

THE RISE OF A COMMERCIAL EMPIRE:  
AN ASPECT OF THE ECONOMIC HISTORY OF ZANZIBAR,  
1770-1873.

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ABSTRACT

The development of Zanzibar as an entrepot and capital of a vast commercial empire has previously been attributed entirely to the far-sighted policies of Seyyid Said. A re-examination of the economic history of East Africa reveals that economic expansion from the eighteenth century resulted from economic forces which were independent of Omani policies; that these forces were already in motion before Seyyid Said first visited Zanzibar; and that the Omanis manipulated these forces to centralise economic activities at Zanzibar to a greater degree than would otherwise have been achieved, thus forming a commercial empire.

The Omani demand for slaves for their expanding date plantations and the increasing French demand in the Mascarenes initiated a rapid expansion of Kilwa's hinterland and the growth of Zanzibar's entrepot role to supply the imports. When the French slave trade suffered a mortal blow from the Napoleonic wars and the eventual prohibition in 1822, the redundant slaves were diverted to the clove plantations of Zanzibar.

The second major development was initiated by Portuguese taxation of the ivory trade of Mozambique. By 1801 ivory exports had been halved. To supply the unsatisfied Indian demand, to which was soon to be added European and American demand, the northern ivory hinterland was rapidly expanded during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The

development of the Indian mercantile community facilitated this expansion. The supply of this commodity of the hunt called for a constant expansion of the hinterland and sophistication of the commercial organization which, however, was dependent entirely on a caravan of human shoulders. The demand thus regularly outstripped supply, and ivory prices consequently rose. The price of manufactured imports, on the other hand, tended to remain steady or even decline as a result of mechanisation. The diverging price curves thus constituted a dynamic force for economic expansion.

On such a vibrant economic base the Omanis structured their commercial empire. The empire, however, was not built on a stable administrative or political structure, but on a system of influence and common economic interests. In the age of the "Scramble" it merely crumbled.



## PREFACE

Political bias of many of the previous historians and of sources has thus far permitted the growth of a thick political crust around the economic factor in the history of the East African coast. The great variety and volume of sources for the nineteenth century has permitted a re-examination of the rise of Zanzibar and the economic unification of the coast and the interior.

The study has been made possible by a fellowship and a supplementary scholarship from the Rockefeller Foundation. I am grateful to the Foundation for taking my particular needs into consideration and for sponsoring my research trips to the United States and Paris. The staff at the Peabody Museum and the Essex Institute, by their helpfulness and friendliness, contributed to the success of my study tour to Salem for which I am grateful.

It is harder to express my gratitude to Dr. J.R. Gray for his patience, guidance and friendship throughout the period of research even when separated by continents. His and Dr. B. A. Dato'o's critical comments helped in streamlining the thesis and in bringing the main themes into a sharper relief though, of course, they do not share the shortcomings of the thesis.

I am also grateful to Mrs. C. Nicholls for giving me useful hints about the French archives, and regret that I was not able to see her thesis on "European and Arab Activities on the East African Coast, 1798-1856" at Oxford.

My father's interest in ivory stimulated me to examine its historical role, and his support and confidence sustained me through the long years of research. Finally, I owe an immense debt to Fatma who has been not only a patient wife but also a collaborator in research who helped me many a time to get out of my mental ruts.

The University College, Dar es Salaam, allowed me sufficient time during 1969/70 to write up the thesis for which I am happy to express my appreciation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	2
Preface	4
List of maps and graphs	6
Abbreviations	7
Glossary	9
Chapter I. Introduction	10
Chapter II. The Rise of an Entrepot: Zanzibar, 1770-1810.	18
1. Centrifugal and Centripetal Geographical factors	18
2. The Omani Intervention	29
3. Kilwa and the French Slave Trade	45
4. Zanzibar as the Entrepot	65
Chapter III. Indian Demand for ivory and the Evolution of the Northern Hinterland	85
1. The decline in the supply of ivory from Mozambique.	86
2. The Growth of Indian trade at Zanzibar	101
3. The expansion of the Northern Hinterland	128
Chapter IV. The Slave Trade and the Economic Development of the Islands, 1810-50	156
1. The East African Slave Trade	157
2. The Development of the clove economy	171
3. The Sugar Industry	200
Chapter V. The Dynamo of Economic Expansion until the mid-century	208
1. Anglo-American trade at Zanzibar	217
2. Salem's Strategy of controlled growth	241
3. The Expansion of Zanzibar's foreign trade	278
Chapter VI. The Commercial Empire at its Height	293
1. Differential Exploitation of the Coast	296
2. Centralisation of Economic Activities	323
3. The Commercial life of the Entrepot	335
Chapter VII. Resilience and Fragility of the Commercial Empire	359
1. The American Civil War	365
2. Zanzibar's Hinterland	374
3. Alienation of the Indians and the loss of Economic Independence	412
4. The Slave Trade and the economy of the commercial empire	436
Appendix A: Bombay Trade Figures, 1801/2-1869/70	464
Appendix B: Ivory Imports into the United Kingdom, 1792-1875	466
Appendix C: Early American Trade with East Africa, 1823-33	468
Bibliography	476

LIST OF ESSAYS

I. The "Nyika"	22
II. The Monsoons	25
III. Differential Taxation and the Centralization of Trade, c. 1848	298
IV. The Hinterland of Zanzibar, c. 1873	475

LIST OF CHAPTERS

I. Ivory trade of Mozambique, 1780-1820	91
II. Prices of Ivory, Copal, Cloves, and Sheeting 1800-1870	469
III. Trade between East Africa and Bombay, 1800-70	470
IV. Ivory imports into the United Kingdom, 1790-1875	471
V. American Trade with Zanzibar, 1838-1867/8	472
VI. The revenue of Zanzibar, 1800-70	474
VII. Zanzibar: Clove production	185

ABBREVIATIONS

- ANF Archives Nationales, Paris.
- AOM Archives Nationales: Section Outre-mer.
- B.M. British Museum.
- B.R. Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government, New Series.
- C.C.Z. Correspondance Consulaire et Commerciale: Zanzibar, at M.A.E.
- E.I. Essex Institute, Salem.
- E.I. H.C. Essex Institute, Historical Collections, Salem.
- F.O. Foreign Office.
- F.O. CP. Foreign Office Confidential Prints.
- F.K.I. The French at Kilwa Island, G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, Oxford, 1965.
- H.E.A. History of East Africa, Vol. I, R. Oliver and G. Mathew, (eds.), Oxford, 1963.
- I.O. India Office.
- J.A.H. Journal of African History, Cambridge.
- J.E.A.S.C. Journal of the East African Swahili Committee, Kampala.
- J.R.G.S. Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, London.
- L.C. Library of Congress, Washington.
- M.A. Maharashtra State Archives, Bombay.
- MAE Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres, Archives.
- NAI National Archives of India, New Delhi.
- NAW National Archives, Washington.
- NEMA New England Merchants in Africa, N.R. Bennett & G.E. Brooks, Boston, 1965.
- O.I. Ocean Indien series at AOM.
- PAT. Pre-Colonial African Trade, J.R. Gray & D. Birmingham, (eds.), Oxford, 1970.
- P.M. Peabody Museum, Salem.
- P.R.G.S. Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, London.
- P.R.O. Public Records Office, London.
- S.C.H.R. Salem Custom House Records.

Abbreviations cont.

- S.D.      The East African Coast: Select Documents,  
            G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville, Oxford, 1962.
- T.B.G.S.   Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society.
- TNR        Tanganyika / Tanzania / Notes and Records, Dar es Salaam.
- U.J.        Uganda Journal, Kampala.

GLOSSARY

- ALROBA A Portuguese unit of weight of 32 to 33 1/3 lbs. (Salt, 92. Nama, 500).
- BAGIALA The largest of Indian Ocean dhows ranging from 150 to 400 tons. Also Bugala.
- CRUZADOS A Portuguese silver coin. See Fiastre for value.
- FATASALIA A unit of weight measuring 35 lbs. at Zanzibar and 36 lbs. on the mainland to the north.
- MARIA THERESA DOLLARS (M.T. \$), or Austrian or German crowns, the "black" dollar current in East Africa until the 1850's, of approximately equal value to the Spanish and the U.S. dollar (See p. )  
 1 M.T. \$ = 2.14-2.23 rupees during the first half of the nineteenth century, (Milburn, 1, 198; Burton, 1, (1872), 1, 324-5; 11, 406, 410-9).  
                   = 5.50 francs. (C.C.L. 1, 438)  
                   = 110-123 copper piece (NEMA, 498, 541)  
 1 Pound = 4.75 M.T.\$ (ibid. 499)
- MAUND An Indian unit of weight. The Surat maund used to weigh ivory equalled to 37 1/2 lbs. approximately. (Milburn 1, 159)
- FIASTRE A French term for the Maria Theresa or the Spanish dollar.  
 In 1777, 1 p. = 3.75 crusados FVI, 68  
 In 1813, \$1 Spanish = about 2.6 crusados (Milburn, 1, 60; Philips (1951), 114)
- RUPEE Indian unit of currency. In 1836 the universal rupee was established but the value fluctuated until 1899. (Philips, (1951), 62)  
 1813 1 Bombay and Surat rupee = 2s.6d.  
           2.14 Rs. = 1 Spanish \$  
           (Milburn, 1, 116, 173-4).  
 See Maria Theresa \$



## CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Trade is the pervasive theme in the history of the East African coast and is essentially a unifying economic and cultural force. It formed the basis of East Africa's foreign relations with the countries across the Indian Ocean, as depicted in the Periplus and by the Arab geographers. It gave rise to the Swahili city states which resembled the beads of a rosary, clustering in places and widely spaced elsewhere, threaded together by coastal shipping. Husuni Kubwa palace at Kilwa, backed by a massive "warehouse", is an admirable portrait of the material achievement of those relations,<sup>1</sup> but that was not all that remained. They left a more permanent heritage in the form of the "Swahili" culture, with an African base and oriental embellishment.

It was, however, not necessarily a unifying political force. The longitudinal alignment of the coast, and the parallel stream of the monsoons on which depended trading relations between Africa and Asia, did not favour the emergence of a single dominant and unrivalled centre. The tendency towards political independence, despite economic and cultural interdependence, was thus marked among the Swahili city states.

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1 See Datoo and Sheriff, passim, forthcoming, for a summary of the geographical and economic factors in the early history of the East African coast.

It was generally left to the inherent centralising tendency of foreign conquerors, such as the Portuguese or the Omanis, to impose a greater degree of unity, to centralise the trade at a few entrepôts which could easily be defended, often on the offshore islands.

Geography played a similar trick in the relationship between the coast and the interior. The "Nyika" belt of wilderness of variable width and solidity imposed a price on communication between the coast and the interior. Here again it was trade that was the unifying factor. At certain times in the history of East Africa, and in certain places, external demand for African commodities was massive enough to promote a long-distance linkage with the far interior which economically unified the coast and the interior. This economic unity has left its indelible mark in the spread of aspects of the Swahili culture, such as language and, to a smaller extent, Islam, almost halfway across the continent.

The commercial empire centred on Zanzibar that developed from the second half of the eighteenth century was thus based on a combination of the Omani centralising tendency at the coast and the phenomenal economic integration of the coast and the interior. A degree of "policy", if it may be called so, in this evolution is thus admitted. Most historians of East Africa, however, have approached the region with the tools of political history, and with a very limited understanding of the nature of the Omani "monarchy", to which they ascribed



all sorts of initiative. These historians, thus had to rationalise all the economic changes then occurring in East Africa in terms of the economic "policies" of the prominent political figures. Coupland ascribed to the economic policy of Seyyid Said, among others, the exploitation of Zanzibar and Pemba for cloves, the expansion of the hinterland, and the development of the Indian community to finance economic development.<sup>2</sup> Coupland's synthesis is faulty not only in attributing the changes during Said's reign to his policies, but also in ascribing initiative to him for developments which were already in motion by the time he first visited Zanzibar in 1828. For the purposes of this thesis it has been found necessary to tear Coupland's synthesis, at least as regards economic affairs, into its primary elements before reassembling them, with greater regard to chronology and sequence, to determine whether Said initiated the developments, or whether the latter persuaded him to

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2 Coupland (1939), 4-5. The other "threads" were the introduction of the small copper coinage for India which had only a limited significance in the retail at Zanzibar; the regularization of all duties to a simple 5% duty on imports without considering the very important system of internal duties which were not pegged to a certain fixed sum by the commercial treaties; and the "welcome" he extended to European and American traders and the negotiation of those commercial treaties. Ingham, 19, 73, 80, has gone so far as to assert that the history of East Africa was moulded by the personality of Seyyid Said and Britain's concern for the slave trade. He goes on to say that the transformation of Zanzibar from "a small and relatively unimportant village" to the most important trading centre along the coast was "almost entirely due to the initiative and powers of organisation of Seyyid Said".

shift his capital to Zanzibar in about 1840.

A probable defence for the political bias of these historians is the alleged political bias of the available sources and the paucity of economic data. Few can realise better than the present writer the frustrations in accumulating economic data, and the difficulty of using a scatter of such data, some of which are merely wild guesses. It is for this reason that a long time span for the study has been chosen to deal with some aspects of the economic history of East Africa in outline. The exercise, however, threatened to be swamped by the less common danger in African history, an abundance of sources. A close examination of the available sources easily explains the above-mentioned political bias, in view of the fact that the most political of these sources, the British consular records, duplicated in London, India and Zanzibar, have formed the basis of many of the studies until now. Even these include, from 1859, a series of trade reports which do not appear to have been fully utilised, nor were some of the able published accounts, such as Guillain's and Burton's. The present study has attempted to supplement these by an admirable set of detailed reports of the commercial commissioner attached to Guillain's mission in the 1840s to give a balanced picture of the organisation and functioning of the commercial empire in its heyday (ch VI). However, what have given the study its time depth, and have enabled us to trace economic changes, have

undoubtedly been the continuous series of trade figures for the trade of Bombay and Surat with East Africa, and the most valuable sets of private commercial papers of American merchants trading with Zanzibar. Unfortunately, they are not of even quality, and are the fullest for little more than fifteen years. Their existence has not been unknown, and a selection of them have recently been published, but they have not before been used for an economic analysis.

A detailed examination of these sources has made it clear that the role of Seyyid Said in the economic development of East Africa is far less significant than previously maintained. More positively, it has yielded a more probable set of purely economic factors for the development of each sector of the economy which either antedated or were independent of a decisive influence of Seyyid Said. Even the Omani centralising tendency, which provided a suitable political form for the commercial empire, though a product of Omani "policy", can be traced to a period long before Seyyid Said. Shorn of much of these mythical garbs, with which Coupland has burdened him in history, Seyyid Said, nevertheless, is not left entirely nude in the history of East Africa. Though he modestly declared himself to be "nothing but a merchant",<sup>4</sup> he was a considerable merchant. By an intelligent response to economic factors that were affecting himself and his subjects

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4. Coupland (1938), p. 299.

alike, he was sometimes in a position to accelerate development and regularise trading relations. Though on occasions he sacrificed considerable economic advantages and unwittingly tied his hands in the generally unreciprocated commercial treaties, he fought valiantly to defend Zanzibar's economic interests. Indeed he understood many of the economic forces affecting the empire better than his latter-day praise-singers, and he continued the development of his heritage into a full-fledged commercial empire by the time of his death.

These economic forces were centred around the two major commodities of trade, slaves and ivory. The apparent increase in the Omani date cultivation in the eighteenth century, and the decreasing profitability of the French slave trade at Mozambique during the last third of that century, combined to create a substantial demand for slaves at Kilwa. The hinterland rapidly expanded as far as Lake Nyasa, and Zanzibar's entrepot role grew out of the need to supply Arab and Indian imports to pay for the slaves. While the Omani demand soon levelled off, the more substantial French demand was subject to violent fluctuations as a result of the Napoleonic wars, and was ultimately virtually strangled in the 1820s. A vital transformation in the sector of the economy was therefore initiated by local Arab traders during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, diverting the slaves to the clove plantations of Zanzibar and Pemba. Thus the sector was modified from being primarily an export of slave labour to one that exported the produce of that labour for

the most part (chs II and IV).

The second major economic force was activated by the collapse of the supply of ivory from Mozambique around the turn of the century as a result of the rapacious Portuguese system of taxation. To the Indian demand was soon added the British and American in the 1820s and the 1830s. The supply of such a commodity of the hunt, however, demanded a constant expansion of the hinterland. So rapid was the growth in demand for ivory in the affluent West that throughout the century it almost always outstripped supply, and resulted in a constant increase in the price of ivory. The price of manufactured imports, on the other hand, remained steady, or even declined as a result of technological improvements. These diverging price curves constituted for East Africa the powerful and dynamic motive force for the phenomenal expansion of the hinterland. This dynamo was able not only to cover the increasing cost of transportation by human porters, but also to offer more lucrative prices to local traders for their commodity every new year (chs III and V).

The commercial empire developed out of the more limited entrepot role of Zanzibar for the hinterland of Kilwa in the later half of the eighteenth century to a vibrant economic centre of a vast area that stretched to eastern Congo by the early 1870s. It exploited ingeniously the various stretches of the coast to their full economic yield without, however, killing the trade itself. It furthered the natural central-



isation of trade at Zanzibar by offering tax inducements to ports farther from the centre to use the entrepot. Above all, it secured its economic foundation by reserving the most valuable Mrima coast for the exclusive use of the local traders. In this pre-Scramble era little need was felt to consolidate the vast market by means of an elaborate political and administrative structure. The underlying philosophy of the commercial empire was not colonial exploitation of a subject people but the forging of common economic interests with the people of the interior. The known demand for ivory at the coast and the intense competition among caravan traders from the coast and from the interior, ensured that a large part of the increasing price difference was passed on to the producers of ivory in the form of a larger quantity of cloth for each tusk. This system of common interests, however, was not stable or static, and considerable strains were imposed on the structure of the empire as the "frontier" successively moved away from the coast. The less systematic political relations with the people of the interior, in the form of presents, were not a viable prop for the structure of the empire when challenged by determined European expansionism. At the coast the State was unable to defend its own shipping and was subverted from within by the conversion of the most powerful economic group into an instrument of European influence. In the interior the rich hinterland in the Congo was tied to the entrepot by only a couple of slender lifelines. When these snapped the empire crumbled, to be shared out among at least four European powers(chs. VI and VII).

## CHAPTER II

The Rise of an Entrepot: Zanzibar, 1770-1810

One of the central themes in the history of the East African coast is the interaction and potential conflict between the two fundamental forces which have influenced the coast: the Swahili ideal of political independence despite economic inter-dependence and the centralising tendency of the external "invaders". The Swahili ideal was nourished by geographical factors which, however, were not unequivocal in their effect, for while they encouraged the spirit of independence among the city states, they failed to provide each with an adequate and independent economic base from which to exercise that independence. Participation in the wider Swahili economic region for purposes of trade was thus characteristic of the city-states, and this permitted a certain degree of economic domination by certain well-placed ports. The history of Zanzibar during the late eighteenth century is the story of the coming together of Zanzibar's own natural entrepot role and the Omani centralising tendency to lay the foundation of a commercial empire.

