seeking only rice from the highlands, chlorite schist from the east coast, and cattle from the south, these new traders desired large amounts of the same commodities throughout Madagascar.[[114]](#footnote-114) Such uniform demands placed new stresses on communities not prepared to provide supplies of water or rice, and certainly not in the desired quantities. Communities all along the coast of Madagascar struggled to meet demands, creating new competition for food and slaves, both usually taken from the interior of the island. Despite a long history of oceanic trade in Malagasy ports, the arrival of European traders slowly and gradually created cracks into pre-existing economic systems.

The pastoralists of southwest Madagascar struggled to control and benefit from trade. Historians have highlighted the impact of controlling natural resources had on state formation in pre-colonial Africa.[[115]](#footnote-115) Early modern trade was resource intensive. The shift in human settlement patterns and trade during these centuries resulted in the intensification of production, agricultural as well as industrial. This production required fuel and labor.[[116]](#footnote-116)

Studies of global trade frequently focus on the exchange of high-value commodities throughout the Indian Ocean. What many studies fail to highlight is the role of African supplies of food and labor in powering global trade in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. With the number of ships circulating the world increasing, the demand also increased for certain food items that could be stored on board and consumed while at sea. On the long trading voyages undertaken by Europeans and non-European traders, prestige goods probably comprised only a small fraction of the cargo carried. Food, water, wood, and lower-value trading goods such as cheap cloth or alcohol probably filled most of the cargo space. In addition, for the completion of successful voyages, ship captains had to identify multiple ports of call around the world to purchase food.

Europeans had trouble obtaining trading goods and guarding ports during the early modern period. As European merchants crossed oceans, they sought to develop colonies and trading posts to provision traders. Even though they failed to colonize Madagascar, Europeans influenced the trade of certain commodities throughout Madagascar, just as they did in southern Africa.[[117]](#footnote-117) The Dutch founded a settlement at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. This settlement was meant to provide provisions to passing ships. For the crews of ships seeking to re-provision before their journey into the Indian Ocean, the location was perfect. Yet the settlers at the Cape quickly realized that pastoralists, not agriculturalists, inhabited the interior of southwestern Africa. These pastoralists, the Khoikhoi, could not provide the Dutch with the food supplies they required. As the Dutch tried to produce their own food in southern Africa, they required large imports of labor.[[118]](#footnote-118) The need for labor and land resulted in wars between the settlers and Africans, as the settlers extended their farming into the interior.[[119]](#footnote-119)

Even though Europeans did not migrate to Madagascar in large numbers, coastal groups of Madagascar likewise struggled to produce commodities to supply the European ships that passed by their ports. These struggles increased the incidence of warfare and the demand for food and labor on the coast. Likewise, when the Sakalava took control of trade on the west coast of Madagascar, they sought to solve to the problem of labor and food production by creating an expansive empire and confederation stretching the west coast of the island.

For communities in Madagascar, the seventeenth century ushered in a period of uncertainty, even for the Antaloatra of the northwest. Unbeknownst to the Europeans, a state was developing the resources and technologies to dominate trade from the west coast of the island. Inhabiting a region not under direct pressure from global trading systems, the Sakalava took advantage of the weaknesses of their neighbors in the face of the pressure and took control of those trading ports as well. Sakalava leaders observed the spread of global trade from a distance and planned their attacks on the ports of Madagascar. They attempted to control trade from the hinterland to the coast to meet the new demands for food, wood, and water.[[120]](#footnote-120) Sakalava rulers exploited the divide between the port cities and the interior to control the circulation of imported goods and dominate cross-cultural exchanges.