1. Centrifugal and Centripetal Geographical Factorsa. The Acephalous Coast:

The alignment of the more or less straight coastline provided no obvious focus for the control of the coast as a whole. Coupled with the territorial separation of the ports,

the orientation of the coast imprinted on coastal economy and politics its general acephalous and even fissiparous character. Each sought its economic sustenance from agriculture in the immediate environs of the port, sometimes entirely from the off-shore islands on which many of these ports were located. Their prosperity and strength largely depended on the foreign trade, on their ability to establish trade contacts with the interior and independent oceanic contacts with the northern rim of the Indian Ocean. In the absence of external intervention these separate economies bred independent polities with a strong sense of economic and political independence within the wider cultural unity.

The system, however, had its own internal weaknesses. Varying geography imposed a pattern of unequal potential for the growth of the city states. At the very primary level the self-sufficiency of some of the city states, especially those on the smaller islands, was threatened by inadequate local production of grain and cattle. Conceivably the mainland opposite could be cultivated in places, and with surplus elsewhere and an efficient coastal shipping, perhaps none of the cities were limited in their growth by a shortage of food. However, dependence on external supplies of foodstuffs was a significant crack in the city states' ideal of economic independence, and could be used by a rival to threaten political independence as well.

A more decisive factor in the disparity of their growth



has been their varying potential for contacts with the interior. It is perhaps commonplace to state that economics place a certain price to linking the coast with the interior, in terms of supply and demand. In the case of East Africa the price was variable according to the difficulty of traversing the land behind the coast to the interior. A glance at the rainfall probability map reveals a thick belt of less than 30 inches needed for dependable agriculture running just behind the narrow coastal belt of Kenya. This is the famous "Nyika" wasteland which is the least densely populated region in Kenya.<sup>1</sup> It is a considerable barrier to interior penetration, broken only by the few rivers. However, it also formed one of the refuges of big game, and the islands of higher rainfall around the highland blocks, such as the Taita hills, provided convenient caravanserais. Thus, while a high premium was placed upon its crossing, the potential for trade also existed. South of the border, the belt is broken by a chain of highlands from the Usambaras to Meru and the resultant strip of higher rainfall and more favourable vegetation. Coupled with the Pangani river it is a likely avenue for early contacts with the interior. Southwards the dry belt is more broken and recedes further into the interior, virtually disappearing in southern Tanzania. Thus, moving from north to south there is a progressive enlargement of the potential

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1 Morgan and Shaffer, 10-11.

immediate hinterland before the difficult barrier has to be traversed.

This barrier, however, is a negative factor. It is a geographical price tagged on to long distance communication, which is brought into existence by the stimulus and response of both the hinterland and the foreland to satisfy each other's desires. Since the rejection of the earlier belief that trade routes were established by the coastal people who single-mindedly pushed their way into the dark interior, the pendulum has swung to the other extreme, that the trade routes were established "exclusively through African initiative".<sup>2</sup> The question, surely, should be approached rather by reference to supply and demand of the various commodities from both ends and to the ability of one side or the other at a particular time and place to respond to economic factors. The pattern was probably variable and not only in terms of who blazed the trail. It may be possible to discover in some places the forging of links between the coast and the pre-existing regional trading networks in the interior which provided the necessary economic organization for the fuller exploitation of the natural resources and the distribution of trade goods.

b. The Monsoonal Focus

Local geography in various ways made for a disparity in the growth and strength of the city states. Climatology,

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2 Alpers, (1967), 13.

**MAP I : THE "NYIKA"**



SOURCE : E. W. RUSSELL, (ed.),  
THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF  
EAST AFRICA, (NAIROBI, 1968), P. 78

or more particularly the monsoonal wind system, compounded the threats to the independence of the city states by coming closest to provide a focal area for the east African coast. The importance of the monsoon has been more often stressed than understood. It is worth emphasising that the system is highly dynamic. The east African coast is only a fringe of this system, whose qualities are variable in time and space according to the latitude. The map<sup>3</sup> for November shows the "build up" of the North East Monsoon. It is apparent that the spatial extent of reliable northerly winds encompasses the northwest coast of India, south Arabia, and the Somali coast only as far south as about five degrees north, to the north of Mogadishu. The winds are steady and light (over 55% being less than 10 m.p.h.). This is the early season for the departures of dhows from the south Arabian coast which sail along the East African coast, taking between 30 and 40 days to reach their destination. With a greater frequency of tropical storms in the Arabian Sea, especially in the eastern half, in October and November, suitable sailing conditions from northwest India occur later. At the same time the East African coast between the Equator and 10°S. is dominated by the declining South East Trades, used for communication from the Mascarenes.

By December the monsoon with 60% frequency has extended

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3 The discussion on the monsoon is based on Kirk, (1962); McMaster, (1966); Weather in the Indian Ocean; Monthly Meteorological charts of the Indian Ocean; Marine Climatic Atlas of the World, Vol. III.

as far as 10°S. While the pattern hardens with increasing reliability and strength of the wind in January, the peak month, there is no further shift south except in the 80% reliability from about the Equator to the latitude of Zanzibar. The constancy of northerly winds reaches 90%, and the winds are stronger, allowing for a faster and more direct voyage from northwest India in about 20 days. This is the season for the Indian vessels. In 1825 all the vessels from India arrived at Mombasa in January and February, later than the vessels from Arabia in general.<sup>4</sup> The consequent shorter season of trade in East Africa and the greater reliability of winds from Zanzibar northwards, are certainly strong reasons for the choice by the Indians of the northern ports as their centres of trade. The monsoons, therefore, are partly responsible for creating conditions for the rise of a focus in East Africa in the northern half of the coast, rather than the southern.

If the monsoon has placed the coast of southern Tanzania at a disadvantage, the coast to the south of Cape Delgado was at an even greater disadvantage. The constancy of the monsoon falls dramatically as it encounters south-easterlies blowing towards Mozambique. The convergence of the two wind systems creates a region of variable winds and unstable weather prone to tropical cyclones in the Mozambique channel. The

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4 P.R.O.: Adm. 52/3940. Emery's journal, passim.



NOV.

N. E. M. ONSOON

DEC.



MAY: "BUILD-UP" S.W. MONSOON


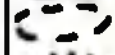
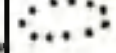
SEPT. "TAIL-END"



JULY: "BOISTROUS S.W. MONSOON."

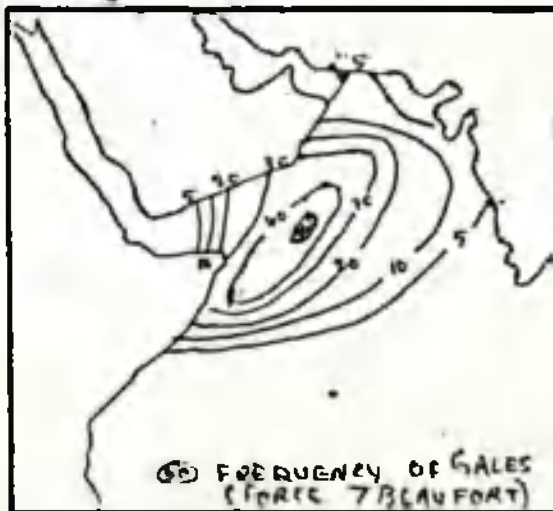
MAP II

FREQUENCY OF WINDS FROM PREDOMINANT QUADRANT

-  EXCEEDING 60% CONSTANCY
-  " " 80% " "
-  INCIDENCE OF CYCLONES

SOURCES:

WEATHER IN THE INDIAN OCEAN  
 VOL. I (H.M.S.O. 1943)  
 MONTHLY METEOROLOGICAL CHARTS  
 OF THE INDIAN OCEAN (H.M.S.O. 1949)



(50) FREQUENCY OF GALES (FORCE 7 BEAUFORT)

voyage is arduous and dangerous. It is hardly surprising that before the Portuguese the entrepot was located north of Cape Delgado, while the all important Sofala trade was served by coastal shipping which can "steal" along the coast. The detachment of Sofala by the Portuguese cut off the flow of commodities to the northern entrepot, and some of the Indian vessels were forced to seek their supplies from the newly established Portuguese entrepot at Mozambique. The crossing of Cape Delgado, therefore, greatly lengthened the time needed to complete a voyage as well as adding to the hazards of the voyage. As long as the Portuguese hold on the trade routes into the Zambesi hinterland persisted, the coast to the north could rise again economically mainly by developing its own trade contacts with the interior and thereby attracting the foreign merchants back.

The North East Monsoonal conditions begin to break down by March and, consistent with the fringe situation of East Africa in the system, it does so first in the south. Thus the outward sailing season is shortened as we go south. Vessels wishing to make for Kilwa, for example, are therefore forced to make a faster and more direct voyage. By March the monsoon in the Mozambique channel has entirely collapsed, and the winds are stronger and predominantly southerly (over 70%). Vessels going south of Cape Delgado have therefore to make port long before that. The North East Monsoon extends only as far south as Zanzibar in March, and thereafter there is a gradual "build up" of the South West Monsoon, which

begins to influence the East African coast in April and is well established by May as the winds get stronger. Dhows which leave before mid-April may take 30 to 40 days, whereas those leaving between mid-April and mid-May complete their voyage in 20-25 days. Normally, however, dhows leave East Africa in April to avoid the tropical storms more frequent in the Arabian sea in May and June. Contrary to the commonly held belief, the South West Monsoon, when fully developed in June and July, is much too strong for the Indian Ocean craft. Off the Somali coast winds of gale force (more than 35 m.p.h.) between June and August reach between 30 and 60%. The native mariners, therefore, normally utilize the lighter winds for their return journey either during the "build up" of the monsoon or with the "tail-end" in September, having "wintered" in East Africa. These alternatives, however, were available only to the coast north of Cape Delgado, and the choice between them depended on the level of economic organisation for credit and the collection and warehousing of the commodities during the off-season. It is possible that wintering may have been commoner before the nineteenth century than after, but sailing with the "build up" appears to have been the general rule. Even without wintering there was an adequate trading season whose duration, however, decreased from north to south not only by the lengthening of the voyage but also by the later establishment and the earlier break-up of the monsoon in the south. In contrast, there was no alternative to "wintering" for those who went to the south of Cape Delgado.



Only the Portuguese determination and control permitted the growth of Mozambique as an entrepot.

The monsoons, therefore, helped to define a focus area, the area most convenient for monsoonal dhows. In the absence of blockading navies it is probably going too far to say that Zanzibar had a commanding position on the Zanzibar channel which was normally used for communication with the south. The most that can be said is that geographical and climatic conditions facilitated the growth of an entrepot along the northern coast able to control, in the economic sense, the foreign trade of the southern city states. One of those conditions was the wind system which provided the motive power for coastal shipping to enable the collection of cargoes at, and the distribution of goods from, the entrepot. Much of the strictly longitudinal coastal traffic was controlled by the monsoons. However, being at the edge of the system, East Africa experienced longer intervening seasons of variable winds which can be used by the coastal crafts to "steal" from one port to another, using land and sea breezes. These seasons are called in Kiswahili "Tanga Mbili" (two sails)<sup>5</sup> which in fact indicate the possibility of two-way lateral communication between the off-shore islands and the mainland through the greater part of the year. These winds are

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5 Christie, (1876), 11; Prins, (1965), 303; Johnson, (1945), 452. Prins gives a more technical but perhaps not conflicting meaning.

admirably suited to entrepot activities during the off-seasons as well as the large scale grain transportation, such as from Pemba to Mombasa.

The pattern emerging from the consideration of the geography of East Africa is thus equivocal. On the one hand it favoured the growth of independent city states, often prosperous but ultimately politically and economically weak. On the other hand it created natural strains within the whole East African economic system which strengthened some states at the expense of the others and created conditions conducive to centralisation. And yet no native "empire" probably ever arose apart from some limited local expansion and unstable alliances.<sup>6</sup> The two tendencies probably cancelled each other out. It perhaps called for an external centralising intervention to tilt the balance.

## 2. The Omani Intervention

The recapture of Muscat in 1650 set off Oman on a path of political and economic transformation which turned her into a commercial and strongly expansionist maritime state. Her anti-Portuguese offensive met an early response in East Africa where the grievances were more economic. It rekindled the traditional spirit of independence among the city states

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6 The concept of the "Zenj Empire" is now thoroughly discredited. HEA p. 113. The rather wild claims of the "History of Pate" in Stigand, 45, and Werner, (1915) passim, have also been rejected. Chittick (1969), pp. 375-82.

fretting under the heavy burden of Portuguese monopoly. The leader was often Pate; but she was a leader of at most a loose and unstable alliance. In the second half of the seventeenth century two conflicting forces were thus brought together in a common alliance to smash the Portuguese hegemony. The city states had a limited objective - the removal of foreign domination to allow them freedom of action and economic growth. The Omanis, however, sought to replace the Portuguese rule by their own.

The Portuguese had established their rule north of Cape Delgado, centred on Mombasa. They were forced, however, to allow the development of another centre at Pate between 1633 and 1645 when they established a custom-house there, perhaps in recognition of the role Pate was already playing as a centre for Arab and Indian shipping and its success in forging trade links with the interior.<sup>7</sup> The resulting prosperity is graphically described in the Swahili History of Pate:

"They made large houses and put in them brass lamps with chimneys, and they made ladders of silver to climb into bed with, and silver neck chains. Into the Pillars of the houses they beat silver studs

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7 Boxer, 44. In 1679 the Portuguese had to leave behind 15,000-20,000 cruzados worth of ivory out of their booty. This may have come from Pate's trade with the Galla. Strandes, 232; Freeman-Grenville, (1962), 181.

and nails of gold on top of them."<sup>8</sup>

If this trade made Pate rich it also made her powerful enough for the Portuguese to fear her and to attempt to shut down the custom-house.<sup>9</sup> But it was in vain. The closing of the custom-house converted Pate into a centre of anti-Portuguese insurrections all along the coast, and with the assistance of Omani raiders, succeeded in generally weakening the Portuguese hold over the East African coast. Pate's ability to maintain her momentum, both in military and commercial warfare against the Portuguese would suggest a very strong economic base which, though it did not make her invulnerable to repeated Portuguese raids, allowed her to absorb them, yield rich booties, and yet rise again to throw off the raiders after a very short period, as in 1679 and 1688.<sup>10</sup> It was this economic momentum, picked up in the seventeenth century, which permitted Pate to carry the offensive into the Portuguese domains in the next century.

a. The Transformation of Oman

The collapse of the Portuguese rule did not lead to the setting up of a comparable Omani domination for another half or even a full century. The "interregnum" allowed the process of local independence and economic growth to reassert

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8 Stigand, 49.

9 Boxer, 45.

10 Strandes, 232, 236-8.

itself'. The failure of the Omanis to provide a unifying force at this time can be explained mainly in terms of Omani history. With the expulsion of the Portuguese, Oman had embarked on a two-stage transformation in her character and polity.<sup>11</sup> In the Muscat harbour the Omanis had captured a number of Portuguese vessels, and in a remarkably short time they had built up a strong naval force which sallied forth to harass the Portuguese.<sup>12</sup> It was the traditional polity, strengthened by a strong religious and nationalist sense of unity, that led the fight against the infidel. It armed itself with the long spoon needed to counter Portuguese sea-power but its centre of power was in the interior. It had limited aims apart from freeing the homeland from foreign control. Its activities abroad were characterised by periodic raiding of the Portuguese settlements in India, the Persian Gulf and East Africa. In East Africa they threatened the Portuguese hegemony, but apparently made no attempt at a systematic conquest and establish an elaborate form of

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11 Authoritative histories of Oman are lacking. The hypothesis is based mainly on the Omani chronicle by Salil b. Razik. Bathurst's largely political history of Oman under the Yarubi has, unfortunately, not examined the economic question in depth.

12 Boxer, 46, n. 2. He believes the Portuguese vessels provided the model for the Omani warships, whereas Hornell ascribes the European influence to the English East India Company's vessels. Strandes, 226, suggests the English and the Dutch sold such vessels to Omanis though they built some themselves. Jarden, 169. It should also be remembered that a large part of the Omani naval fleet consisted of armed dhows. Miles, 237, 273.

administration.<sup>13</sup> Already by 1652 the Portuguese captain of Mombasa was reporting that the region was infested with Omani raiders and that the whole Swahili coast was in open rebellion. In 1660 the Omanis and their Swahili allies occupied Mombasa town and captured three Portuguese vessels. In 1670 they went so far as to attack Mozambique castle, unsuccessfully, although they pillaged the town before departing.<sup>14</sup> Apart from these specific Omani naval expeditions Arab dhows appeared annually in East African waters with the monsoons, ostensibly to trade, but not averse to raiding the Portuguese and their local allies.<sup>15</sup>

While the first stages of the transformation turned Oman into a naval and "raiding" power, the second stage was to convert her into a commercial and expansionist power. Crucial in this was the attitude towards commerce. The conqueror of Muscat incurred the odium of the religious party for taking part in commerce even though he did so under the cloak of the holy war, as the Omani historian puts it, "to supply the demand of the Mussulmans for horses, arms, etc."<sup>16</sup> By the time his son died in 1711 he had acquired possession

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13 Miles, 212-20. Salil b. Razik, 87-8. Bathurst, 205-6, says that the period was characterised by wars "on flimsy pretexts", which were, perhaps, necessary to loosen Portuguese hold on the Western Indian Ocean. He appears to have misjudged the character of the succeeding stage which he says was characterised by "blatant aggression having no other purpose than plunder". See below.

14 Boxer, 47-8. Strandes, 228, 230.

15 Strandes, 239-40.

16 Miles, 213. Salil b. Razik, 89. Bathurst, 137.



of one-third of all the date-trees in Oman, 1,700 slaves and 54 vessels,<sup>17</sup> the three elements in, and a good indication of, the Omani foreign trade. They captured the lucrative trade between Gujarat and Persia, and may have acted as the general carriers of trade in the Western Indian Ocean.<sup>18</sup> The profit from commerce as well as the loot from the raids against the Portuguese thus seem to have created a respectable class of merchant-capitalists.<sup>19</sup>

The change in attitude towards commerce by the end of the seventeenth century began to have an effect on the attitude towards external ventures. The raids were replaced by more systematic territorial expansion, perhaps to exploit the area under Omani influence more effectively. For East Africa the long siege of Mombasa between 1696 and 1699 and the establishment of administration upon its capture were signs of the change that had taken place in Oman. But it was a weak first effort, and a garrison apparently was left only at Mombasa. With the spirit of independence among the city states still running strong the symbol of externally imposed unity, the Omani governor of Mombasa, was soon expelled.<sup>20</sup>

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17 Salil b. Razik, 93. Bathurst, 205-6. The latter used some other Omani chronicles which differ from the former. Salil says he owned 700 slaves and 28 ships, the latter gives 1,700 slaves, 24 large ships and 28 barques.

18 Strandes, 226. Bathurst, 137.

19 In Salil b. Razik, 75, 200, references to "merchants and nobles" in place of "nobles and commons" become more frequent, especially under the al Bu Said. The reversal in the placing of "nobles" in them may not be accidental.

20 Miles, 221.

Nor was Oman able to enforce her will. She was experiencing the strains of the transformation and being torn apart by the conflict between the coast and the interior. A fierce civil war resulted from a conflict between the Ibadhi principle of the elected Imam and the growing tendency toward inheritance of the post in the increasingly secularised state. It is significant that the elected Imam offered a particular concession to mercantile interests by abolishing the customs at Muscat, but in vain. The fabric of the old society was unable to incorporate the innovations without a social revolution. The Yarubi Imams had participated in overseas trade and in naval raiding, but they remained territorial overlords. The Al Bu Said who replaced them were of mercantile origin. Ahmed b Said was "first and foremost a merchant and shipowner". Within a generation the spiritual character of the ruler had been quietly renounced and, to set the seal to the transformation, the capital had been shifted from the interior to the coast.<sup>21</sup>

The Omani weakness prolonged the "interregnum" in East Africa and confirmed the false security the local city states felt in maintaining their individual independence by playing off the two external vultures against each other. They failed to realise that in the absence of at least a stable local coalition, a permanent vacuum could not be long maintained. The Portuguese occupation of 1728-29 emphasised the

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21 Hiles, 239, 251, 253-64. Bathurst, 176, 180. Kelly, 10-12. Thomas, 15.



point but failed to teach the lesson. This time they were able to expel the Portuguese by themselves once and for all, though for good measure they requested Omani naval support.<sup>22</sup> They were ultimately unable to stand up to the renovated Oman: when she came to demand the price for her aid. For East Africa was Oman's main avenue for expansion apart from the coast of Arabia, and perhaps the most attractive. It was a natural field for Omani commercial activities, and from their intimate contact they realised its fragmentary character and political weakness. With renewed vigour they now sought a secure political and economic base.

b. The Choice of Zanzibar

The Omanis were a monsoon-using alien power dependent upon easy communication with the homeland. They were also a commercial power intent upon controlling the trade of as much of the East African coast as possible. Kilwa was probably ruled out for the former reason. The Lamu archipelago was at the periphery of the coast and closely hemmed in by the Nyika belt as well as by the Galla with whom sound economic relations were not stable. Moreover, the archipelago was dominated by Pate, the very heart of Swahili independence. She was a periodical ally of the external power, but a

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22 Strandes, 291. Miles, 250. Miles may be mistaken in suggesting actual naval assistance, confusing Saif b. Sultan, the conqueror of Mombasa in 1699, with his grandson and namesake. Compare the names of the vessels mentioned in his account with that in Salil b. Razik, 93.

"trencherous" one as both the Portuguese and the Omanis realised. The choice was therefore reduced to the middle reaches of the coast, effectively between Mombasa and Zanzibar. Both are within the reliable orbit of the monsoons. The Old Harbour of Mombasa is well sheltered and provides careening facilities in the upper reaches almost throughout the year.<sup>23</sup> The almost impregnable Fort Jesus must have been a powerful attraction to an invading power. It was chosen, after its capture, as the first seat of Omani governorship. However, before a commercial and political partnership arose between Mombasa and the Nyika tribes, Mombasa town was often subject to raids from the mainland across the Makupa creek, fordable at low tide. The Portuguese had been forced to build blockhouses to guard the creek and tried to buy off the Sepeju with rich presents of cloth. Both policies were not remarkable for their success. Moreover, Mombasa was dependent on imported foodstuffs from the mainland as well as from Pemba.<sup>24</sup> Hemmed in by an unfriendly population the alien power could be starved to surrender Fort Jesus, though with the long siege of 1696-99 in mind it is clear that Mombasa's advantage was by no means negligible.

However, the Al Bu Said were denied Mombasa by the secession of the Mazrui who refused to recognise the change

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23 Hoyle, 14-7.

24 S. J., 177, 179-80, 217.

of dynasty in Oman. They espoused the local idea of independence and then embarked upon their own Mombasa-based expansion, perhaps with a view to build a wider political base to resist the inevitable Omani invasion. Unable to dislodge them the Al Bu Said was forced to turn to Zanzibar which offered sheltered anchorages throughout the year as well and careening facilities in the creek behind the town. By 1744 a kinsman had been installed in the "ridiculous little fort" there.<sup>25</sup> The struggle had begun that was to last nearly a century, a struggle that was both economic and military. In the military struggle in the eighteenth century Zanzibar was unable to subjugate Mombasa for very long, although backed by the Omani military might, she broke the military parity of the 1750s, and thereafter was able to invade Mombasa and impose a tribute more than once.<sup>26</sup> But it was the economic struggle for the hinterland that was to

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25 Hoyle, 98-100. Christie (1876) 268-9. Strandes, 275-6. Gray, (1962) 87. Alpers, (1966) 154.

26 The impression, derived from the Mazrui history of Mombasa, is that Mombasa retained her independence until 1837. However, the period between 1753 when Mombasa unsuccessfully attempted to capture Zanzibar, and 1824 when the history was written to impress Owen of her independence, is little more than a list of Mazrui governors. It seems the less glorious periods were passed over in silence. Mombasa may have been occupied in 1754, and Morice records the overthrow of Omani control in 1775. By 1784 a tribute had been re-imposed. Freeman-Grenville in S.D. 213-9, has collated the history from the two versions which appear in Owen, I, 249-53, and Guillain, I, 614-22. For Omani occupations see Alpers (1966) 155; F.K.I., 128. S.D., 193.

prove decisive in the nineteenth century. With her own hinterland constricted by the "Nyika", and with the Omani determination to deny her a share in the trade of the Mrima coast, Mombasa's disadvantages began to make themselves felt. The final subjugation in 1837 was merely a coup de grace.

#### B. Omani Commercial Stimulus

With the transformation in the character of the Omani polity and the changed attitude towards commerce, Omani intervention in East Africa began to take increasingly the form of more sustained commercial expansion and territorial aggrandizement. A large number of armed merchantmen who had taken part in Omani raids reverted to peaceful commerce by the mid-1730s.<sup>27</sup> They traded in the less ostentatious but perhaps more important commodities in the age-old commerce between East Africa on one hand and Arabia and the Persian Gulf on the other, such as grain and mangrove poles in exchange for dates, dried fish and Muscat cloth. It was probably these commodities, and slaves, which initially attracted and sustained the attention of the Arabs to East Africa. The Arabian coastline is deficient in foodstuffs and timber. Pemba and the Kenya coast were the main granaries in East Africa from where provisions were exported not only to Arabia, but also to Mozambique. Mangrove poles

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27 Miles, 237. Warden, (1856) 57.

from East Africa have been used throughout the peninsula and the Persian Gulf for the construction of ceilings and roofs. They are more evenly distributed along the East African coast but the three major areas for mangrove poles appear to be the Lamu archipelago, the Rufiji delta and north-west Madagascar, the last offering the best quality.<sup>28</sup> These commodities could largely be supplied from the coast north of Cape Delgado, and formed part of what was probably a stable trade unlikely to affect major changes in the political and economic fortunes of the East African states.

The trade in "luxuries", such as slaves and ivory, in contrast to the staples, tends to be less stable since it is influenced by the unequal distribution of sources, the development of the means of their exploitation and the vagaries of the external market. In the context of East Africa we again come up against the high price set up by geography to trading contacts with the interior. Any sudden rise in the external demand could be met firstly from the limited hinterland of the coastal belt, secondly by commercial expansion along the coast, and finally by trade routes to the interior. Conclusive

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28 Villiers (1948) 414. The architectural limitation placed on the width of the rooms in East Africa by the length of the mangrove pole can perhaps be traced in the Persian Gulf and Arabia as well which can help date the antiquity of the trade. Garlake, 23; Grant, (1938) 5, 8-9. Oral information derived from Muhammed Ali Mjeni, formerly a resident of Zanzibar with an experience in house-building.

evidence is sorely lacking but it may be suggested that the pattern of Omani trade with East Africa is roughly parallel to the suggested theory of Omani transformation. This would postulate that up to the end of the seventeenth century Omani demands from East Africa, apart from booty, were largely confined to the staples. Society had not yet undergone a revolution to demand the "luxuries". Towards the end of the century, however, the changing Omani attitude to commerce may have led to the application of commercial profits to internal agricultural undertakings and, hence, perhaps to a specific demand for slaves. This may explain why after the capture of Fort Jesus the Omanis should have attempted to set up an administration for the first time. It is significant that the conqueror of Fort Jesus, Seif bin Sultan, upon his death in 1711, is for the first time specifically stated to have owned 1,700 slaves, constructed 17 irrigation works, planted over 30,000 date-trees and 6,000 coconut trees, and, as we have seen, to have acquired possession of one-third of all the date-trees in Oman.<sup>29</sup> While it is not stated where these slaves came from we can assume that these were "plantation" slaves from East Africa, probably not the more expensive "domestic" Ethiopians.<sup>30</sup> The beginning of Omani

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29 Salil b. Raḥik, 93. Bathurst, 205-6. See note 17 above.

30 Kelly, 413.



slave-trade in appreciable numbers can thus probably be dated to the end of the seventeenth century, and while it is impossible to trace the curve of this trade it would appear to bear some relation to the general pattern of Omani activities in East Africa. This demand for slaves was perhaps largely met from the coast north of Cape Delgado where the hinterland may have been deepened especially in the Kilwa region. The advent of the Al Bu Said and the gathering momentum in the trade under them may have created a larger demand than the northern coast could immediately provide. Thus in 1754 it was reported that several small boats from Mombasa and Pate, apparently having failed to procure their slaves at Mongalo, passed south to the Kerimbas. In August, 1777 the Omani ruler seemed to have two vessels trading for slaves in East Africa, and others may have departed at the beginning of the season in April.<sup>31</sup>

With regard to ivory the Omanis were carriers of the trade for the Indian market rather than consumers. The first source was naturally the immediate hinterlands of the cities north of Cape Delgado. The most active supplier may have been Pate which apparently had established fruitful trading contacts with the interior in the seventeenth century and continued to be prosperous well into the eighteenth century.<sup>32</sup>

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31 Alpers, (1966), 156; F.A.I., 20.

32 See p.30-1 above.

Mombasa also may have become an important supplier. An English report states that after the capture of Fort Jesus the Omani came into possession of 200 tons of ivory, which is doubtless an exaggeration, but suggests the importance of the trade.<sup>33</sup> Kilwa was the third such centre. However, the northern coast as a whole was apparently still unable to meet the demand for ivory. The first reaction was therefore to encroach into the Portuguese sphere. The commandant of the Kerimba Islands reported in 1762 that seven Arab vessels were trading there with 50,000 gruzados worth of cloth with which he feared they would carry off all the ivory.<sup>34</sup>

A tremendous economic pressure was thus building up along the East African coast in the middle of the eighteenth century, leading to a maritime commercial expansion. Pate's leading role in this expansion can be explained partly by the momentum from her seventeenth century trade, but also by the unusual development of coastal shipping in the Lamu archipelago which so forcibly struck Boteler in 1824.<sup>35</sup> This may have permitted them to act as carriers of trade long

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33 Quoted in Strandes, 269. In the 1850s when the trade was well-developed, Zanzibar exported less than 220 tons. Russel, 343.

34 Alpers, (1966) 157.

35 Boteler, 375.

after Pate herself declined as a political power and perhaps as an entrepot. For it would appear that in the early 1770s Pate suffered from destructive internecine warfare during which, according to the History of Pate, "for five years they were not able to cultivate or to trade or to do any work whatsoever. So a great famine raged ..." <sup>36</sup> It is not unreasonable to assume that this calamity may have turned the people of Pate even more to seafaring pursuits and even dispersion and settlement abroad. For it was reported that between 1786 and 1789 of the 35 Swahili vessels which put into port at Ibo, 17 were from Pate and 10 more from the rest of the Lamu archipelago; and that the Swahili from Pate "travel through the lands ... establish themselves almost as masters of them, and fortify themselves in Quirimize" which was their base. <sup>37</sup>

The coast to the south of Cape Delgado was an attractive field for Swahili commercial expansion mainly because it lengthened the coastal belt from which the commodities in demand could be procured. The two cases already mentioned of Swahili penetration of the Portuguese sphere for ivory and slaves suggest that in the 1750s and 1760s they were trading mainly in the Kerimba Islands and the coast opposite. The hinterland along this part of the coast had expanded

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<sup>36</sup> Stigand, 62, 75.

<sup>37</sup> Alpers (1966) 226-7.

initially in response to the Portuguese and French demand for slaves. Increased Swahili demand may have further deepened it. Meanwhile the Swahili continued their maritime encroachment, extending as far as Mozambique. They traded in grain, but the specific prohibition of trade in cloth and beads, presumably for ivory and slaves, in the treaties with Kilwa and Zanzibar in the 1760s indicates Portuguese anxiety at Swahili encroachment into the lucrative trade at Mozambique.<sup>38</sup>

### 3. Kilwa and the French Slave Trade

The Omani economic initiative had stimulated the economic encroachment into the Portuguese sphere but the demand they created in East Africa was limited to their own moderate need for slaves and their carrying role in the ivory trade. It will be shown below that it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that significant shifts occurred in the ivory trade to create a significant demand for ivory from the coast north of Cape Delgado.<sup>39</sup> It is immensely difficult to estimate the Omani demand for slaves. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, as we have already seen, the Omani Imam who owned one-third of the date plantations possessed 1,700 slaves. If there is an economic relationship between the two, and even if we assume the wastage of slaves in such an economy at about a fourth, the annual demand for slaves can be roughly estimated at not above 2,000, allowing for

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38 Alpers (1966) 156, 226.

39 See pp. 93-7.

the demand for domestic slaves and in the Persian Gulf. In 1777 there were only two Muscat vessels trading for slaves and a few more may have left earlier in the season.<sup>40</sup> This tends to suggest that Omani demand may already have reached its plateau reasonably close to the 2,000 level.

While the unsatisfied Omani demand for slaves stimulated the Swahili encroachment to the south, the growth in the French demand for slaves, especially after the middle of the eighteenth century, created an opposite current. The net effect of these currents was a certain degree of economic unification of the two slaving regions on either side of Cape Delgado, and a spectacular expansion of the hinterland behind Kilwa. However, by subjecting the smaller Omani demand to the competition from the larger French one, it threatened the supply of slaves to the north and increased their price. The French compounded the strains of the situation by scheming to make Kilwa independent of the Omanis, economically as well as politically, and thus threaten the nascent Omani commercial empire.

a. Unification of Economic Regions

It has been shown above that the "Nyika" belt almost entirely disappears in southern Tanzania, and the immediate hinterland is therefore of a considerable depth. The geographical situation was thus very favourable to the growth

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40 See pp. 41. This would give the annual demand for "plantation" slaves at 1,300, and 700 for the others. Alpers (1967) 8, gives the same estimate of 2000, but not the basis of his calculation.

of a large number of ports initially exploiting a limited hinterland which could progressively be expanded as economic conditions demanded. Favourable geography also permitted the growth of an intricate mesh of trade routes providing an inland centre at times with several outlets, and a port with several trade routes. A few of the ports eventually developed as termini of long distance trade routes, but all too often, the excitement of tracing long distance trade routes overshadows the numerous short distance ones. Though the results of these two types of routes varied, they were often different only in terms of degree, and in any case they can be fully appreciated only when seen as part of the whole network.

The bare outline of the network had already appeared as a result of Omani commercial stimulus, especially in the second half of the eighteenth century. Archaeological survey has revealed a revival of building activities along the coast after being dormant for nearly two centuries. While their dating is inexact, the appearance of several of the ports in the earliest French maps would indicate they preceded French slave trade. Many of these ports may have been founded or re-enforced by immigrants from the major ports elsewhere on the coast where economic opportunities may have been limited. Many may have grown up independently but they often fell within the economic, and sometimes political, orbit of the major ports.

Mongalo, identified with Mgau Mwanja on the same bay



as Sudi, may have been of some antiquity, appearing on many of the sixteenth century maps. It appears unmistakably in D'Anville's map of 1749 as a river and, as we have seen, in 1754 some boats from Mombasa and Pate traded there for slaves. It seems to have been inhabited by the Swahili and the Islamised Makonde. In 1766 it fell under Arab control and its trade was channelled through Kilwa, the nearest major port which was then under Omani suzerainty. That control may have lapsed with Kilwa's overthrow of Omani overlordship, and was reaffirmed with Kilwa's subjugation.<sup>41</sup>

Omani control over Mongalo, however, should not be viewed in terms of political control. Comarmond makes it clear that the Omanis had no permanent establishment at Mongalo, but were seasonal traders. A normal pattern was for them to deposit their merchandise with the local ruler who collected slaves and ivory for them while they continued their voyage to Mozambique or Zanzibar according to seasons. Thus, in 1786, when Mondevit and Comarmond visited Mongalo, there was neither an Omani representative, nor was any tribute paid, but it recognised Omani suzerainty,<sup>42</sup> with which went a form of economic control. This is in line with the nascent Omani commercial empire which sought the maximum amount of economic advantage with the minimum of political control.

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41 Alpers (1966) 156, 158, 232. Gray (1964) 226-7.

42 Datoo, 225.

Comarmond perhaps even exaggerates the degree of economic control. He alleges that the Arabs forced the people of Mon-galo to sell them their slaves and ivory in exchange for low quality cloth from Surat, iron, muskets and powder, at the rate of about seven to eight piastres worth of merchandise for an arroba of ivory whereas the French had to pay twice or three times as much.<sup>43</sup> It is possible that Comarmond, who was arguing for a French establishment on the East African coast, exaggerated the tension between the local people and the Arabs to suggest that the oppressed local people formed natural allies for the French. It is unlikely that, in view of the nature of Arab authority, there was an adequate machinery for the enforcement of such a monopoly. Moreover, already by the mid 1770s there was such a mesh of trade routes as to give the hinterland several outlets both north and south of Cape Delgado and permit a diversion of trade to escape that monopoly. To the north there are at least three other ports along the coast south of Kilwa in Morice's map. The northern-most was "Youe mouzonga" or "Jiwe la Mzungu" (the European's stone) where, as the name indicates, the Europeans may have traded. Morice mentions Lindi and

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43 Alpers ascribes the Memoire to Mondevit, but Datoe says it was Comarmond's. Alpers (1966) 193-4, 233, 257. Datoe, p. 222. The price amounts to between 18 and 21 cruzados. The price ceiling at Mozambique was fixed in 1780 at 40 cruzados, raised by 1787 to 80. See p. 94.