1. Small regions of rice production can be found in this region near the population centers, along rivers, most notably near Tulear and Morondava. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For instance, see Donald R. Wright, *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1997). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Sinnappah Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies, and Commerce on the Coromandel Coast, 1650-1740* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); M. N. Pearson, *Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat: The Response to the Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce: Southern India, 1500-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Cloth exports perhaps from the twelfth century to the Middle East, might have been from the interior of the island. John Baldry, *Textiles in Yemen: Historical References to Trade and Commerce in Textiles in Yemen from Antiquity to Modern times* (London: British Museum, 1982), 17-8. On the trade of northwest Madagascar, see Marie Radimilahy, *Mahilaka: an Archaeological Investigation of an Early Town in Northwestern Madagascar* (Uppsala: Dept. of Archaeology and Ancient History, 1998), 32. On the linkages with elsewhere in Madagascar in, see H. T. Wright and J. A. Rakotoarisoa, "The Rise of Malagasy Societies: New Developments in the Archaeology of Madagascar," in *The Natural History of Madagascar*, ed. Steven M. Goodman and Jonathan P. Benstead (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 114; Pierre Vérin, *The History of Civilisation in North Madagascar* , trans. David Smith (Rotterdam: A. A. Balkema, 1986), 145-151. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ant- refers to the place, -laut- means ocean. The term is also spelled Antalaotra and Antalaotse. See Gabriel Rantoandro, “Une Communaute Mercantile du Nord-Ouest: Les Antalaotra,” *Omaly sy anio 20,* 197. All translations are mine, unless otherwise noted. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. On the early history of Swahili city-states, see Mark Horton and John Middleton, *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000); Chapurukha Makokha Kusimba, *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 1999); John Middleton, *The World of the Swahili: An African Mercantile Civilization* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992); Derek Nurse and Thomas T. Spear, *The Swahili : Reconstructing the History and Language of an African Society, 800-1500* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The earliest Portuguese sources describing northwestern Madagascar: Tristan da Cunha, 1506, COACM, 1:15-6; Fernan d’Albuquerque, 1506, Ibid., 1: 20-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Lin Poyer and Robert L. Kelly, "Mystification of the Mikea: Constructions of Foraging Identity in Southwest Madagascar," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 56, no. 2 (2000): 165. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Just as the Swahili did: Kusimba, *The rise and fall of Swahili states*, 154. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Around the thirteenth century, the trading city of Mahilaka was abandoned. Scholars suspect the fleas on these rodents may have carried the plague to Madagascar and the plague resulted in the deaths of the city’s inhabitants. These animals also damaged, over time, the local vegetation and agricultural crops on the island, particularly in the north, making it even harder to produce sufficient food supplies locally. See Radimilahy, *Mahilaka*, 210-11. On the black plague, see J. M. Duplantier and J.B. Duchemin, “Introduced Small Mammals and Their Ectoparasites: A Description of their Colonization and Its Consequences,” in *The Natural History of Madagascar*, ed. Goodman and Benstead, 1193. On the continuing problem of rats on the island, see Steven M. Goodman, “Rattus on Madagascar and the Dilemma of Protecting the Endemic Rodent Fauna,” *Conservation Biology* 9, no. 2 (1995): 452. New port cities filled the vacuum left by the collapse of Mahilaka: Vohémar (northeastern coast) around the fourteenth century, Langany and Kigany along the northwest coast during the fifteenth century and Irodo (on the northeast) around the fifteenth century. Pierre Vérin, "Irodo et la Tradition Vohémarienne: Les decouverts d'Irodo et les Civilisations du Nord-Est" from *Arabes et Islamisés,* XXVII; Vérin, *History of Civilisation*, 151-169. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. On various locations visited by Arab sailors in Madagascar, see the remarks of Tibbetts in Ahmad ibn Majid al-Najdi, *Arab Navigation in the Indian Ocean before the Coming of the Portuguese,* ed. G. R. Tibbetts (London: Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1972), 432-5. He lists the following ports on the island of al-Qumr: Haufā, ‘Umda, Ra’s al-Milḥ, Langānī or Lūlūjān, Sa’da, Mazalājī [Massaleige, Mazalage, Boina, Majunga, in European texts], Banda al-Nūb, Malawīnī, Anāmil, Bandar Sha’bān, Bandar Kūrī, Bandar Qāsim, Bandar Hait, Ghubba Kūrī, Bandar Banī Ismā’īl, Bīmārūh, Jazīrat al-‘Ain, Naitam, Nusim, Mankāra. Various smaller islands around Madagascar are also mentioned. Ibn Majid, however, identifies ports in Madagascar also described in Portuguese sources. On identifying