Mongalo hyphenated, but as a late eighteenth century French manuscript map shows, the two bays were quite apart. Several villages are shown around both bays. South of Mongalo appears "Quindamis" which has been identified with Mikindani Bay. By 1786 it is clear that there were trade routes to at least these three ports, apart from Mongalo, from the Makonde plateau where the Makua, Makonde, Ndonde and Yao were "continually at war, solely to make each other prisoners, whom they sell".<sup>44</sup>

There is also a suggestion that this system of trade routes developing in the north was also linked to another system of short distance trade routes developing behind the northern Mozambique coast. There is a complaint of 1776 that merchandise introduced at Mongalo was percolating through the interior to the south of Cape Delgado, depriving the Portuguese of their supplies of ivory.<sup>45</sup> It appears therefore that southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique were being linked by a close network of trade routes on the landward side as coastal shipping had done to some extent on the sea-ward side, uniting more effectively the two previously separate regions. With such mobility it would not have prevented the African traders to Mongalo who were

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44 F.R.I. 103-4, 202. Dato, 222-3; fig. 26.

45 Alpers (1966) 158. Dato, 224.

allegedly getting half or one-third of the price for their commodities to shift their trade to the south.

The resulting unification of the economic regions on either side of Cape Delgado had the effect of standardising the price along the coast, for the interior Africans could divert their trade from one port to another, all within a short distance from the source, to get the best price. This reduced the ability of a small rising port to compete with larger ones by offering a lower price, except perhaps by charging a lower duty. Blancard in the 1780s in fact, states that the prices at Mongalo were the same as at Kilwa, though the "capitation tax" at Kilwa was  $6\frac{1}{2}$  piastres compared with 3 at Mongalo. The difference in the duty may not have been enough to attract the French traders to Mongalo because of the latter's inability, in view of its more restricted hinterland, to supply a large number of slaves. Thus, while the average cargo from Mongalo in the 1780s was between 100 and 150, at Kilwa, which was the terminus of a long-distance trade route as well as an entrepot for the neighbouring small ports, the average was nearly 300.<sup>46</sup> Mongalo features large in French schemes to establish a factory there, but it did not become the main French slave port. In 1788 it was reported that while seven French vessels traded at Kilwa, only two traded at Mongalo.<sup>47</sup>

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46 Datoo, 235-8. Alpers (1966) 228-32, 238. Gray (1964b) 225. S.D., 196

47 Datoo, 235-8.

b. Extension of the French Slave Trade

This process of economic unification was bound to subject each of the two economic regions to the most competitive factor of the other. Before 1770 the price of slaves to the north of Cape Delgado was largely governed by the Omani market. To the south, the demand for slaves in the Mascarenes had grown up in the 1730s, though on a modest scale. During the interruption in the trade during the 1740s and 1750s when the Portuguese attempted to exclude foreign traders from their territories, some French traders may have ventured to the north. However, with the decreasing profitability of the West African slave trade a tremendous demand for slaves was added in the 1770s and 1780s for the American market. Morice apparently took a cargo of slaves in 1773 to America and in 1777 he was offering slaves for export to America "because Ile de France is so well stocked with blacks". By the mid 1780s rounding the Cape of Good Hope was a regular concern of the French traders.<sup>48</sup>

The earlier shortage of slaves north of Cape Delgado as a result of Omani demand, which had forced the Swahili from Pate and Mombasa to trade in the Kerimba Islands, was therefore reversed by the early 1770s. By then the Swahili were taking slaves to the south "when they do not have to sell to the Arabs", an indication that a better price was being

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48 Alpers (1966), 215; (1967) 6-7, 14. F.K.I., 7, 85, 88. S.D., 193, 196.

offered there. The French were therefore eagerly welcomed by the competing city states, and even by the Omani authorities at Zanzibar who thus hoped to share in the profits. Morice himself traded at Zanzibar on his first two voyages in 1775, taking off 1625 slaves, most of whom probably came from Kilwa, "the entrepot of the slave trade of the whole coast of Zanzibar".<sup>49</sup> But the Omani sentiments soured fast. As the smaller market, Oman was soon placed in a grievously disadvantageous position. Her demand, estimated above at 2,000 was a small fry in comparison with the total French demand which by the mid 1780s amounted to at least 1,800 at Kilwa and more than 4,000 from Mozambique.<sup>50</sup> The entry of the French tended to internationalise the slave trade, subjecting the Omani sphere with the high prices of the Mozambique market.<sup>51</sup> It moreover threatened to deprive Oman of all her supply unless she was prepared to pay the higher prices. There is little doubt that M. Clonard's "petite guerre" with the Arabs was caused by this rivalry. The captain of the Dutch frigate Jagstruit was informed in 1777 quite bluntly by the Omani governor that he had orders from his master to prohibit trade in slaves to all except two vessels bound for Muscat. The Dutch picked up a cargo of copal and cowries,

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49 F.K.L., 64, 92, 152.

50 See pp.56. Alpers (1967) 7-8. S.D., 196. These figures hardly justify Alpers's conclusion that the Omani trade was "big business by French standards".

51 See below, p. 56.



and managed to smuggle 100 slaves with the help of the Swahili inhabitants of Zanzibar, and some more perhaps at Pate and the west coast of Madagascar, completing his cargo of 328 slaves. <sup>52</sup> The Omani attempts to preserve their spheres of trade drove Morice and the French to Kilwa.

Over the next decade slave trade at Kilwa was gradually but substantially expanded to meet French demand. In 1776 Morice signed a contract with the ruler of Kilwa under which the latter was to supply 1,000 slaves annually at the rate of 20 piastres per head and 2 piastres tax, regardless of sex. This would have brought into Kilwa 20,000 piastres, and a revenue of 2,000 piastres. It seems, however, that at least in the first two years of his trade at Kilwa, Morice did not export the 1,000<sup>53</sup> and even as late as 1779 he was contracting to supply only 600 slaves. Morice, however, was given to exaggeration to recommend his scheme. In March 1776 he had promised 2,000 slaves. A year later the figures had grown to 3,000 or 4,000 "as a start", and by September he was promising, after four or five years, 10,000 slaves

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52 F.K.I., 13, 87, 141. Hall, 47. Gray (1956 a)35.

53 F.K.I., 87-8, 169, 207. It is clear that on his first voyage to Kilwa he obtained a total of 700 slaves for the two vessels "L'Abyssinie" and "Le Gracieux". In his letter of 26.3.1777, he is still referring to those two voyages only. Later in that year "La Confiance" was joined by "L'Abyssinie" in what appears to be their only voyage that year.

from the whole east African coast, of which Kilwa's share was to be 6,000. These promises were based on "treaties that I have made with the Moorish and the Arab princes.". As far as we know there was one contract with one Arab governor of Zanzibar which, after the Clonard incident, he should have realised was practically worthless. The only other contract was with Kilwa which promised 1,000 slaves only.<sup>54</sup>

Perhaps it is kinder to say Morice was a visionary, envisaging tremendous expansion of the trade which, however, took place largely after his death in c. 1781. He was a monopolist who did everything in his power to keep his rivals, Conard and the Dutch, out of Kilwa. Yet, without government sanction he felt unable to provide the economic organisation necessary for his own scheme of expansion except, perhaps, for a short period in 1777.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the freezing of the price at 20 piastres at Kilwa, while elsewhere it was probably rising, must have dampened the growth of trade.

With his death his monopoly presumably lapsed, and Kilwa now witnessed the most intense competition among the French traders. Crassons bitterly complained about the lack of central planning for the trade as a result of which "three or four ships find themselves in the same place and crowd each other out". He listed eight vessels which, over a period of 28 months, made a total of 14 voyages and carried

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54 Dato, 239

55 P.K.I. . 53, 55, 82-3, 141, 201, 208.

off 4,193 slaves, an annual average of about 1,800. With such a high demand that the Swahili traders knew to exist, they could dictate the terms, forcing the French to take away the slaves without selection. Moreover, the price doubled to 40 piastres, and the duty trebled to six. He claims that despite the increases, slaves still cost less at Kilwa than at Mozambique, where they amounted to 50 or 60 piastres each, excluding "present and tiresome vexations". This may be part of his propaganda in support of his scheme, for in c.1787 Blancard shows a maximum price at Mozambique to be 45 piastres, and 40 at Kilwa.<sup>56</sup>

These figures clearly show the effects of the internationalisation of the slave trade and of the insatiable French demand. Prices increased at Mozambique by at least a half between the mid 1770s and the mid 1780s; but they doubled at Kilwa during the same decade almost to catch up with the "international" price. The nullification of the price advantage along the northern coast, however, did not lead to its abandonment. It is possible that the supply was gradually expanded at both places to meet that demand. It is therefore

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56. S.D., 196-7. F.K.I., 215-6. Here he says "the king of the country would be content with three piastres a head". He may be referring to the situation just after Kilwa's subjugation. But Blancard(c.1787) confirms the higher figure. He also says that by that time French vessels carried on their trade "turn by turn and not in rivalry". Gray(1964) 225. However, Dato cites evidence of a French captain in 1788 who was at Kilwa for nine months competing with five other vessels to make up his cargo. Dato, 234, 238.

wrong to suggest that there was a "shift" of French slave trade from Mozambique to Kilwa as Alpers does; rather there was an "extension" of the trade as Datoe shows. Between 1779 and 1785 at least twice as many slaves were exported by the French from the coast south of Cape Delgado as from north of it.<sup>57</sup> The ability of each of the economic regions to meet that demand depended on the depth of the hinterland, the ability to expand the necessary economic organisation and any pre-existing demand upon their resources. While Mozambique had experienced French demand since the 1730s the sudden upsurge of demand in the 1770s may have taken Kilwa by surprise. Nevertheless the pre-existing Omani demand had begun to build the essential framework which permitted Kilwa to expand her supply during the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

c. Kilwa's Hinterland

In view of the obviously increasing importance of the trade of Kilwa during the second half of the century, arising initially out of the Omani demand for slaves and ivory, and later from the growing French demand for slaves, we should expect considerable changes in her hinterland and politics. In 1754 Crassons apparently traded for slaves at Songu Songu island, to the north of Kilwa, and there is a record of a French vessel at Pate a few years before 1770, but it was not until 1775 that Morice initiated the sizeable direct French

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57 Alpers (1966) pp.172.

trade with the coast north of Cape Delgado.<sup>58</sup> It is tempting to suggest that Kilwa's overthrow of Omani control in 1771<sup>59</sup> may be related to her increasing prosperity from the indirect French slave trade to the south of Cape Delgado and her consequent partial orientation to the south. Unfortunately, reliable figures for Mozambique as a whole are lacking for the 1760s, and for Ibo altogether. It is known, however, that between 1766 and 1779, 9,158 slaves were "officially" exported giving an average of about 700 only. Alpers feels that most of them were exported after 1770, giving an average of 1,000. Allowing for contraband trade, and 1,500 slaves exported from Ibo, he arrives at an average for the 1770s of about 3,000.<sup>60</sup> Neither argument will therefore support the suggestion of a link between Kilwa's reassertion of her independence and the French trade; the former gives too low an average; the latter suggest the change occurred too late. A possible interpretation is that if, in fact, there is some connection between Kilwa's prosperity and her overthrow of the Omanis that prosperity was derived from the Omani trade in slaves and ivory. Kilwa could be fairly sure that the lucrative trade would not be abandoned because of the change in political relations between herself and the Omani authorities.

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58 S.D., 193. Dato, 219.

59 F.K.I., 138, 151.

60 Alpers (1966) 165-6, 168.

A similar problem arises in connection with the relative contribution of the two branches of Kilwa's trade to the expansion of the hinterland behind Kilwa. The earliest information about the hinterland dates only from the mid 1770s when direct French trade with Zanzibar and Kilwa was being inaugurated. Though it is possible that the growth of that trade to the south of Cape Delgado during the first half of the decade may have expanded the demand at Kilwa, the number of slaves involved was still comparatively small, whereas the direct Omani demand has been previously estimated at about 2,000.<sup>61</sup> The conclusion, therefore, seems to be that it was again the Omani trade in slaves and ivory which was primarily responsible for the expansion in Kilwa's hinterland. We shall defer the examination of the role of the Yao in that expansion to the next chapter while we consider the extent of the hinterland and the system of trade during the mid 1770s.

Morice is the only eye-witness of the conditions at Kilwa at this time and, unfortunately, his account suffered from his inability to communicate with the African traders directly. Moreover, much of his evidence is in the form of answers to Cossigny's questions, and is often vague and contradictory. However, by subjecting his evidence to historical criticism, it is possible to extract enough data to

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61 See p45-6 above.



give a fairly probable picture of the hinterland and the system of trade. Firstly, it appears that though Africans from the interior undoubtedly traded on the mainland opposite Kilwa, there is a hint that the trade was not conducted by a single tribe along the whole length but rather as a system of "relay" from one tribe to another. As Morice says:

"they come from quite a long way, of 200 leagues or thereabouts. I speak of their slaves for they change masters on the way."<sup>62</sup>

The last sentence provides a very significant detail which Morice felt compelled to add for clarification, and can reasonably be depended upon. Elsewhere Morice speaks of certain "immense rivers" which "no one crosses ... save Africans who are known on the other side", or that "the Africans do not allow those on this side of the river to go and trade on the far side".<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, there is no direct and incontrovertible evidence in Morice to suggest that there was any single tribe which conducted trade along the whole distance. Secondly, Morice states that the interior people "come to the coast in bands, with their slaves carrying ivory".<sup>64</sup> While it is true that slaves did come from the Makonde hills nearer the coast, as well, Alpers's attempt to draw a distinction between the ivory, which he

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62 F.K.I., 119-20.

63 Ibid., 106, 137.

64 Ibid., 106.

says came from a long distance in the interior, and the slaves predominantly from the Makonde hills, directly conflicts with Morice's evidence.<sup>65</sup> It is likely, in fact, that ivory as well as slaves reached the coast by this system of relay from a great distance in the interior, and probably also from the region closer to the coast.

African participation, and even domination, along various sections of this route at this time can hardly be doubted. This however, did not exclude the penetration of coastal traders, especially in view of the allusion in the History of Sudi that some of these were Africans who had settled on the coast and who thereafter went "to their former homes up-country: there to buy ivory and slaves."<sup>66</sup> By Morice's time, however, there is evidence that not only the Swahili but also Arabs may have been penetrating the interior. The evidence is contradictory. After alleging in a couple of instances that they were not allowed by the Africans to go inland from the coast, Morice goes on to voice a contradiction even in a single paragraph:

"I think that [the Africans] would not allow either the Moors or the Arabs to penetrate their lands, but the Moors can go everywhere. The Arabs who go there dress like Moors,

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65 Alpers (1966) 203.

66 S.D., 231.

and in this disguise they go as far as the  
sweet ~~water~~ sea."<sup>67</sup>

While the contradiction is real, there are the significant details of the disguise and the distinction between the Swahili and the Arabs to lend credibility to the second half of the quotation rather than to the simple pronouncement of the first. A couple of other references would seem to suggest that the prohibition referred to the penetration beyond the "sweet ~~water~~ sea" which was prohibited to not only the Swahili and the Arabs, but also to other Africans. Even this penetration eventually occurred, according to the traditions of the Africans on the west bank of Lake Nyasa, during the last quarter of the eighteenth or early in the nineteenth century.<sup>68</sup> Apart from the obvious rivalry between the Africans and the coastal traders, there is no particular reason why the latter should be prevented from penetrating the interior if they could demonstrate to the intervening

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67 F.K.I., 106, 109, 137.

68 Ibid., 106, 137. Alpers (1966) 205-7. St. John (1968) 3-4. His rejection of the identification with the Arabs is not acceptable since i) as he admits, Marabi boatmen controlled the lake crossing in the far south; ii) the Ngonde tradition specifically mentions the Mweli rowers; iii) the term "Abalungwani" used in the interior for Arabs probably is the same as the Swahili word "mwungwana", freeman; iv) in the whole tradition the evidence is overwhelmingly about coastal cultural features. Identification of Marabi with Maravi makes nonsense of geography as well, and has no merit except the similarity of words, which is shared by "marabu" or amb.

tribes the advantages of their trade. It is possible that the known demand at Kilwa for slaves and ivory could have actuated that penetration if areas closer to the coast were unable to provide the needed commodities economically and in sufficient quantities.

Finally, what was the extent of the hinterland c. 1775? The previous quotation talked about the "sweet ~~[-water]~~ sea" which, he says, "I believe to be a great lake known by the name of Zultan or as Zemba". Elsewhere he estimates that it was:

"a month's march from the sea doing seven or eight miles a day. This fresh water sea has a rise and fall of eight feet. It takes two days to cross it in a boat rowed by six oarsmen. There are some islands more or less in the middle of it where boats wishing to cross it can put in."<sup>69</sup>

From the details of this description there is little doubt that the lake described is none other than Lake Nyasa though Morice seems to have underestimated the distance from the coast.<sup>70</sup> The route, according to Cossigny's unpublished note,

69 E.K.I., 76, 137. On p. 106 he says "this river is 12 or 15 leagues wide", i.e., 36 to 45 miles.

70 At that pace the lake would appear to be 210 to 240 miles. In 1616 Bocarro took 53 days from Tete to Kilwa, a linear distance of over 650 miles, and added that his unencumbered servants returned the same way in 25 days, an average of 12 and 26 miles per day respectively. S.D., 168.

probably based on Morice's information, lay through the country of the Zimbe, the Dzibys, and the Mounjous or the Yao. While the first may be an anachronism and the second is thus far unidentified, the Yao appear to have been mentioned/on this occasion in the documents connected with Morice's project.<sup>71</sup> Morice goes on to say that beyond the lake lay "a huge country which has been crossed by natives of the country who, after two months travelling, found the ocean and saw ships there manned by Europeans."<sup>72</sup> It has been argued that in view of the time assigned to the journey, the natural obstacles, and the known relation of the Yao with Mozambique, Morice may be referring to a circular route ending at Mozambique,<sup>73</sup> though it should be noted that Morice specifically mentions crossing the lake, and he may merely have underestimated the distance as he did for the distance of the lake from the east coast. It is more tempting to link this allusion to the contact between Kazembe and the coast of Angola through Kwana Yamvo.<sup>74</sup>

If this contact had, in fact, already been established by the mid 1770s, it is likely that it was still tenuous and, as we have seen, coastal traders had not yet crossed the lake. It is reasonable to argue that the addition of the substantial French demand for slaves after 1775, and especially

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71 Saulnier de Mondevit, 348 n.

72 F.K.I., 76.

73 Saulnier de Mondevit, 348-9 n.

74 Cunnison (1966) 226.

in the 1780s, was a powerful push for coastal penetration beyond the lake. More importantly, perhaps, the increase in the demand may have led to a more effective exploitation of the resources of the hinterland and the expansion of the commercial organisation.

#### 4. Zanzibar as the Entrepot

##### a. Economic dependence and the Subjugation of Kilwa

A tangible monument of Kilwa's prosperity as a result of the Omani and French trade survives in the Makutani Palace on Kilwa Kisiwani. The tower in the south-east corner and the old battered north wall date from perhaps the sixteenth century. However, as the Ancient History of Kilwa Kisiwani asserts, the palace was enlarged during this period of profitable trade.<sup>75</sup> That enlargement consisted of the addition of a second storey to the palace and the eastern extension enclosing a large courtyard. As Chittick remarks, however, they contained "none of the finer cut-stone work associated with fourteenth-fifteenth century buildings",<sup>76</sup> a modest and perhaps fitting monument to the transitory profits of the slave trade.