these ports, see Jean-Claude Hébert, “Sur des ports esclavagistes de la côte nord-ouest de Madagascar dont le nom est devenu obsolète : Maringado ou Moringambo et Lulangani/Langany/Morumgany,” in *Navires, ports, itinéraires*, ed. Claude Allibert (Paris: Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales, 1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Swahili political leadership was held by elites who also controlled trade: Kusimba, *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States,* 180-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. A good source for this history: *The Mombasa Rising Against the Portuguese, 1631: from Sworn Evidence*, ed. and trans., G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville (London: Published for the British Academy by the Oxford University Press, 1980). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. “Histoire de la revolte des musulmans de Madagascar contre les Portugais, et martyre du P. Thomas,” 1587, in COACM, 1:153-9. The culprits were “Arabes” or “Mores de l’isle de Saint-Laurent.” [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Since there are sporadic references to the importation of food from Madagascar into Mozambique during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, it seems likely that small ships frequently crossed the Mozambique Channel. Thus far, the sources have not been examined in depth. Alpers has tracked the nineteenth century movement of food from Madagascar into Mozambique: Edward A. Alpers, "The Western Indian Ocean as a Regional Food Network in the Nineteenth Century," in *Africa and the Indian Ocean* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, Princeton, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Luis Mariano, Portuguese Jesuit priest, visiting Madagascar in 1619, COACM, 1: 319-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. For examples of sorabe and myths of origins in the southeast of the island, see the collections of Ferrand, especially Gabriel Ferrand, *Les Musulmans à Madagascar et aux îles Comores* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1891). The sorabe mostly date from the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. These include: Georges Heurtebize, *Histoire des Afomarolahy (Clan Tandroy, extrême-sud de Madagascar)* (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1986); Barthélémy Manjakahery and Chantal Radimilahy, "Archaeology of St Augustine's Bay, Lower and Middle Onilahy Valley, Southwestern Madagascar," *Studies in the African Past* 5 (2006); Wright and Rakotoarisoa, "The Rise of Malagasy Societies.” [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. On the distinctions between the Antaloatra and the Malagasy “Bouki,” see Ramusio, 1550, COACM, 1: 99-100. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. It seems likely, given archeological findings, that the first visitors to the island visited the north. Wright and Rakotoarisoa, “The Rise of Malagasy Societies,” 112-3. On the earliest evidence of habitation in the southwest, see Manjakahery and Radimilahy, “Archaeology of St. Augustine’s Bay,” 65-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The location of the “island of the moon” – *al-qumr* – recorded in Arabic sources is a subject of debate. The close commercial ties between East Africa, the Comoro Islands, and northern Madagascar may have meant the whole region of southwest Indian Ocean, home to several trading islands, was referred to as one place, the island of the moon. Frequent visits by ships to all of these three places meant the Arabs possessed extensive knowledge of the entire region. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. For a good summary of archeological studies completed in Madagascar, see Wright, “The Rise of Malagasy Societies,” 112-6; David A. Burney and others, “A Chronology for Late Prehistoric Madagascar,” *Journal of Human Evolution* 47, no. 1-2 (2004): 25-63. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Jonathan P. Benstead and others, “Conserving Madagascar's Freshwater Biodiversity,” *BioScience* 53, no. 11 (2003): 1101. The Seychelles islands were also continental, which explains their unique wildlife. By contrast, the flora and fauna of the Comoro and Mascarene islands came from either Madagascar or East Africa, and then developed in isolation into animals like the dodo bird. See Robert J. Whittaker, *Island Biogeography: Ecology, Evolution, and Conservation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Øyvind Dahl, *Meanings in Madagascar* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999); Alexander Adelaar, “The Indonesian Migrations to Madagascar: Making Sense of the Multidisciplinary Evidence” (paper presented at meeting on the Austronesian Diaspora and the Ethnogensis of People, 2006), http://www.santafe.edu/events/workshops/images/6/6d/IndonesianMigrations.pdf (accessed 6 March 2009); Otto Christian Dahl, *Migration from Kalimantan to Madagascar* (Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1991), 20-34. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. This history is summarized in Solofo Randrianja and Stephen Ellis, *Madagascar: A Short History*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 17-19, 24-34. This book gives a good summary of the state of historical and anthropological research concerning Madagascar. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. For a discussion of *hasina*, see Randrianja and Ellis, *Madagascar,* 43. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Chantal Radimilahy, “Sacred Sites in Madagascar,” in *Sacred Sites, Sacred Places*, ed. David L Carmichael, et al. (London: Routledge, 1994), 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Randrianja and Ellis, *Madagascar,* 22-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Ventura R. Pereza and others, “Evidence of Early Butchery of Giant Lemurs in Madagascar,” *Journal of Human Evolution* 49, no. 6 (2005): 722-72; P. Binggeli, “Introduced and Invasive Plants,” in *The Natural History of Madagascar*, ed. Goodman and Benstead, 227. Their extinction was probably similar to that of the dodo bird in the Mascarenes – a mixture of human hunting, the introduction of new predators (especially dogs) and elimination of the dodo's habitat. In reference to Madagascar, see David Quammen, *The Song of the Dodo: Island Biogeography in an Age of Extinctions* (New York: Scribner, 1996), 49-53. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Ibid., 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Radimilahy and Manjakahery, "Archaeology of St. Augustine’s Bay,” 66-68; M. R. Jury, “The Climate of Madagascar,” in *The Natural History of Madagascar*, ed. Goodman and Benstead, 75-84. On dramatic environmental shifts in Madagascar, see J. Carter Ingram and Terence P. Dawson, “Climate Change Impacts and Vegetation Response on the Island of Madagascar,” *Philosophical Transactions: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences* 363, no. 1826 (2005): 57; Jörg U. Ganzhorn, “Cyclones over Madagascar: Fate or Fortune,” *Ambio* 24, no. 2 (1995): 124. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. This is due to the rise of environmental history to study frontier and colonial societies. See William Beinart and Peter A. Coates, *Environment and History: the taming of nature in the USA and South Africa* (London: Routledge, 1995). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Randrianja and Ellis remind us that “The ecology of the island was already ‘dynamically changing’ before the arrival of the first people.” Randrianja and Ellis, *Madagascar,* 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. R. E. Dewar, "Relationship between Human Ecological Pressure and the Vertebrate Extinctions," in *The Natural History of Madagascar*, ed. Steven M. Goodman and Jonathan P. Benstead(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Quammen, *The Song of the Dodo*; Whittaker, *Island Biogeography.* It must be remembered that under French colonialism, far more land was cleared for agricultural production. Lucy Jarosz, “Defining and Explaining Tropical Deforestation: Shifting Cultivation and Population Growth in Colonial Madagascar (1896-1940), *Economic Geography* 69, no. 4, (Oct., 1993): 366-379. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. On the more contemporary attempts to restrict the use of fire for agriculture in Madagascar, see Christian A. Kull, *Isle of Fire: The Political Ecology of Landscape Burning in Madagascar* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 81-4.

    Environmental problems have had a severe impact on poverty in Madagascar. The people of Madagascar used to supply food for the southwestern Indian Ocean but have recently imported food. The food shortages are even worse in southern Madagascar. A 2010 report by the “Global Information and Early Warning System” on food and agriculture concluded that, despite good rice harvests in 2009, the people of the south are “chronically food insecure” due to dry conditions near Tulear impacting not just rice production, but also cassava (manioc) and maize. These problems, combined with the impact of a powerful cyclone in southeastern Madagascar, mean that people will have problems during 2010 purchasing food in southern Madagascar. The report also reminds us that “Madagascar as a whole has the highest level of acute malnutrition (15 percent) and chronic malnutrition (53 percent) in Southern Africa.” From the GIEWS Country Brief on Madagascar, 20 March 2010, “Global Information and Early Warning System,” found online

    http://www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/country.jsp?code=MDG, <accessed 1 April 2010>. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Burney and others, "A Chronology for Late Prehistoric Madagascar," 30, 34; R.E. Dewar and H.T. Wright, “The Culture History of Madagascar,” *Journal of World Prehistory* 7 (1993): 417-466. On the long-term impact of this cattle herding and the environment, see Jeffrey C. Kaufmann, “Prickly Pear Cactus and Pastoralism in Southwest Madagascar,” *Ethnology* 43, no. 4 (2004): 347. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Dewar, “Relationship between Human Ecological Pressure,” 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. On cattle in Madagascar, see Charles Ravoajanahary, “The settlement of Madagascar: two approaches,” in *Historical Relations across the Indian Ocean* (Port Louis, Mauritius: UNESCO, 1974), 85; Pierre Vérin, “Cultural influences and the contribution of Africa to the settlement of Madagascar,” in Ibid., 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Radimilahy, “Archaeology of St. Augustine’s Bay,” 62-8. Horton posits a presence of pastoralists and zebu cattle in Shanga, a Swahili port. Mark Horton, *Shanga: The Archaeology of a Muslim Trading Community on the Coast of East Africa* (London: The British Institute in Eastern Africa, 1996), 392, 411. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. This was also the case in East Africa: Helge Kjekshus, *Ecology Control and Economic Development in East African History* (London: James Currey, 1996) [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Radimilahy, “Archaeology of St. Augustine’s Bay,” 66-67. Life in an arid region meant small populations, not that the pastoralists lacked a surplus for engaging in exchanges. Rather than seeing the local economy as underdeveloped, this study presents their perceptions of value predicated on an understanding of survival in an environment foreign to the European traders. Sahlins argues against the idea of a “ ‘mere subsistence economy.’” Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Hawthorne, New York: Aldine Transaction, 1972), 2-3, on mobility and moveable wealth, see 11-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Radimilahy, “Archaeology of St. Augustine’s Bay,” 67-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. See, for instance, Heurtebize, *Histoire des Afomarolahy ,*77-9; Kaufmann, “Prickly Pear Cactus,” 347. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. On the spread of rice farming: Burney and others, "A Chronology.” [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. On early rice growing, see the conclusions of archeologists: Wright and Rakotoarisoa, "The Rise of Malagasy Societies,” 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Kaufmann, “Prickly Pear Cactus,” 350-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. On sites of iron working in southern Madagascar, see Chantal Radimilahy, *L'ancienne métallurgie du fer à Madagascar* (Oxford: BAR International Series, 1988), 66-72, 122-157. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Wright and Rakotoarisoa, “The Rise of Malagasy Societies,” 116. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. On elites on the highland before the Merina Empire, see*,* Charlotte Liliane Rabesahala-Randriamananoro, *Ambohimanga-Rova: approche anthropologique de la civilisation merina, Madagascar* (Paris: Le Publieur, 2005), 21-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Dahl, *Migration from Kalimantan to Madagascar*, 67; Rabesahala-Randriamananoro, *Ambohimanga-Rova*, 290-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Ramilisonina, "Topographies religieuse d'un terrior et relations entre Vivants et Ancestres á Madagascar: Les Bezanozano Zandroandrena et Tsimifahy (Mandialaza-Moramanga), in *Ancestralité et Identité à Madagascar* (Paris: Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, 2001), 100-116. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Gerald M. Berg, “Riziculture and the Founding of Monarchy in Imerina,” *The Journal of African History* 22, no. 3 (1981): 291-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. “A Voyage in the ship Frances from Mossambique for St. Lawrence”, 1640, reproduced in 1700?, in “Rawlinson Ms. A 334,” Memoirs of East India, Bodleian Library, Oxford University Library, ff. 54-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Radimilahy and Manjakahery, “Archaeology of St. Augustine’s Bay,” 63-64. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. On the connection between identity and economic livelihood, especially as it pertains to the Mikea, see Poyer and Kelly, “Mystification of the Mikea,” 164-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Randrianja and Ellis. *Madagascar*, 10-11. On the use of oral histories, see J. F. Ade Ajayi and Michael Crowder, *History of West Africa*, 3rd ed. (London: Longman, 1985), 259; Peter R. Schmidt, *Historical archaeology in Africa : representation, social memory, and oral traditions* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2006), 225-243; Jan Vansina, *Oral tradition as history* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. In fact, contemporary hunter-gathers on the island are equated with the Vazimba and treated as either mythical or relics of a distant past. See Poyer and Kelly, "Mystification of the Mikea,”170-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. François Callet, *Histoire des rois, traduction du Tantaran'ny andriana*, 5 vols. (Tananarive: Éditions de la Librairie de Madagascar, 1953), 1: 15. For current and past traditions involving the Vazimba, see, for instance, Charles Guillain, *Documents sur l'histoire, la geographie et le commerce de la partie occidentale de Madagascar* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1845), 8-15; Jørgen Ruud, *Gods and Ancestors: Society and Religion among the Forest Tribes in Madagascar* (1948; reprint, Oslo: Solum Forlag, 2002), 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Wright, “The Rise of Malagasy Societies,” 113. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Despite the persistence of scholars arguing that the Malagasy all spoke a commonly recognizable language prior to the nineteenth century, it seems unlikely that people from southern and northern Madagascar, for instance, could understand one another clearly. Due to oceanic connections, groups on the coast incorporated more Swahili and Arabic words, producing a dialect that other groups would find hard to understand. It is likely, however, that neighboring groups in Madagascar could communicate with ease. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Otto Chr. Dahl, *Migration from Kalimantan to Madagascar* (Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1991), 117-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Its worth nothing that the term Merina is derived from the name of the ruler, Andrianampoinimerina, who united the highland kingdoms in Madagascar during the late eighteenth century. The term was not previously in existence. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Radimilahy and Manjakahery, “Archaeology of St. Augustine’s Bay,” 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Dahl, *Migration from Kalimantan*, 73, 87, 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Example: E. Birkeli, "Folklore Sakalava: recueilli dans la région de Morondava," *Bulletin de l'Académie Malgache* VI (1924): 192. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Ramilisonina, "Topographies religiouse.” [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Or Ramina, depending on the oral tradition. On sorabe traditions, see Jacques Dez, “De l'influence arabe à Madagascar a l'aide de faits de linguistique,” in *Arabes et Islamisés à Madagascar et dans l'océan Indien* (Revue de Madagascar, distribué par Hachette-Madagascar, 1967), 4; Gabriel Ferrand, *Les Musulmans a Madagascar et aux iles Comores* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1891), 1: 36. For a different perspective, see N. J. Gueunier, *Chemins de L'Islam A Madagascar* (Paris: L.'Harmattan, 1994), 42. Andriana has been translated as lord in Malagasy. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. This sorabe tradition traces the migration of a migrant (literate in Arabic) from Mecca to the southeastern coast of Madagascar. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. The story of Darafify, found in Andre Dandouau, *Contes populaires des Sakalava et des Tsimihety de la region d'Analalava* (Alger: Jules Carbonel, 1922), 380-392. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. *Vazaha* means, in contemporary usage, “foreigner,” but usually the term describes people of white European descent. Terms such as *Karana* (Indian descent), *Chinois* (Chinese descent) and *Silamo* (of Arabian descent or a Muslim) are used to designate other non-Malagasy. On the term for non-Muslim Malagasy (probably an Arabic term), *Bouki*, see the records of the Jesuit Priests Mariano and Freire, in 1613-4, inCOACM, 2: 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. I have been unable to uncover the derivation of the term and have not seen a satisfying explanation in the secondary literature. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. On navigation into the bay, see especially John Thornton, *The English Pilot: the Third Book* (London, 1703), “Maps 22.d.30,” Maps Reading Room, British Library;John Seller, *The English Pilot (Book III)* (London: 1761), “Maps.C.22.d.17,” Maps Reading Room, British Library. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. One of the earliest visits was in 1575, by the Portuguese, according to André Thevet, in Grandider, COACM, 1: 128. Dutch and Portuguese likely visited the bay earlier. The visits during the early seventeenth century were by the English. Ship journal of the Hector, 1608, “IOR/E/3/1,” ff. 9-12, India Office Records, East India Company, African and Asian Studies Reading Room, British Library, London (henceforth IOR); ship journal of the Hector, 1614, “IOR/L/MAR/A/XX”; ship journal of New Year’s Gift, Hector, Salloman, and Hope, in 1613, “IOR/L/MAR/A/XIX”; the ship journal of the New Year’s Gift, in 1614, “IOR/L/MAR/A/XXI.” [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Walter Hamond, *Madagascar, the Richest and Most Fruitful Island in the World* (London: Nicholas Bourne, 1643), 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. The best sources for Madagascar during the 16th century are various Portuguese documents in COACM, volumes 1 and 2, as well as *Documents on the Portuguese in Mozambique and central Africa, 1497-1840*, 6 volumes (Lisboa: National Archives of Rhodesia, 1962). For the seventeenth century, English, Dutch, and French documents begin to give evidence about St. Augustine's Bay. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. *The Register of Letters etc of the Governor and Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies, 1600-1619,* ed. George Birdwood and William Foster (London, Quartich, 1893, reprint 1965), 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. The ships were: the New Year’s Gift, the Hector, the Hope, and the Salloman. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. The houses were more likely made of palm leaves: the ship journal of New Year’s Gift, 1614, “IOR/L/MAR/A/XXI.” [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. The ship journal of the Hector, 1607, “IOR/L/MAR/A/IV.” [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. The ship journal of New Year’s Gift, Hector, Hope, and Salloman, 1613, “IOR/L/MAR/A/XIX.” [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. See Chapter 5 for more information on the high demand for beef in the French Mascarenes. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. See various letters accounting their stays in St. Augustine’s Bay: Frederick Charles Danvers, ed. *Letters Received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1896), 1: 215, 252-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Ship journal of the New Year’s Gift, 1614, “IOR/L/MAR/A/XXI.” [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. "Relâche de Francois Martin de Vitre à la Baie de Saint-Augustin et à Mohely, en 1602" and "Relâche à Saint-Augustin de David Middleton, Commandant le "Consent", en 1607,"COACM, 1: 284, 299, and 403. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. See description in the ship journal from New Year’s Gift, 1614, “IOR/L/MAR/A/XXI.” [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. One observation of soldiers using spears in northern Madagascar successfully against European guns: Report of a voyage to Madagascar, 1646, Original Correspondence, “IOR/E/3/20.” [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Examples of early trading, see the ship journal of the Hector, “IOR/L/MAR/A/XX.” See also “An account of the present commodities that are imported and exported at Madagascar and the manner of dealing with the natives,” late 17th century? in “Rawlinson Ms. A 334: Memoirs of East India,” Bodleian Oxford Library, ff. 61-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. The ship journal of New Year’s Gift, 1614, “IOR/L/MAR/A/XXI.” [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Letter, John Sandcroft to the East India Company, Nov 29, 1614, in *Letters Received by the East India Company*, ed. William Foster (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1897), 2: 212, 250, 255; report from the ship the Hector, 1608, “IOR/E/3/1.” [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. On instances of Andriana used for the names of chiefs, see “A booke of consultations belonging to the Plantation of Madagascar,” Captain John Smart, 1643-6, “Add. Mss. 14037,” Manuscripts Collection, British Library (henceforth Add. Mss.). There are also mentions of “Androa,” “Andria,” and “Dean” as prefixs for leaders' names. See various letters in Original Correspondence, East India Company, 1646, “IOR/E/3/20”; Robert Drury, *The adventures of Robert Drury* (London: W. Meadows, 1743; reprinted for Stodart and Craggs, 1807), 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Some archeologists believe that these structures were for rituals or royal villages, being too small to be used for protection. Mike Parker Pearson and Karen Godden, *In Search of the Red Slave: Shipwreck and Captivity in Madagascar*, vol. 2002 (Stroud, UK: Sutton, 2002), 108, 163-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Radimilahy and Manjakahery, “Archaeology of St. Augustine’s Bay,” 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Walter Hamond, *Madagascar, the Richest and Most Fruitful Island in the World* (London: Nicholas Bourne, 1643), 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. On their skills with spears, see Powle Waldegrave, *An Answer to Mr Boothbies Book, of the Description of the Island of Madagascar* (London: Printed by T. N, 1649), 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. See description of raids in Drury, *The adventures of Robert Drury*, 120-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. On contemporary cattle rustling in western Madagascar, see Jonny Hogg, “Cattle 'war zone' in Madagascar,” *BBC News*, June 21, 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. For such an appeal for help, see Smart, “Plantation of Madagascar,” in “Add. 14037.” Also compare to the French experience of interfering in local politics in Fort Dauphin – see various colonial archives, especially "Relation de ce qui s'est passé à l'île Dauphin depuis le 1er Mars 1668,” in *Fonds des Colonies, Correspondance à l'Arrivée, Madagascar*, “COL C/5A/1,” French Archives Nationales, Paris (henceforth COL). Europeans also interfered in île Sainte Marie and Antongil Bay. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Richard Boothby, *A Briefe Discovery or Description of the most Famous Island of Madagascar or St. Laurence in Asia neare unto East-India* (London: E.G. for John Hardesty, 1646), 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. This intervention also made the Andriana less likely to listen to the supplications of their dependents to cease warfare. See the use of councils of war in southern Madagascar, Drury, *The Adventures of Robert Drury*, 146-9. For a similar increase in cattle raids in southern Madagascar, see the observations of the French colonial administrators, including the report from 3 March 1670, in “COL C/5A/1.” [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. On the plans for this failed English colony, see Alison Games, “Oceans, Migrants, and the Character of Empires: English Colonial Schemes in the Seventeenth Century” (paper presented at the conference on Seascapes, Littoral Cultures, and Trans-Oceanic Exchanges, Library of Congress, Washington D. C, February 12-15, 2003), http://www.historycooperative.org/proceedings/seascapes/games.html <accessed 17 February 2009>.

     On the history of the Courteen company that financed these colonies, see W. Foster, “An English Settlement in Madagascar in 1645-6,” *The English Historical Review* 27, no. 106 (1912); Report on the Courteen company, 1646, “IOR/E/3/20.” Courteen had trouble settling his debts with the English East India Company, following the failure of the plantation: Details of the hearing, 1650, “IOR/B/23.” A short tract was written in defense of the plans and describing how the East India Company thwarted the St. Augustine’s Bay colony: John Darell, *Strange New from the Indies, or East India Passages Further Discovered... The Manner and Tenour of East India Trade Hitherto, with Part of the Woefull and Sad Sufferings of William Courten* (London: Printed for Stephen Bowtel, 1652). See also Alfred and Guillaume Grandidier, *Les Anglais à Madagascar: au XVIIe siècle - extrait de la “Revue de Madagascar”* (Paris: 1903), 8-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Radimilahy, “Archaeology of St. Augustine’s Bay, Lower and Middle Onilahy Valley, Southwestern Madagascar,” 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Visit to St. Augustine’s Bay, 1646, “IOR/E/3/20.” On the settlement, see also: Boothby, *A Briefe Discovery*; Powle Waldegrave, *An Answer to Mr Boothbies Book, of the Description of the Island of Madagascar* (London: Printed by T. N., 1649). This manuscript is a collection of letters and orders given by Smart, the leader of the colony: "Add. 14037 - "a Booke of Consultations Belonging to the Plantation of Madagascar", Captain John Smart," British Library. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Consultations, “Add. 14037,” f. 17; [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Ibid., f. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Waldegrave, *An Answer to Mr Boothbies Book,* 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Pier M. Larson, "Colonies Lost: God, Hunger, and Conflict in Anosy (Madagascar) to 1674," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 2 (2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Waldegrave, *An Answer to Mr Boothbies Book*, 6-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Radimilahy and Manjakahery, "Archaeology of St. Augustine’s Bay,” 65-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Arne Bialuschewski, “Pirates, Slavers, and the Indigenous Population in Madagascar, c. 1690 - 1715,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 38, no. 2 (2005): 411. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Drury, *The Adventures of Robert Drury*, 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Guillain, *Documents Sur L'histoire,* 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Ibid., 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. De la Haye description of “Le Pays D'Anosy près le Fort Dauphin” 1 August 1671, from “COL C/5A/1.” [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. On European ideas of what Africa could provide, see Curtin, “The Environment beyond Europe,” 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. For instance, David Lee Schoenbrun, *A Green Place, a Good Place: Agrarian Change, Gender, and Social Identity in the Great Lakes Region to the 15th century* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1998). [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. John Richards, *The Unending Frontier: an Environmental History of the Early Modern World* (Berkely: University of California Press, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. See Gareth Austin*,* “Sub-Saharan Africa: Land rights and ethno-national consciousness in historically land-abundant economies,” in *Land Rights, ethno-nationality, and sovereignty in history*, ed. Stanley Engerman and Jacob Meter (London: Routledge, 2004), 284-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Richards, *The unending frontier*, 274-302. It is worth noting that the Dutch imported slaves and food from Madagascar, especially during the seventeenth century. For instance, see Jan Van Riebeek, *Journal of Jan Van Riebeeck*, ed. Hendrik Bernardus Thom, 3 vols. (Amsterdam: The Van Riebeeck Society, 1952), 1: 191. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Leonard Guelke, "Frontier Settlement in Early Dutch South Africa," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66, no. 1 (1976). [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Ecological instability presumably led to a need for ritual leaders to help ensure the prosperity of proto-Sakalava communities. Compare with the work done on leadership in East Africa: Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Helge Kjekshus, *Ecology.*

     There is a new trend towards the integration of environmental history into histories of trade and empire. See Robert W. Harms, *River of Wealth, River of Sorrow: the Central Zaire Basin in the Era of the Slave and Ivory Trade, 1500-1891* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); Emmanuel Kreike, *Re-creating Eden: Land Use, Environment, and Society in Southern Angola and Northern Namibia* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004); T. C. McCaskie, *State and Society in Pre-colonial Asante* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Randall M. Packard, *Chiefship and Cosmology: an Historical study of Political Competition* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981); Schoenbrun, *A Green Place.* [↑](#footnote-ref-120)