Kilwa's prosperity must have appeared to the Omanis as a multiple insult. By taking their supplies at Kilwa, which was also Zanzibar's main source, the French were threatening

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75 S.D., 223.

76 Chittick (1959) 186-9.



to deprive Oman of her share, and other ports along the coast which had formerly sent their slaves to Zanzibar diverted their trade to Kilwa.<sup>77</sup> Secondly, by extending their demand to the north of Cape Delgado, thereby effectively uniting the two sources of slaves, the French imposed on the Omanis the higher price which prevailed to the south. Finally, the shift of French trade to Kilwa from Zanzibar not only deprived the Omanis of part of their middleman's share, but also buttressed a rebel from Omani authority which threatened to nip in the bud the nascent Omani hegemony. Nevertheless, so long as Morice exercised his "monopoly" and the price ceiling was fixed by treaty at twenty piastres, any economic ill-effects were perhaps compensated by Zanzibar's continued control over Kilwa's trade to the north for cloth and beads which must have expanded proportionately to the French trade. However, Morice's apparently unaccomplished object to provide Kilwa with an independent source of imports, and the intense competition and steep rise in prices of slaves in the 1780s made the Omani economic position in East Africa untenable unless they acted.<sup>78</sup>

Before the revolution of 1771 Kilwa had recognised Omani suzerainty. It appears, however, that the Omani garrison and governor were merely merchants who seasonally went to

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77 F.K.I., 168, 182.

78 F.K.I., 184-6.

Zanzibar to trade. About 1771 the Kilwa people took the advantage of their departure to declare their independence, in which they were supported by Mafia and the adjacent islands. It was apparently a moment of Omani military weakness and for the next fifteen years the southern Tanzania coast remained politically independent. The various city states, however, do not seem to have coalesced to form a political unit, and though Morice claims that the kingdom of Kilwa extended from Cape Delgado to just south of Dar es Salaam, this appears to be no more than a sphere of influence. Kilwa does not seem to have controlled the mainland except in its immediate vicinity, and many of the islands off the coast are stated to be independent.<sup>79</sup> Kilwa therefore suffered from the same kind of political weakness that was endemic along the coast, the inability of the city states to cooperate except for very short periods.

Kilwa was also internally weak. After the expulsion of the Omani governor it was ruled by a dyarchy of a Shirazi king, who had his political base on the mainland and who was the leader of the Swahili section of the population, and a family of "amirs", apparently of Malindi origin, who represented the interests of the mercantile "old" Arab population of the island. The two communities were linked in a commercial partnership for mutual benefit. Morice probably draws too

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79 F.K.I. 76, 135-6, 151. Morice also says that Kilwa controlled all the land "as far as the fresh water sea" which appears improbable.

sharp a distinction between the Swahili, generally agriculturists but also involved in the caravan trade, and the "old" Arabs, who conducted the local coastal trade. On the latter the Swahili were immediately dependent for their supply of cloth from Zanzibar. As Morice puts it, "but for the Moors they would not have the smallest scrap of cloth ... The well-to-do today cannot do without all the materials that the Moors have been bringing them for 300 years." These two sections of the community often represented conflicting economic interests between the mercantile island and the mainland. Morice records one incident of a near revolt of the island owing to an imposition of an "unjust" tax.<sup>80</sup> He, however, fails to make a further distinction between the Swahili and the African traders of the interior, all of whom he terms Africans. With the latter fruitful economic links had been established on the mainland to exchange their ivory and slaves for cloth and beads taken there by the Arabs, both "old" and "new". However, it still seems to be a hostile environment in which the trade was conducted. Morice repeatedly asserts that the Africans were not allowed to cross over to the island. The trade was, therefore, conducted

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80 F.K.I., 42-7, 49, 7., 81-2, 135, 177. The term "old" Arabs seems to be the best description for what Morice calls "Moors" who differed from the "new" Omani Arabs, not only in their antiquity of their residence in East Africa, but also perhaps in their origin and religion, the former being from Hadramaut and Shafei Sunni, the latter from Oman and Ibadhi. Frins, (1961), 46.

at the trading centres on the mainland.<sup>81</sup> What we need to notice here then is the often disparate and conflicting interests of the four communities involved in the trade and politics of Kilwa.

Perhaps the most damaging of these conflicts of interests was that between the "old" and the "new" Arabs, or rather between Kilwa and Zanzibar. Kilwa, as has been shown above, is located towards the perimeter of reliable monsoons, and the voyage beyond Zanzibar to Kilwa added anything up to 16 days sailing, which shortens the trading season in port by that much. The choice of Zanzibar by the Indians was, therefore, crucial.

"It is to them [Arabs] and to their centres in Zanzibar that the ships from India go in preference to unload their cargoes for distribution all along the coast. When the ships from India arrive in December, January or February, all the Moors from Kilwa, Mafia, Mombasa, Pate, etc., go to Zanzibar to buy cargoes and distribute them subsequently in their districts in exchange for ivory tusks, provisions and slaves. In March and April

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81 P.K.I., 109, 123, 135. Morice says that all the Africans were not allowed to cross over to the island. But elsewhere he says "free Africans" composed one-third of Kilwa's population, ibid., 170.

all the Moors and Arabs come to the Kingdom  
of Kilwa to trade these for slaves."<sup>82</sup>

Thus, before the advent of the French almost the entire trade of Kilwa, as well as that of many other city states, was channelled through Zanzibar. This partly arose from lack of deep-sea shipping. Morice says the Swahili and "old" Arabs were not rich enough to have their own ships, but paid freight on Surat, Socotran and Arab ships, some of which could be built at Zanzibar able to carry 300 slaves. Furthermore, the local people lacked the capital and commercial know-how to conduct their own foreign trade, while the Omanis of Zanzibar, "being richer, more business-like, and more commercial", were able to attract the trade to Zanzibar. This is partly substantiated by Kilwa's higher duty of at least 7% compared with the 3% on exports and imports at Zanzibar, which clearly could not have served to attract foreign traders from the north.<sup>83</sup>

Kilwa's economic dependence on Zanzibar was almost pathetic. Morice reported that though the Swahili and the "old" Arabs were capable of driving the Omanis back to Muscat, "they will never do it so long as some European nation does

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82 F.K.I., 82, Guillaum III, 371. He says that between mid-August and November boats took seven to eight days from Zanzibar to Kilwa.

83 F.K.I., 115, 163, 172. It is not stated if the duty is on imports, or on exports, or on both. It seems to refer to the export of ivory; Morice himself contracted to pay 10% on slaves. It is also probable that some tax was imposed on imports of cloth, etc. Kilwa perhaps could afford to charge such high rates in the knowledge that it produced a large share of slaves and ivory.

not bring<sup>7</sup> them Surat goods which they need and can take in exchange their slaves and ivory." Even at the time of their expulsion the Omanis were informed that they would be welcomed as traders.<sup>84</sup>

The result of this dependence was a pattern of trade with an almost single track for the export of slaves and ivory. Slaves primarily went to Oman though Morice says that the "Moors of Surat" also took some. Ivory went primarily to India where, Morice says, the smaller tusks were absorbed, especially along the Malabar coast but also around Surat, perhaps to make bangles out of them. The larger ones were re-exported to China. It was presumably shipped on board the two Surat vessels and the 400 ton vessel belonging to the Omani ruler which was said to be trading in ivory and hippopotamus teeth. It was stated to be a very profitable trade yielding 25% profit, but Morice's estimate that he could obtain 500 to 600 tons of ivory was grossly unrealistic.<sup>85</sup>

Along the same single track south flowed the Indian

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84 P.K.I., 148, 115. Elsewhere, p. 109, he says that the Moors cannot seize Zanzibar because the Omanis have a well fortified citadel there.

85 Ibid., 82, 107, 121-2, 172, 187. Freeman-Grenville is wrong in interpreting "teeth of whales" as rhinoceros horns which are dark, whereas Morice says the teeth were preferred in Europe to ivory because "it does not yellow with age", pp. 106, 119. In 1859 when the trade was well-developed, the export from Zanzibar was less than 220 tons. Russel, 343.



merchandise which sustained the whole trade of East Africa as it did further south. Morice is most eloquent on their role and clearly recognised it in his schemes. The chief Indian import was cloth of great variety, but generally coarse. The thread was spun by hand which was therefore softer, and the cloth made from it more durable. Within East Africa the quality in demand varied with time and place. The Malagash preferred the "coarsest and commonest". Lamu and Pate on the other hand, preferred a better quality than the rest of East Africa, an indication, perhaps, of a higher cultural taste, for use presumably in the coastal towns themselves. Elsewhere the demand was probably for medium quality cloth for the interior market. There was a very great variety of types in demand as Morice's list clearly indicates, of which the main ones were "Basto", "Kaniki" and "Dhoties" which came from Gujarat, and striped loincloth which came from both Muscat and Diu. Beads were the other main merchandise, which were also of great variety. They may have been as important as cloth and in Morice's "Plan" they were to constitute nearly half the imports from Surat.<sup>86</sup>

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86 Alpers (1966) 119. Capen, III, 299. F.K.I., 142-4, 185-6, 191. It is almost certain that the word deciphered by Freeman-Grenville as "Basrah" is the cloth called "Basto" which was a famous produce of Gujarat. Commissariat, II, 300. It is interesting that the word passed into Kiswahili in its older form of "Bafta" (Persian: "baftan"=to weave), while today the Indians in East Africa use the new form. The "Kaniki" is a dark indigo-dyed cloth popular in the interior, and may be represented in Morice's list not by "Quinsangue" which Morice

The advent of French slave trade did not succeed in disrupting this pattern of trade though it drained off part of the slave supplies to Ile de France. It did however strengthen East African trade to the south-east by which coarse cloth had previously flowed to the west coast of Madagascar which was paid for in piastres originating from French slave trade on the east coast. The French now merely established a more direct and probably a more important sea-route, without perhaps destroying its predecessor. They, however, never seem to have taken the further step, envisaged by Morice, of supplying Kilwa with Surat merchandise. This would have given them a double profit, and Kilwa a more independent economic base. As it was, Zanzibar continued to handle Kilwa's ivory which apparently did not interest the French, and also all the cloth and beads which went to pay for the slaves from the interior. The French paid for slaves in piastres which, as Crassons commented, did not remain long in their hands, but rather passed almost immediately into the hands of the Arabs and "Moors of Surat" at Zanzibar in payment for cloth and beads.<sup>87</sup>

The French had excited the centrifugal forces of the

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Describes as a white loin-cloth with stripes, but perhaps by "Genequai". The final item was "dhotis" which were cotton loin-cloths, probably white.

87 F.K.I., 182, 190. Gray (1964 ) 227. S.D., 197.

coast, but by failing to provide their paramour with a full dowry, they left Kilwa rather naked when retribution came. By 1784 Mafia, Kilwa's "foster-mother" on which she depended for cattle and provisions, had begun to assert her independence from Kilwa,<sup>88</sup> perhaps with Omani encouragement. In desperation Kilwa turned to the pretender to the Omani throne, Saif b. Ahmed, who was seeking a share of his patrimony in East Africa, and together they probed the possibility of French aid, but to no avail. A similar drama was to be enacted at Mombasa four decades later. Kilwa, however, fell under a "swift and fierce" Omani onslaught. The Sultan was left with his title and dominion over the mainland section of the kingdom, while Zanzibar appropriated half of the revenue from the slave trade.<sup>89</sup>

With the subjugation of Kilwa, Zanzibar at least assured herself a share in Kilwa's prosperous trade, and by that time the Omani market may have adjusted to the higher prices of slaves. Therefore, the Omanis may not have felt the need to force the French slave trade back to Zanzibar. Datoe has shown that trade at Kilwa continued to be prosperous until

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88 F.K.I., 115. On p. 135 Morice says that Mafia was independent of Kilwa, but Crassons says in 1784 that it was "at this moment engaged in making itself independent of the King of Kilwa". S.D., 193.

89 Gray (1964a) 20-4; (1964b) 224. S.D., 194-5. Albrand, 83.

about 1793, when it was disrupted by Anglo-French naval warfare. When it was re-established Zanzibar began to take the lead and Kilwa gradually withered away.<sup>90</sup>

b. The Return of French Slave Trade to Zanzibar

The French rather reluctantly returned to Zanzibar. When Kilwa was conquered the Omanis did not immediately attempt to upset the trading pattern established by the French. They were permitted to trade there "in complete safety", and the duty on slaves taken by them was increased by only half a piastre to 6½ piastres. According to Dallons, as a result of a French mission to Muscat, this was reduced in 1788 to 5 piastres, but by 1799, when he first traded at Zanzibar and Kilwa, he had to pay 3 piastres, apparently at both places. We do not know what the duty was on slave exports to the north prior to the conquest. There is little doubt, however, that after the conquest the duty on slave trade to the north was substantially, and perhaps immediately, reduced to make the Omani market more competitive. Thus, by 1804, the duty on the French slave trade at Kilwa was 12 piastres, while exports to the north were charged only one. By that date the Omani authorities had taken a further economic step to divert the French to Zanzibar and centralise foreign trade at Zanzibar by charging a lower rate of 11 piastres at Zanzibar.<sup>91</sup> However, the reduction of only one piastre,

90 Datoe, 18-9. Prior in 1812 described it as a "petty village". S.D., 203.

91 Gray (1964b) 225. S.D., 194, 199, 200.

which the native traders had to pay in bringing the slaves to Zanzibar, may have been too small.

The French continued to trade at Kilwa but at an increasingly smaller scale. A certain Jean Naud seems to have gone to Kilwa presumably to trade in 1797. Dallons traded at Kilwa in 1799, and perhaps again before 1804, for he reports the increased duties there. Datoe has extracted information from a shipping register which shows that in the year 1803/4 two voyages were made to Kilwa, and three to Zanzibar. It seems, however, that despite the small differential in the duties, voyages to Kilwa may have ceased after 1804. In 1809 Fisher reported that no French vessel had been at Kilwa for 11 months, while the trade at Zanzibar continued.<sup>92</sup>

The decline in French trade at Kilwa does not, however, imply decline in trade in general, if that trade is evaluated not in terms of revenue but volume. It has been shown above that in the mid 1780s the revenue of Kilwa from the French slave trade alone amounted to over 10,000 piastres. By 1804, Kilwa was farmed for 6,000 piastres, despite the fact that the duty on the French slave trade had been doubled. Firstly, it may be pointed out that this sum does not represent the whole revenue which in 1812 was estimated

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92 Gray (1962) 173. S.D., 200. Datoe, P.R.O. Adm. 1/62, under "Quilwa", "Zanzibar"; Adm. 1/63, entry for 8.9. 1809.

between 12,000 and 20,000 dollars.<sup>93</sup> Secondly, as we have seen, direct French trade had declined. The two vessels in 1803/4, even at the high mid-1780s average of 300 slaves per vessel, would have taken only about 600 slaves, yielding 7,200 piastres in duties. At the same time, three French vessels were trading at Zanzibar for about 900 slaves, most of whom may have come from Kilwa region, for which they would have paid only 900 piastres to Kilwa's revenue, and 9,900 piastres at Zanzibar. This is quite apart from the slaves taken by the Arabs and even then compares favourably with the mid-1780s average. That large numbers of slaves were being exported to the north is clearly indicated by the capture by a French privateer, Labadie, of one dhow proceeding to Zanzibar carrying 300 slaves.<sup>94</sup> While slaves from the northern areas may have begun to enter the market, there is no reason to believe that they had become proportionately more important.

The diversion of French trade from Kilwa to Zanzibar, increasingly after 1804, would therefore have the effect of reducing the revenue even further, with<sup>out</sup> a necessary reduction

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93 S.D., 205. The dollar equalled a piastre.

94 Gray (1967) 172. It is not accurate to describe these slaves as "surplus to Kilwa's export requirements" which still assume that the largest number of slaves were taken by the French at Kilwa. Rather, it is an indication that there was no particular advantage in trading at Kilwa any more.



in the total volume of trade. The reduction however, did occur as a result of Anglo-French hostility so that, by 1812, it was reported that Kilwa's exports consisted of ivory and tortoise-shell, and the demand for slaves was confined to the Arabs "who do not take many". No wonder, therefore, that in that year Kilwa Kisiwani [on the island] was described as a "petty village". Its decline may partly be due to the rise of its rivals on the mainland nearby where, as Morice had reported, much of the direct trade was transacted. These were termini of the trade routes from the interior, among which probably was Kilwa Kivinje which is marked on Morice's maps. Kivinje finally surpassed Kisiwani during the second quarter of the nineteenth century.<sup>95</sup>

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95 S.D., 203, 210. F.K.I., 109, 202, 206. As late as 1824 Kivinje was described as "a small village". Owen, II, 3. The "Ancient History of Kilwa Kisiwani" in S.D., 224-5, describes the division of the kingdom Kisiwani and Kivinje as a result of rivalry between two brothers when the ruler, probably Yusuf b. Hasan (f. 1812, according to Prior, S.D., 205) died c. 1819. Albrand, 85. Upon the death of one of them, Sulaiman b. Hasan, the other, Muhammed, was asked by the people of Kisiwani not to pass by Kivinje, while the coast people gave a contrary advice which he followed. Kisiwani, therefore, set up Sulaiman's son on the throne, though he "had no power but only the honour of the title Sultan". Upon Muhammad's death power passed into the hands of Seyyid Said. The tradition indicates the island's desperate and unsuccessful attempt to retain her commercial role.

By 1850, Krapf describes it as "the most important town on the coast between Mozambique and Zanzibar". Krapf, 423. Freeman-Grenville's chronology is slightly faulty when he says that Yusuf flourished c. 1827 when Said first visited East Africa just because the two are described as having cordial relations by the "History". F.K.I., 32-33.

Already by 1799 French trade at Zanzibar was considerable and Bissell reported that French was spoken there by many. In 1809 the friend and interpreter to the governor of Zanzibar was described as "a perfect Frenchman". Apart from fiscal and administrative measures taken by the Omanis to induce the French to shift their trade to Zanzibar, that island may also have offered other advantages as an entrepot. Bissell mentions coffee being traded for by the French. Moreover, Zanzibar may also have begun to supply slaves from its own immediate hinterland, the Mrima coast, as well as channelling Kilwa's exports. Thus, in the cargo of slaves captured in 1810 by "Sir Edward Hughes", Indiaman, which could only have been on a French vessel perhaps proceeding to Ile de France, a number of northern Tanzanian and Kenyan tribes are encountered, including the Mrima, the Nyika, the Nyanwezi, and the Galla, besides a large number of the southern Tanzanian, Mozambique and Nyasa tribes. That this cargo came from Zanzibar is suggested by the fact that, apart from Kilwa, the French were trading mainly at Zanzibar where, Tomkinson reported, slaves were collected "from different parts of the coast, to the north and south of that place by Arab boats".<sup>96</sup> In exchange for slaves and coffee,

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96 Gray (1962) 98. P.R.O., 1/62, under "Zanzibar". I.O. M.R. Misc. 586. The list was given to Smee to help him in his researches. The slaver was probably French captured as a result of Anglo-French hostilities. Tentative identifications are given in brackets:

Vaccanee (Wakani) Komango

Dallons says that he traded cloves, sugar and iron. Fisher in 1809 confirms that a small quantity of sugar was imported, but he was assured that apart from that commodity, the French were "always obliged to pay ... in dollars".<sup>97</sup> The market in East Africa for those commodities was not large enough, but their supply from Ile de France is an indication of greater maturity of the trade and a more favourable balance of trade as far as Ile de France was concerned.

In its organisation, however, French trade retained, even at Zanzibar, its primitive character of the previous century. Throughout the period it was conducted on a "single voyage" basis with no local establishment and only native brokers. Smee reported in 1811 that the French had a "factory" at Zanzibar where the French flag was displayed constantly before the arrival of the English vessels. The weight of

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Maheh (Hehe)	Morina (Mirina)
Muckondeh (Makonde)	Kutchindoo (Machinga)
Mufsa Galla	Anna Meajee
Ojien Galla	Meher (Mahiwa)
Mica (Nyika)	Mackiva or Mankua (Makua)
Meahoo (Yao)	Mujendoo (Ngindo)

Giaga (? Chaga. Rebsmann consistently spelled it Jagga. Krapf, 201. Smee himself identified them with "Givraha Galla", Smee (1811b) entry for 7.4.1811.)

Monnamoojee or Monanuge: in Smee (1811a) 510, "Moenmaizees" are mentioned as slaves (Nyamwezi).

97 S.D., 199. F.R.O. 1/62, under "Zanzibar".

evidence, however, suggests that this building may have been no more than temporary accommodation on shore while the vessels waited for their cargo to be completed. Only two years before Fisher had noted that there were no Frenchmen on the island and that French vessels were obliged to anchor for two or three months to wait for their cargo. Tomkinson was told by an Arab captain that he had left two French vessels at Zanzibar "which he conceived would remain a month or two, as their cargo was being procured".<sup>98</sup>

The trade formed an important part of Zanzibar's economy. It was reported in 1810 that Zanzibar was farmed to "black merchants connected with the French".<sup>99</sup> The growth of this trade to Zanzibar, however, may have been hampered by Anglo-French warfare which was almost continuous till the fall of Ile de France in 1810 except for a short break in 1801-3. These hostilities were not confined to the western Indian Ocean, but were global, no doubt disrupting the previously lucrative slave trade to the West Indies. Except for the trade to Madagascar and the African coast, it was reported in 1804, all trade had been suspended. Compared to at least eleven vessels trading on the East African coast in 1788, in 1803/4 there were only five.<sup>100</sup> With their

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98 Smee (1811b) entry for 25.2.1811. P.R.O.: Adm. 1/62 under "Zanzibar"; Adm. 1/63 entry for 8.6.1809.

99 Caledon to Vansittart, 27.6.1810 in Theal, IX, 13.

100 (Datoe, 246n.- Alpers, (1966), 238.

primitive commercial organisation the threat of capture hung heavily on French traders who always had to keep at least a pace ahead of English cruisers. The capture of a slaver in 1810 has already been mentioned, and in 1811 two French slavers had to beat a hasty retreat at the news of the approach of British warships which kept them from Zanzibar from February till September. Moreover, to beat the blockade mounted by the British around the Mascarenes the French had to devise a circuitous route via the Seychelles to be escorted by French cruisers in December to Ile de France, hazarding the high percentage of tropical cyclones at this time.<sup>101</sup>

A fresh stimulus to French trade with East Africa was given by the Portuguese entry into the conflict, and the consequent cessation of French trade with Mozambique. French cruisers turned to raiding Portuguese coastal shipping, capturing "nearly all the vessels" with their cargo whose value was estimated at \$500,000. The prizes were taken to Zanzibar and Kilwa where slaves were purchased, and taken to Ile de France via Seychelles.<sup>102</sup> The new opportunities, however, could hardly have been fully exploited under conditions of war. With increasing hazards to French shipping, Arab ships began to play a bigger role, transporting slaves to the French Islands or to Madagascar, and even rice from the port

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101 P.R.O.: Adm. 1/62, under "Quiloa"; Adm. 1/63 entry for 7.6.1809. See (1811b) entry for 25.2.1811.

102 P.R.O.: Adm. 1/63, entry for 7.6.1809.

of Majunga to Ile de France.<sup>103</sup> French trade, as far as East African commerce was concerned, seemed to be a spent force. The fall of Ile de France dealt a stunning blow to the French slave trade. By 1809 it greatly impressed Captain Fisher that there existed "an extensive commerce on this coast" in which the French had no interest.<sup>104</sup>

#### Conclusion

The Omani and French demand for slaves during the eighteenth century had served the important function of expanding Zanzibar's entrepot role in the supply of the imports and of developing a vast hinterland behind Kilwa as far as Lake Nyasa and beyond. By 1785 the development at Kilwa had gone so far that it threatened to pull the economic centre of gravity to itself and re-establish its mediaeval glory, in this case, based on the French slave trade. The Omanis effectively intervened to prevent the French supplying Kilwa with an entirely independent economic base and thus cut off their feet. They also set about converting Kilwa into Zanzibar's outport, but by the end of the century Kilwa's well-developed hinterland was still Zanzibar's only limb. The strangling of the French trade around the turn of the century reduced the hazards of this imbalance but only at the cost of an overall decline in the prosperity of the nascent commercial

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103 P.R.O.: Adm. 1/62, under "Mosangayo" Caledon to Vansittart, 27.6.1810, in Theal, IX, 13.

104 P.R.O.: Adm. 1/62, under "Zanzibar".



empire. The hoped-for solution was not so much retrenchment and streamlining as the revival of the southern hinterland by finding a new market for slaves and the development of the hinterland to the north to achieve a balance simultaneously. The development of a plantation agriculture on Zanzibar and the increase in the demand for ivory were to oblige in both of these respects during the first half of the nineteenth century.

## CHAPTER III

Indian Demand for Ivory and the Evolution of the  
Northern Hinterland

During the second half of the eighteenth century an economic framework evolved along the East African coast centred on Zanzibar under primarily an Omani economic impetus but consolidated by the French slave trade. It was the Omanis who played the dominant role in the total organisation of trade. They dominated the ocean-going transport and supplied whatever there was of capital and commercial organisation at the entrepot presided over by a representative of the Omani merchant prince. They shared with the "old" Arabs and the Swahili in the entrepot trade, collecting and distributing goods during the off-seasons.

The framework, however, was in a state of uneasy equilibrium. Zanzibar controlled the trade to the north, but this involved a precarious parasitic dependence on the produce of the only long distance trade route with a terminus at Kilwa. French intervention had shown the hazards, and the moral was the obvious need to enlarge Zanzibar's economic base by a more effective economic exploitation of the region under her direct control. However, that need was to remain unsatisfied in the absence of external economic factors critical enough to cause those developments. When some of these factors did come into play they caused several vital changes in the

economy of the coast. In view of the anaemic state of the French slave trade, the most promising change was the expansion of the northern hinterland to supply ivory and thus reverse the relative roles of ivory and slaves in the foreign trade of Zanzibar. With this reversal the economic centre of gravity shifted northwards and sharpened the conflict between Zanzibar and Mombasa. For Zanzibar it was an opportunity to establish the commercial empire on more secure foundations; for Mombasa a desperate struggle for survival so near a powerful neighbour.

The importance of the Indian ivory market in the early part of the nineteenth century entailed the emergence of the Indian mercantile class at Zanzibar which gradually displaced the Arabs as the most important "foreign" traders at the entrepot and even in the entrepot trade. The Arabs were thus driven on to the land as clove plantation owners, and into the interior as caravan traders. In neither direction were they to find a sanctuary. The Indians were close on their heels in the same economic stream which, by the end of the nineteenth century, found them both in the African interior and as land-owners on Zanzibar itself.

1. The Decline in the Supply of Ivory from Mozambique

It is Alpers's thesis that the ivory resources of the region east of Lake Nyasa had two outlets at Mozambique and Kilwa since the sixteenth century and he postulates several shifts from one to the other in response to economic

conditions at those markets.<sup>1</sup> Ivory is not so localised a commodity and therefore it is not surprising that it formed an export at both places at various times, but Alpers's hypothesis implies a long-distance trade route and the attendant vast hinterland whose resources could be re-oriented from one market to another with considerable mobility. Its obvious importance to the economic history of the East African coast therefore calls for a re-examination of the evidence.

Alpers argues rightly that it was the truncation of Kilwa's maritime hinterland to Sofala by the Portuguese that forced her to re-orient her trade to the exploitation of her own interior during the last quarter of the sixteenth century.<sup>2</sup> However, as Alpers admits, there is only one Portuguese source in the seventeenth century for the existence of a route to Kilwa from Lake Nyasa region. In 1616 Gaspar Bocarro under-

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1 Alpers, (1966) 73-5, 101. Alpers had to work from a limited number of sources and he was sometimes tempted to infer too much from them. After quoting Xavier's (1758) vague reference to Yao trade which he says "formerly divided, part to Mombasa, and part to this island, and since the former was lost, all goes to this market", he concludes that "Xavier's premise that there was a shift of Yao trade towards Mozambique in the first half of the eighteenth century is strikingly borne out by the fact that there was a reversal of this movement in the second half of the century", which does not strengthen the source even if the latter were true.

2. Ibid.

took an overland journey from the Zambezi to Kilwa. While the journey certainly revealed inter-tribal political relations and exchange of gifts along the route he used, there is really no certain evidence of long distance trade except over the last stretch from the Ruvuma to Kilwa. The guides he had taken from the southern end of Lake Nyasa turned back at this point. Moreover, it was only on the Ruvuma that he first encountered cloths which originated from "the coast of Melinde".<sup>3</sup>

The Maravi, nevertheless, did have alternate markets for their commodities closer to their home which could obviate the need to seek a very distant market also under Portuguese control in the seventeenth century. Tete on the Zambezi was the nearest market but until 1674 the Zambezi was held as a monopoly by the Captain of Mozambique. As Barreto stated in 1745:

"It is much easier for the traders to bring their ivory to Tete than to carry it to Mozambique, but they avoid coming to Tete in order not to be subjected to the

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3 Alpers (1966) 55. S.D. 195-8. Bocarro says that even the chief on the Ruvuma "obeys Muzura", the Maravi chief. The gifts exchanged included ivory from south to north, and the Ruvuma chief sent a return gift to Muzura of cloths from "the coast of Melinde". This could be interpreted as a very limited form of trade, but there is no reference to trade by the guides or any other along the route.

monopoly of the governor of Mozambique."<sup>4</sup>

The African traders who, at this time, probably included the Yao, therefore preferred to trade at the more competitive market of Mozambique where, despite the governor's attempts to restrict their trade, the moradores (merchants) were able to offer a better price to the Africans.<sup>5</sup>

These two clear possibilities should, therefore, be borne in mind when considering the evidence for the second half of the eighteenth century when Alpers contends there was a reversal of trade from Mozambique to Kilwa. Needless to say, we do not have any quantitative data for Kilwa in the eighteenth century, and the few available for Mozambique should therefore be used very carefully. It is, first of all, imperative that a clear distinction should be drawn between the ivory brought by the Yao to Mossuril opposite Mozambique island and the total ivory exports of the province. Plotted on a graph the Yao trade seems to suggest a decline from the mid-eighteenth century peak to a first low in the early 1780s. After a partial recovery in 1785 the trade virtually collapsed

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4 Alpers (1966) 54.

5 Ibid., 55. Curiously Alpers goes on to argue that "similar circumstances caused (the African trader) to forsake Mozambique and carry his merchandise to Kilwa", whereas the logic of the argument would suggest the Zambezi.



by 1795. The five figures available for the total ivory exports of the province show a spectacular increase by the early 1790s over the mid-eighteenth century figures only to decline precipitously by 1801 and a further marked decline by 1817.<sup>6</sup> The most immediate impression from a scatter of these data is that the undoubtedly catastrophic decline in the Yao ivory trade to Mozambique island was more than compensated by an apparent increase in the supply of ivory from other parts of the province and need not necessarily imply the total abandonment by the Yao of the province as a whole.

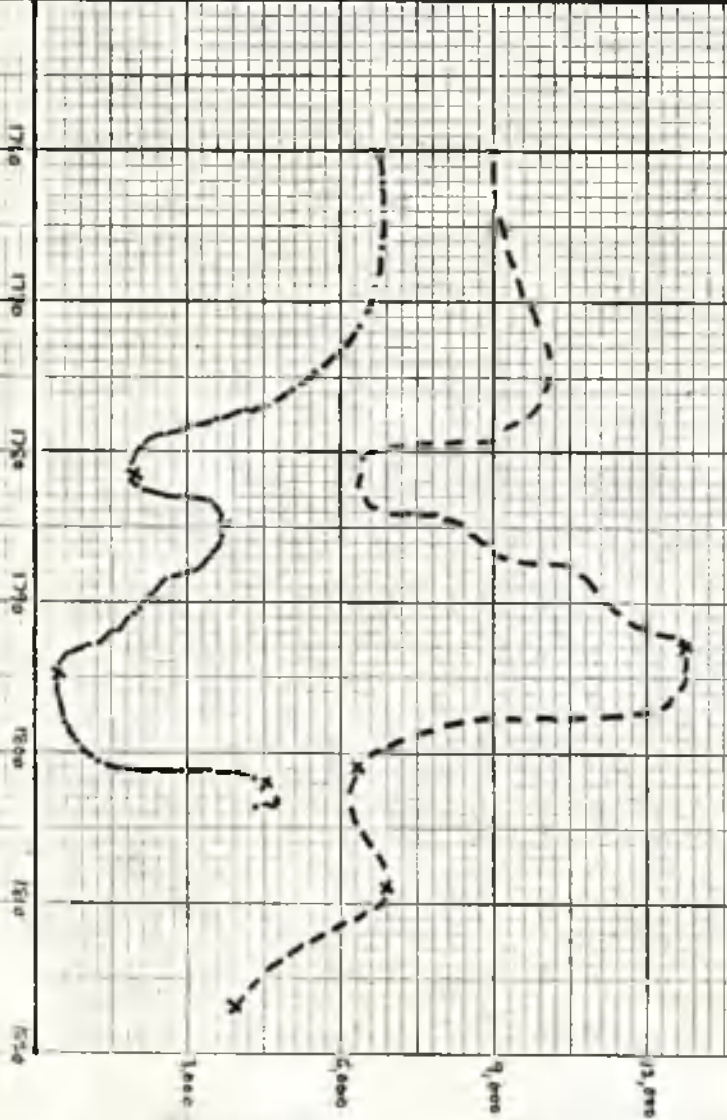
Alpers has attempted to explain the decline in the Yao trade at Mozambique island in terms of the increasing difficulties the Portuguese had with the Makua who lay across the Yao route, and the incessant harrassment of Indian traders at Mozambique, including threats of deportation. It is therefore curious to find that the Indian population, which he says was about 200 strong at the time of the 1759-61 peak of the Yao trade, should have increased to 300 by the early 1780s. Furthermore, whereas at the mid-century only one vessel each from Diu and Daman annually visited Mozambique, there were five vessels from Diu alone in the 1770s.<sup>7</sup> Alpers

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6 Alpers (1966) 182-3, 240, 256, 277. I have used means whenever a range of figures is given. The references are sometimes vague, and I have assumed the figures on pages 182-3 and 240 refer to the Yao trade, and those on pages 256 and 277 to total exports. The points on the graph have been interpolated bearing in mind the changes in duties and prices.

7 Ibid., 109-10, 116, 120-5, 184-6, 192-4.

GRAPH I IVORY TRADE OF MOZAMBIQUE 1760-1820



SOURCE: ALPHEUS (1966) 152-3, 240, 256, 277.





also gives the variations in the duties charged, apparently mainly to emphasise how exorbitant they were, and therefore the advantage of diverting the trade from the province altogether.<sup>8</sup> However, these changes were downwards and they argue against such a diversion before 1800. It does not try to correlate them with the curves of ivory trade, and therefore overlooks the possibility of diversion merely from one area to another within the Portuguese dominions.

There were two duties in force. The basic import duty on foreign trade at Mozambique applied to the two staple commodities, "velorio" trade beads and cloth. Before 1787 the former was subjected to a 20% duty, reduced successively to 15% and 10% by 1793 before being raised again in 1801 to 20%. The relevant changes for cloth are not clear except that in 1801 it was liable to 10% duty.<sup>9</sup> These are the duties which added to the total retail price of the imports when bartered with the African traders anywhere in the province. They could therefore influence the diversion of trade away from the province as a whole if it can be shown that duties outside the province were substantially lower. It is known that in the mid-1770s they amounted to 7% at Kilwa, and 3% on imports as well as exports at Zanzibar.<sup>10</sup> The

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8 Alpers (1966) 255.

9 Ibid.

10 J.K.I., 115, 172..

reduction in the duties at Mozambique in 1787 and 1793 could be interpreted either as an attempt to stimulate trade or to arrest any diversion of the trade from the province which may have occurred.

The re-export duty, on the other hand, was intended to centralise foreign trade at Mozambique island by raising the price of goods in the districts and probably had an effect similar to that of the monopoly exercised by the Captain of Mozambique in the previous century. The duty was raised apparently in the 1760s to 40%, and was reduced to 30% in 1787 and to 10% in 1793. By 1800 it stood at the old rate of 40% but was reduced to 30% the following year.<sup>11</sup> The pattern of changes was thus similar to that for import duty, but the effect was likely to be felt within the province. By reducing the duty it increased the competitiveness of areas other than Mozambique island. Moreover, it is highly significant that the reductions in the re-export duty were much more dramatic than in the import duty for, while the latter was reduced by a half between 1787 and 1793, the former was reduced by three-quarters. If the high rates did apply to the peak period of 1759/61 then it is possible to explain the prosperity of the Yao trade at Mozambique more simply in terms of high duties elsewhere in the province. On the other hand, the low duties between 1787 and c. 1800 stimulated trade in the provinces, and also perhaps suggest the re-

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11 Alpers (1966) 255. Smith (1970) 277.

direction of the Yao trade to other parts of the province. Thus it is known that while in the sixteenth and seventeenth century Delgoa Bay was visited by one boat from Mozambique annually, and even bi-annually, it is highly significant that between 1789 and 1799 it was visited by 22 ships.<sup>12</sup> We should expect a similar dramatic expansion in the ivory trade on the Zambezi where it is probable that the Yao, like their Maravi predecessors, could find a lucrative market, especially as Sena was known as an important exporter of ivory.<sup>13</sup>

The final element of price may now be introduced to explain its possible effect on the ivory trade of the province. It was apparently variable in the middle of the eighteenth century and in the late 1760s it stood at about 56 cruzados per arroba. In an effort to break Banian competitiveness and foster a Portuguese merchant class, the authorities established a price ceiling at 40 cruzados in the early 1780s.<sup>14</sup> The measure was economically inept for it reduced the competitiveness of the province as a whole. In Delgoa Bay this constituted a powerful incentive to the Africans to seek out the Austrians who had established themselves there since 1777, and who were paying twice as much for ivory as the official rate.<sup>15</sup> The price ceiling may have dampened the prospects

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12 Smith (1969)

13 Smith (1970) 278.

14 Alpers (1966) 193.

15 Smith (1970) 283.



of trade in the province as a whole. Where possible efforts may have been made to divert the trade, but it is also possible that in view of the brief tenure of the measure the trade may have been abandoned only temporarily. Alpers has explained the exceptional low in the Yao trade during the early 1780s as resulting from the Makua war.<sup>16</sup> Portuguese relations with the Makua were allegedly deteriorating throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, and there is no particular reason to believe that the war of the early 1780s was exceptional. It is not impossible that the war itself may have been triggered by the price ceiling and what the Makua may have interpreted<sup>it</sup> as a Portuguese attempt to cheat them. On the other hand, the imposition of the ceiling in 1780, the exceptional low in the Yao trade, the abandonment of the ceiling in 1783 and a marked recovery in the trade by 1785, would seem to suggest a much more probable and intimate causal relation between the price ceiling and the variation in the Yao trade of the first half of the 1780s.<sup>17</sup>

In 1787 the Portuguese took a series of economic measures which, though they did not improve prospects for Yao trade at Mozambique island, did improve commercial conditions of the province as a whole. They appear to have been adequate in arresting any diversion of trade beyond the province. Both the import and the re-export duties were reduced by a

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16 Alpers (1966) 182-3.

17 Ibid., 193-4. 240.

a total of 15%, and in 1793 by a further 25%. The total effect of these changes were felt in the province where the total reduction by the latter date amounted to 40%, while the comparable reduction at Mozambique amounted to only 10%. In view of this, the "unusually high" total ivory export of the province in 1793 as well as the utter collapse of the Yao trade at Mozambique island by 1795 appear to be perfectly reasonable and predictable. The Portuguese took a further measure of establishing a new price ceiling at 80 cruzados which was high enough not to hinder the free movement of prices so long as the duties were kept low.<sup>18</sup>

The critical change in the economic climate of Mozambique occurred towards the end of the century when the duties were raised in a suicidal attempt to raise revenue and centralise trade at Mozambique island. Re-export duties were raised by 1800 to 40%, though they were reduced the following year to 30%.<sup>19</sup> On the earlier eighteenth century analogy, this increase would have had the effect of diverting trade from the districts back to Mozambique island, and the Yao may well have returned there where Salt found them in numbers in 1809, trading slaves as well as ivory.<sup>20</sup> However, trade

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18 Alpers (1966) 255, 257.

19 Ibid., 255.

20 Salt, 32-3. Alpers (1966) 256. He says that in 1802 Inhambane and areas apparently other than Mozambique island supplied a total of 1,841 arrobas of ivory. We do not have the total export for that year, but in

in the province as a whole was rendered even less attractive by a parallel increase in import duties on "velorio" beads to 20%, and cloth imports from Diu and Daman were charged 10%. Salt estimated that customs-house charges and pilotage added another 5%.<sup>21</sup> Total duties, therefore, amounted to about 25% at Mozambique and 55% in the districts after 1801. The effect was catastrophic. The total ivory exports of the province were halved by 1801, and after a slight recovery in 1809 they plunged to a nadir by 1817 when they stood at less than a third of the 1793 figure.<sup>22</sup>

These changes were being effected at a very dangerous moment when Kilwa's hinterland already extended to the region of Lake Nyasa and beyond, primarily for the supply of slaves but also able to handle ivory more competitively in view of the lower duties in force there. The direct Bisa trade with Tete which had apparently been established since 1793 was gravely threatened by 1798. As Lacerde commented during his journey to Kazembe's capital:

"I now think with reason that the great number of tusks which once went to

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1801 it amounted to about 6,000 arrobas. If the balance of over 4,000 arrobas was supplied by Mozambique island it would suggest a really marked Yao recovery there.

21 Alpers (1966) 255. Salt, 80-1.

22 Ibid., 256, 277.

Mozambique, and which certainly came from these lands, goes at present to Zanzibar, or the neighbourhood not only because they get more for their ivory, but also because Zanzibar is nearer than our possessions."<sup>23</sup>

It is significant it was Lacerda, as governor of Sena, who undertook the expedition to the Kazembe, one of whose purposes was to "make conditions of trade as favourable to us as possible.". The expedition returned with only a promise "to open the road from (Kazembe's) lands to Mozambique". But the promise could not be kept. In 1810 Pereira reported that the subjects of the Kazembe had ceased to come to trade at Tete since Lacerda's expedition. The war between the Kazembe and the Bisa may have caused some disruption, but the most probable reason was perhaps the Portuguese inability to compete with their rivals trading to Kilwa. In view of the tremendous increase in the re-export duty the former were unable to improve upon their offer of cloth and beads at a time when competition was apparently forcing the prices upwards. Pinto had reported in 1799 that tusks of between 32 and 48 pounds cost two to three pieces of cloth and ten "couros". The largest tusks of 80 to 96 pounds were worth five to six pieces with a little "couro" or "velorio" beads. A decade later Baptista reported that six or seven sheetings

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23 Burton (1873) 95, 57.

and other extra articles were demanded for every large tusk.<sup>24</sup>

With the increase in the duties the price of ivory would have proportionately risen to a new level were it not now to be hindered even by the 80 cruzados ceiling. In 1809 the price of ivory, which was by then probably being kept down by the ceiling, in fact stood unofficially at between \$26 and \$32 per arroba (about 68 to 83 cruzados).<sup>25</sup> It was in recognition of this fact that the Portuguese were forced in 1810 to raise the ceiling to 100 cruzados.<sup>26</sup> The ceiling, however, was no longer the culprit. Without a reduction in the duties the raising of the ceiling merely allowed Mozambique to price itself out of the market. The average price of ivory at the East India Ivory sales in London in 1808 was about £22 per cwt. (about 78 cruzados per arroba), while the price at Mozambique in 1809 was between £21.15s. and £24 per cwt. (about 77 to 85 cruzados per arroba).<sup>27</sup>

The most dramatic effect of Mozambique's suicidal attempt was felt at Surat which had apparently derived most of its ivory during the eighteenth century from Mozambique. Such was Surat's dependence on that source that to the end of its days as an important port in the early 1800s ivory was described in its trade returns as a "produce of Mozambique",

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24. Burton (1873) 130, 168, 200. Gunnison (1961) 65, 67, 69.

25. Salt, 82. At 2.6 cruzados to the Spanish dollar. Milburn, I, 60.

26. Alpers (1966) 257.

27. Salt, 82. Milburn, I, 62. Converted at the rate of

whatever the precise origin.<sup>28</sup> Unmistakeable signs of the crisis began to be felt in the Gulf of Cambay with the steep rise in the mean ivory price from about 72 Rupees per maund (about 73 cruzados per arroba) in 1803/4 to more than double the amount in 1808/9. That this spectacular upswing was not merely a freak in the data available is proved by a similar upswing, though of a smaller dimension, at the smaller Indian ivory markets of Bombay and Calcutta for which comparable data are available.<sup>29</sup> The destruction of Portuguese shipping as a result of Portuguese embroilment in Anglo-French hostilities may have contributed to the rise in ivory prices.<sup>30</sup> However, the fact that a recovery in Mozambique's ivory exports did not follow the cessation of those hostilities shows that the dominant factors lay elsewhere, in the inept Portuguese economic policies from about 1800.

From an examination of the economic data it would appear that the Mozambique ivory market remained healthy despite a diversion of the Yao from Mozambique; and the changes in taxation would suggest a diversion merely to the districts. The trade of Kilwa had been stimulated in the eighteenth

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£4.75 or 12.35 cruzados to the pound sterling and 32 lbs. per arroba.

28 I.O.: P/419/40, Table 2.

29 See graph II. 1 Rupee = 1.18 cruzados; 1 Maund = 37½ lbs. Milburn, I, 159.

30 Salt, 75. P.R.O.:Adm. 1/63. Capt. Tomkinson's Report on a Visit to Zanzibar in 1809, entry for 7.6.1809.



century by an independent set of demands, namely the Omani and French demand for slaves. It was not until at the turn of the century that, with the increase in the duties, trade in the province as a whole was rendered less profitable, and the stated diversion may have occurred. The most significant response, however, occurred further north, with the development of the ivory hinterland in the northern half of Tanzania and southern Kenya.

## 2. The Growth of Indian Trade at Zanzibar

The mounting crisis at Mozambique from the dawn of the nineteenth century was bound to have wide-ranging repercussions along the whole coastline of eastern Africa. It created potentially booming conditions in areas not subject to debilitating Portuguese taxation and unimaginative tampering with the economy for narrow bureaucratic ends. The coast to the north of Cape Delgado appears to have been well placed to take advantage of these new opportunities which created a powerful incentive for the forging of commercial links with the interior across the previously insuperable "Nyika". There was a visibly marked growth in the trade of Zanzibar during the first quarter of the century, most dramatically illustrated by the doubling of its revenue between 1804 and 1819.<sup>31</sup> These developments did not owe their origin to the

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31 1804 - \$40,000 Dallons, in S.D., 198.  
 1811 - \$60,000 Smee (1311a) 512.  
 1819 - \$80,000 Albrand, 78.

French slave trade wriggling for its survival during Anglo-French hostilities only to be finally strangled during the 1820s, nor to the Arab slave trade which, as will be shown in the next chapter, remained more or less static. The expansion in economic activities during the first quarter of the century owed its origin rather to the extension of the ivory trade from Mozambique to Zanzibar and the growth at the latter place of Indian trade and its consequence, Indian settlement.

Unfortunately, the only continuous series of trade figures of Surat and Bombay do not make a distinction between the various parts of the coast from the Gulf of Aden to the Cape of Good Hope with which the British Indian ports may have traded. As we have seen, Surat lumps the whole coast under "Mozambique", showing the importance of that region at the beginning of the century when the trade reports began to be compiled. Bombay lists it under a broader designation, "Coast of Africa",<sup>32</sup> which is more accurate but hardly more helpful for our purposes in tracing the shift of trade in East Africa. Moreover, it should be pointed out that the available trade reports refer only to the trade with ports under direct British administration. From the evidence to be discussed below there is every reason to believe that at least during the first quarter of the century the "protected

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32 I. O. F/419/39. Introductory remarks under "Mozambique" and "Coast of Africa" for Surat and Bombay respectively.

state" of Kutch had the larger share of Indian trade with East Africa.<sup>33</sup> These reports, therefore, can only be taken as representative and a useful index for the total trade, and they must be used, whenever possible, in conjunction with direct observations of the occasional visitors to East Africa itself.

During the last quarter of the eighteenth century the important role of Indian trade in the supply of cloth and other imports was recognised by Morice. He refers to two Surat vessels trading in East Africa for ivory, copal and cowries, but their trade appears to have been confined to the entrepot. Moreover, the Arabs played a significant role as the carriers of trade between India and East Africa. Morice mentions a vessel belonging to the Omani ruler in that role.<sup>34</sup> Towards the end of the century Portuguese reports suggest a larger number of Indian vessels were involved but first-hand accounts raise doubts about their authenticity. Bissell in 1799, while remarking on the "small trading vessels from Muscat" and the fact that "there had not been an English ship in Zanzibar within the memory of the oldest inhabitant", nevertheless omits any mention of Indian vessels.

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33 The earliest reliable and comprehensive trade returns of Zanzibar dates only to 1859 when Kutch had already suffered severe dislocations in its trade, though her share was still significant. P.R.O.:F.O. 54/17, Rigby to Secretary of State for India, 1.5.1860.

34 F.K.I., 172.

Even Dallons in 1804 is silent over the subject except for a solitary reference to a "Banyan".<sup>35</sup> The evidence is negative but the omission in two eye-witness accounts would seem to suggest that Indian trade at the turn of the century was at least intermittent.

The diversion of trade from Mozambique to Zanzibar which began to take place during the first decade receives confirmation from an examination of the shipping between eastern Africa and India. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there were still hints that Surat vessels were proceeding to the south of Cape Delgado and that some of them missed the monsoon for the return journey.<sup>36</sup> The fortunate visits to Zanzibar of Tomkinson and Hardy permit us to compare their observations with the shipping returns of Bombay and Surat. Thus, in July 1809, Tomkinson reported three vessels "wintering" at Zanzibar, while Surat returns for 1809/10 show five arrivals, two of which may have left Zanzibar with the "build-up" of the monsoons in April which was a common practice. In 1811 Hardy escorted back to India three Surat vessels which are probably the ones listed in the Surat returns for 1811/2. During the second decade of the century, when Mozambique experienced a further decline in the export of ivory, an average of five square-rigged vessels regularly plied

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35 Gray (1962) 94, 98. S.D., 198-201.

36 I.O.: P/419/40 & 41, under "Mozambique"; P/414/74, pp. 379, 381.

between Surat and East Africa. Unfortunately, neither the official returns nor the eye-witnesses cared to penetrate the crowd of dhows to determine their number and origin, though Indian dhows were certainly trading there.<sup>37</sup>

That this trade was of recent growth receives further confirmation from a consideration of its organisation and the limited amount of economic power that the Indians could wield at Zanzibar at the beginning of the nineteenth century. They were men of rather limited capital. When Hardy ran short of cash he first turned to the governor of Zanzibar, and it was only when the latter refused to oblige that he turned for a paltry sum of \$786 to the Indians, probably those then "wintering" at Zanzibar. He had to pay interest at the high rate of 25%,<sup>38</sup> not for the risks involved since the East India company must have appeared good enough security,

37 P.R.O.: Adm. 1/63, entry for 14.7.1809. Smeo (1811b), entries for 23/2 and 1.4.1811, and enclosure 11. Hardy, entry for 8.9.1811 and f. 163. Surat's shipping with Mozambique:

	Arrivals		Departures	
	No. of Vessels	Tonnage	No. of Vessels	Tonnage
1809/10	5	465	4	365
10/11	6	556	5	415
11/12	3	240	5	297
12/13	4	315	3	232
13/14	4	349	4	349
14/15	3	249	5	482
15/16	6	665	6	665
16/17	3	272	5	539
17/18	2	216	6	431
18/19	5	630	5	515
19/20	2	250	6	631

Source: I. O.: P/419/46-56.

but for scarcity of capital in East Africa at this time, and its corollary, high rate of returns. Unable to offer substantial long-term loans to the resident Arab merchants, the Indians had limited economic power to resist "oppression". They complained incessantly about "heavy impositions and exactions of the local authority at Zanzibar" and declared that in collecting the duties on imports the governor was not guided by any invoice prices. He fixed a valuation far below the cost, and while he charged the duty in kind, he took "good care to detain for his own use such articles as are most saleable" at the low price. The total charges, therefore, amounted to 15% on the average, over and above the legal 5% which was paid by the Arabs. The Indians were also subjected to periodic "exactions" but it is significant that out of the demand for 25,000 crowns in 1811, the Indians were asked to pay only 3,500 which they declared they could not bear. By calling in British intervention to protect them from this demand,<sup>39</sup> which was certain to jeopardise the next season's trade, they were betraying a lack of commitment to this trade. It is possible that these Surat vessels were the ones which had formerly traded at Mozambique, and their behaviour points to the primitive commercial system based largely on the "annual voyage", often trading directly from

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38 Hardy, ff. 164-5.

39 Smee (1811a) 492, 503-4, 513. Translation of a Petition from Lalchund Bhy Sajee Saite et al. to Capt. Smee, 31. 3.1811, M. A.: Diary 380/1811, pp. 4878-9.



the vessel. Without a local agency to collect ivory and distribute cotton goods during the off-seasons, they were forced to "winter" in East Africa until September so as to supervise personally all their transactions.<sup>40</sup>

It is probable that at this time the Swahili and the Arabs played a larger role in the trade of East Africa. They dominated the entrepot trade within East Africa, and with the expanding economy there may not have been such an acute struggle between the two communities for a share in that portion of the trade. Albrand comments that the "Moors" viewed with indifference the Arab occupation which hurt neither their rights nor their interests.<sup>41</sup> As late as the 1840s several Swahili merchants of Mafin, close relations of the Mvinyi Mkuu of Zanzibar, were conducting trade on a considerable scale along the coast where they exercised a greater influence with the "black" chiefs than Seyyid Said himself. At Lindi the Swahili governor had even chased out all his Banian and Arab rivals from the trade of the port.<sup>42</sup>

In foreign trade, however, the Swahili were unable to play a significant role. As early as 1775 Morice had

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40 "Memorandum by Sir B Frere regarding Banians or Natives of India in East Africa" FO 84/1391, printed in Correspondence Respecting Sir Bartle Frere's Mission to the East Coast of Africa, 1872-73, Presented to Parliament 1873, p. 99.

41 Albrand, 72-3.

42 Learer, 2/10 (2), "Mondia", "Lindy"; *id.*, 5/23 (1), "Population Commerciale de Zanguebar: Arabe".

remarked that they lacked the capital and large vessels to trade beyond the coastal waters to any great extent. In 1811 Smee reported that this trade was "chiefly in the hands of the Arabs belonging to Muscat ~~and~~ Maculla", and, it should be added, "old Arabs" settled along the coast, such as the Mazruis. As late as the mid-1820s the most prominent merchants at Mombasa were Rashid b. Salim and Salim b. Rashid, one of whom had a capital of \$25,000. Their activities were wide-ranging. They owned several dhows, and apart from their own trading, they transported goods on freight. Apart from their considerable coastal trade, especially to Lamu, Pemba and the Mrima, they traded actively with the Kerimba islands and Mozambique to the south, and Arabia and India in the north. A single dhow belonging to Salim departed in 1824 for Bombay with 556 frasalas of ivory and 337 frasalas of gum copal, and returned the following year with a sizeable consignment of brass wire which was so important in the Kamba trade.<sup>43</sup>

Muscat, in particular, was probably in a position to expand its role as the carrier of trade between India and eastern Africa during the first decade of the nineteenth century. Making full use of its neutrality during the Napoleonic wars, Omani shipping was considerably augmented by the purchase of English prizes at the French ports in the

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43 See p. 70 above. Smee (1811a), 512. P.R.O.: Emery's Journal, entries for 30.9., 20.9. and 7.10.1824; 24.1., 28.2., 3.3., 14.3., 6.6.1825; 27.3.1826.

Mascarenes of Portuguese prizes in East Africa. It was reported in 1803 that the Omni Arabs, "in the course of ten years have increased their tonnage from a number of Dows and Dingeys, and two or three old ships, to upwards of fifty fine ships, of from three to eight hundred tons burthen.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, Indian vessels flocked to Muscat to acquire its neutral flag when the British were no longer able to offer protection to them. Thus it was reported that two of the best Surat vessels formerly employed in the trade with the Persian Gulf had passed into the hands of Muscat Arabs, and one of the prominent shipowners of Surat held 2,000 tons of shipping at Muscat. With this augmented shipping it was claimed that the Arabs had become not only "the carriers of that part of India which lay between the eastern shores of the Bay of Bengal and the western extremities of the two Gulphs", the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, but also the carrying trade between Indian ports, and threatened to capture the lucrative China trade. The main reason advanced for their success was their great competitiveness in freight charges, for it was claimed they could take freight at between a half and a third of what a British ship could.<sup>45</sup>

This, then, was the basis for the economic boom at

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44 I.O.: P/419/40, under "Muscat".

45 I.O.: P/174/16, paras. 60-71; P/174/8, paras. 58-72; id.: P/419/41, paras. 49, 52, 54. Maurizi, 30.

Muscat especially between 1793 and 1806,<sup>46</sup> but the prosperity was deceptive. It was based on a very weak foundation of the coincidence of war which was perhaps <sup>of</sup> /too short a time to allow Omani entrenchment in those fields. With peace came desertion of the Arab flag by Indian vessels, and by 1817 the English prizes under that flag had begun to decay. The boom was even more deceptive when we consider that a large number of Indian vessels remained in the hands of the Indians who were merely acquiring a flag of convenience, and thus it cannot be interpreted as Arab penetration into new fields of trade. In the East African trade, moreover, Indian dhows flying the flags of the semi-independent princedoms of Kutch and Kathiawar may not even have felt the need for the Omani flag.<sup>47</sup> Anglo-French hostilities, therefore, may not have offered more than a limited and temporary advantage in the expansion of their carrier role between India and East Africa.

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46 Gavin, 19-21. He proposes that the slump which followed this boom at Muscat was a major factor in the development of the Omani empire in East Africa since it forced Seyyid Said to turn there to compensate for the decline of Muscat. But clearly this was not an important factor for economic developments in East Africa.

47 I.O.: P/174/28. Shipping to the Gulfs. Smea (1811b), entry for 23.2. and 1.4.1811. Hardy, f. 163. These mention the existence of Indian dhows at Zanzibar, many of which departed by 30th April, but only the square-rigged vessels from Surat and Bhowanagar asked for protection.

It appears, indeed, that when the trade in ivory developed, many of the Arabs were still more intimately tied to the French slave trade. As late as 1809, perhaps the most powerful person at Zanzibar after the governor was Saleh b. Haramil who was closely associated with the French and was himself described as "a perfect Frenchman". Born at Muscat in the 1770s, he had left his homeland at an early age to embark on a life of commerce in the East African waters during which he visited the French colonies at the Seychelles, Ile de <sup>France</sup> and Bourbon. He amassed a great fortune from the trade and was slow or unsuccessful in making the transition from the slave trade with the French after it had been prohibited in 1822. He thus laid himself open to confiscation of his property and died a pauper.<sup>48</sup> Arab attachment to the French slave trade prevented them from participating more fully in the initial stages of the Indian ivory trade, except in the case of Mombasa Arabs who were farther removed from the sources of slaves and who realised that the prosperity of their island depended on ivory. The fact that the <sup>French</sup> slave trade was on a declining curve to virtual extinction in the 1820s had the effect of limiting the Arab role in the total foreign trade of Zanzibar during the next phase which was then being inaugurated. In the new commercial organisation the Arabs had to re-define their role within the economy. It was fortunate for them that in the expanding economy

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<sup>48</sup> See pp. 177-9, below for identification and full biographical details.

several roles developed or expanded to provide them with worthwhile economic riches, such as the expanded entrepot trade, the caravan trade and the clove plantations.<sup>49</sup>

The Indians, on the other hand, were riding on a rising tide of ivory trade. By 1811 there is some evidence that a class of Indian merchants had already begun to emerge which behaved as if it was more permanent. It is significant that while the four square-rigged vessels sought British protection,<sup>50</sup> the dhows from Bombay and Kutch did not. They were probably connected with the "few adventurers from Cutch and the coast of Scinde" resident at Zanzibar who appeared to be wealthy and held "the best part of the trade".<sup>51</sup> It is very likely that these "adventurers" had begun to provide the essential services at the entrepot in the collection and distribution of goods during the off-seasons to permit the Indian dhows to return home with the build-up of the monsoon

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49 See p. 338-42.

50 Smee(1811b), entries for 23.2 and 1.4.1811.

51 Smee (1811a) 494, 512; id. (1811b) "Description". He seems to contradict himself when he says in one place that "a considerable number of Banians ..... reside in the town, many of whom appear to be wealthy and hold the best part of the trade", and elsewhere he says "the trade of this coast is chiefly in the hands of the Arabs ..... and a few adventurers from Cutch and the coast of Scinde". The total number of Indians, nevertheless, must have been smaller than in 1819, when they numbered 214. Albrand, 73.



in April and thus avoid wintering in East Africa. It is this section of the Indians that formed the nucleus around which the present mercantile Indian community developed. They were then on the threshold of defining their economic role which was to characterise them during the rest of the nineteenth century, and assert their influence at Zanzibar consonant with their economic importance. By 1819 the community had grown to 214 individuals, and most probably included the Bhatia family of Sewji Topan of Kutch, the most prominent Indian mercantile family at Zanzibar during the nineteenth century. Albrand does not mention the family specifically, and gives the impression the customs were under the control of an Ethiopian eunuch who was also the governor and who died shortly before his arrival at Zanzibar.<sup>52</sup> In 1842 Hamerton reported that the family had farmed the customs of Zanzibar for 24 years. Seyyid Said may have taken the opportunity after the death of the Ethiopian governor to revert to the previous system under which civil, fiscal and military powers were divided. The customs may, therefore, have passed soon after 1819 into the hands of the Sewji family which was to retain it for more than half a century. By 1827/8 there is undisputable evidence that the family was in control of the customs: Edmund Roberts during his first commercial voyage to Zanzibar conducted most of his

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52 Albrand, 73, 78. S.D., 200. Guillain, II, 49.

trade with the governor of Zanzibar and "Sewar, Banyan Collector of Customs".<sup>53</sup>

The appointment of the Indian to the important post of collector of customs, and the close commercial relationship between him and the Omani governor are eloquent indications of the important economic position the Indian were already enjoying at Zanzibar. It is probable that it was at this time that a process of indigenisation of the Indians was set in motion by which they were placed on the same footing as the most favoured native class of traders. Already by 1828 they were no longer subjected to the irregular duties beyond the 5% duty on imports paid by the Arabs themselves. At a yet undetermined time, perhaps coinciding with the above concession, the Indians were allowed to enter the entrepot traffic and trade on the Mrima from which they, like the French before them, may have been formerly excluded. This was the most guarded privilege granted to native traders and formed a corner-stone on which the Omani commercial empire was constructed. It is worth noting that these concessions had been extracted by Indian traders probably by the exercise

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53 Hamerton to Willoughby, 22.13.1842, M.A.: 55/1843. S.D.: 198. Mohamed b. Sef, governor of Zanzibar, Sewar, Banyan Collector of Customs, in a/c with Edm. Roberts, 10/1827-1/1828. L.C.: Roberts, Papers 5. Hitherto historians have held, following Kirk, that the firm of Wat Bhina was the first to farm the customs at Zanzibar in 1833. Kirk's Administrative Report, Zanzibar, 1870, 18.7.1870, FOCP 1936, p. 18. Mangat (1967) pp. 25-9. The firm may have farmed the customs at Muscat at that date but does not appear to have been prominent at Zanzibar during the first half of the century.

of their own economic strength or by the realisation on the part of Omani authorities that continued harassment of the Indians as in Mozambique, and the restriction of their trade, only had the effect of retarding the growth of trade at Zanzibar. In return the Indians tacitly accepted their status as local citizens by adopting the Omani flag when trading with the *Ukima* coast. This process of indigenisation was more or less complete by the time the British commercial treaty was negotiated or the British Consul appointed.<sup>54</sup> In fact, by that time, they were already supreme in the economy.

Indian economic strength grew out of the growing importance of Indian trade at Zanzibar. Already by 1811 Smee estimated that nearly 50% of the imports at Zanzibar consisted of "Surat cloths" from Kutch and Surat, quite apart from about 50 tons of iron bar, sugar and rice from Bombay, and chinaware and other goods from Surat.<sup>55</sup> In view of the

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54 Roberts to Woodbury, 19.12.1828. L.C.: Roberts Papers, 6. He says that "English vessels pay only 5% import duty ... in consequence of the commercial treaty which exists between England and the Sultan." "English vessels" do not seem to have been trading at Zanzibar in any number at this time, and he is most probably referring to Indian vessels from British India and the Protected States. Moreover, such a commercial treaty was not negotiated until 1839. The Indians were therefore enjoying the 5% import duty without a treaty, while Roberts had to pay 7½% on imports and exports.

55 Smee (1811a) 512. He says that the value of "Surat cloths" was "12 lacs of rupees" which, at the rate of Bombay Rs. 2.20 to the dollar, amounts to about \$545,000. He estimates the total value of imports at about £300,000 which at the rate of 2s. 6d. to the Bombay rupee, amounts to about \$1,100,000. Milburn, I, 173, 198.

increase in the revenue at an annual rate of about 7% between 1804 and 1819,<sup>56</sup> the value of Indian imports would have increased at least at that rate during the period. However, this increase was occurring at a time when, as a result of the Napoleonic wars, the French slave trade, which was also sustained by Indian imports, was being suffocated. It therefore appears that a large part of the goods were imported to pay for the export of ivory, the only other significant branch of the trade, and the growth rate in that branch of the trade must have been very steep indeed.

The growth in Indian trade with the East African coast receives confirmation from a series of accounts of the trade of Kutch which probably dominated it during the early decades of the nineteenth century. In turn it is possible to trace the increasing dominance of the trade of the "Sowahil" or "Swally", as the coast of East Africa was called, in the total trade of Kutch. In view of her considerable trade at the beginning of the century with other parts of India, the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, as well as the whole coastline of Eastern Africa, the imports of ivory and rhinoceros horns and hides from the "Powahil" (sic) in 1818 are mentioned without any superlatives. By 1835 the "Swally" trade was described as "the most valuable branch" of the foreign trade of Kutch. There were up to 20 vessels from the main port of Mandvi involved in the trade whose tonnage generally varied

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<sup>56</sup> See p.101.

between 50 and 70 tons each, but they also included one vessel of over 250 tons. By the mid 1830s, it should be pointed out, Indian trade was already meeting tough competition from American traders as will be shown below, and therefore the growth of Indian trade may already have been arrested, and perhaps even forced to retreat.<sup>57</sup> Before that western India enjoyed a virtual monopoly over the supply of cotton goods to East Africa which probably constituted over 80% of Indian exports if Surat's trade figures are an accurate guide.<sup>58</sup> During this time Indian cloth established its reputation for its quality and durability, and Indian names for various types of cloth passed into Kiswahili, such as Bafta and Kaniki. It was stated that Indians used hand-spun thread which was softer, and though the cloth was less smooth, it was durable. It was admitted by the Reporter-General of the Bombay Presidency that Indian cloth lasted twice as long and cost only half as much as its Manchester competitors.<sup>59</sup> There were three main varieties. Annual exports included about 750 rolls of unbleached plain coarse cotton cloths called Pankoras, and 60 bales of the narrow

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57 MacMurdo, 218. Gazeteer of the Bombay Presidency (hereafter By. Gazeteer) V, 117-9. Leach, 44-6. Burns (1934), 27. Postans, 169-70.

58 See graph III a.

59 Capen, III, 299. I.O.: F/419/60. Para. 46.

coarse black Kaniki which were both re-exports from Marwar. The trade, however, rested on Sarah Kupra, a great variety of dark coloured cloths, manufactured at Mandavie, of which 950 bales were annually exported. The total value at Zanzibar of cotton good exported to the African coast in 1839 amounted to between £250,000 and £300,000. It is a measure of the predominance of Kutch in Indian trade with the African coast that the comparable figure for Bombay and Surat combined during the first four decades of the nineteenth century was an average of £75,000 only.<sup>60</sup>

The direct counter-part of cotton goods in the imports of Kutch from the African coast was ivory though, as a luxury, its proportion in the total imports varied from 25% to 92% according to local economic conditions. In the late 1830s Kutch alone imported about 100 tons of it whose value at Zanzibar was computed at between £190,000 and £230,000, though by this time a large part of Bombay's imports were being diverted from the local market to the international one, primarily London. Ivory intended for internal consumption in India passed from the ports into the interior, especially Marwar, Gujarat and Rajputana where demand was widespread.<sup>61</sup>

In India much of the ivory was probably used in the

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60 Postans, 171-3. See graph IIIa.

61 Ibid. . 173. See graph IIIb.



production of bangles which, in several regions, were considered indispensable to both Hindu and Muslim women during marriage festivities. On such occasions it was the "inviolable duty" of the bride's maternal uncle, or in some areas, of the bridegroom, to present the bride with a set of ivory bangles. Such sets may consist of a pair or as many as a hundred bangles reaching from the elbow down to the wrist. After the wedding the ivory sets were often put away, as much as the modern bridal dress, to be replaced with silver ones for common use, though in certain parts they were worn at other occasions as well. The majority of Hindu women, it was claimed at the beginning of this century, hardly considered their trousseau complete without two or three sets. The use of ivory, moreover, was not restricted to the well-to-do. Smaller sets, costing between five and fifteen rupees, were worn by almost all Hindu lower classes. The wealthier classes had theirs covered outside with thin sheets of gold or silver. These bangles were exclusively the adornments of marriage and married life, and did not survive, in Hindu life, the termination of that state by death of either partner. In the days of suttee, the widow followed her departed husband with her bridal ornaments. After the suttee was abolished, the ivory bangles were, nevertheless, broken, for they cannot be used again. If the wife died first her ornaments were cremated with the body.

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62 Ellis, 46, 50. Burns, 50. Freeman-Grenville (1962b) 25.

This incredible "waste" sustained a steady demand for ivory in India. Asian elephants are poorly provided with ivory, and since few wild elephants were hunted for their ivory, the limited quantity that was available was obtained after the natural death of this long-lived animal. Moreover, Asian tusks tended to be smaller and less suitable for bangle production. Asian ivory is tinged with red, generally "hard" and brittle. It is more open in texture, easier to work but difficult to polish. When newly cut it appears more like African ivory which has been long exposed to the air, and tends to become yellow by exposure. The "soft" variety which comes from the eastern half of Africa, when recently cut is of a yellow warm "transparent" tint, due to the presence of a considerable amount of oil. It has scarcely any appearance of grain or molting. It is closer in grain, not so liable to warp or split as Indian ivory, and polishes much better. For these reasons African ivory had entered the Asian market at least by the tenth century and it maintained its position almost to the present day.<sup>63</sup>

So long as East Africa's external trade was dominated by its Indian branch both for exports and imports, and these in turn by single commodities, one of which was, moreover,

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(1911),  
 63 Encyclopaedia Britannica /XV, 92. Owen, 65-66. Letters from M.H. Sheriff, a former ivory merchant at Zanzibar, dated 23.2.1965, 19.2 and 6.4.1966.

a luxury, a great element of instability was introduced into the economy. During the first three decades of the nineteenth century East Africa had limited options open to it either in the disposal of its ivory or in the acquisition of cotton goods in return, not only for the ivory, but also for the slaves in demand in the north and in the Mascarenes. The most crucial single element of instability was perhaps the occurrence of natural disasters in either the producing or consuming region of either commodity. Famines in East Africa undoubtedly had a great influence though we have no means to measure the extent. For India we are fortunate in having a continuing series of trade figures for a small but representative portion of its trade with the east coast of Africa, and other supporting evidence enables us to speculate more precisely on the periods of crisis, their severity and influence.

Kutch and Gujarat, the main source of Indian cloth and market for East African ivory during the first four decades of the century, were unfortunately subject to extreme variability of rainfall, which was marginal in any case. The average for Bhuj, the inland capital of Kutch is about 14 inches, but between 1848 and 1878 it varied between 0.1 and 40.3 inches. Drought or unseasonable rainfall, accompanied as they often were by locusts, made life in Kutch precarious. "The saying is that a famine comes every ten years." Thus, in 1803, a scarcity caused by locusts was in the next season

followed by a failure of rainfall, and large numbers of people temporarily migrated to Sind. In 1813 came "the fiercest and most destructive famine on record". Food prices increased five-fold. Many, it was stated, sold their children for food, and even human flesh was eaten. Nearly half the population was said to have perished, partly as a result of pestilence, including the Rao or ruler of Kutch. The famine affected not only Kutch but also Gujarat and Marwar. Locusts had appeared in Marwar in 1811 when rainfall also failed. They drove the inhabitants into Gujarat where the locusts followed them, and into Kathiawar. In 1812 rains failed in Gujarat and Kathiawar as well. As late as 1815 Kathiawar was still in a "distressed state", having suffered from three years of poor harvest. No wonder that in 1814/15, grains and coconuts accounted for over 60% of the imports from the coast of Africa to the Kathiawar port of Bhownagar, overthrowing the normal predominance of ivory. Ignoring the period of more scarcities, the above description could be repeated, with varying emphasis, for the "severe famines" of 1823 to 1825, 1833/4 and so on.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> By. Gazetteer, V, 18, 107-8, 156, 269. Garnac, 296-303. I.O.: P/419/49, para. 2; id., P/419/51, para. 2; ibid., P/419/51-4. Trade of Bhownagar, Extr. from the Proceedings of the Government in the Pol. Dept., 28.10.1830, N.A.I.: 26.11.1830 - P.C. - 5. By. Govt. to Court of Directors, 8.11.1831; N.A.I.: By. Pol. Despatches to Court of Directors, 31/1831; s. to s. 9.1.1833., ibid., 2/1833, p. 16; s. to s. 10.12.1833, ibid., 37/1833, paras. 1-6.

Famines had an obvious and direct effect on the production of cotton and Indian-manufactured cloth on which East Africa at this time depended. It was noted in the study of the later Indian famines that those most affected by famines were the landless village labourers, the cultivators and, significantly, the weavers. The other side of the same coin was a reduction in purchasing power, even for necessities of life, let alone luxuries like ivory bangles and combs, during these periods of extreme privations, high mortality and emigration. Moreover, economic dislocation as a result of famines, coupled with the banditry and piracy which naturally increased at these times, greatly disrupted the trade. It is not surprising, therefore, to see a very marked dip during the period of Indian famines, in the trade between the African coast and the British Indian ports of Surat and Bombay. The imports of ivory into these ports declined from a peak of about Rs. 327,000 in 1809/10 to a mere Rs. 82,000 in 1813/14, a 75% reduction. The curve of the total imports from the African coast for the latter year is greatly disfigured, significantly, by an unusually large importation of bullion, constituting 57% of the total, whereas in the former year it formed only 15% of the total imports, probably because the famine had slashed the market for ivory. That it was the demand rather than the supply of ivory that had faltered is shown by the sharp reduction in the price of ivory at this time. A

similarly marked dip occurs in the export graph showing a faltering in the supply of cotton goods and the nadir is reached, in fact, a season before that in the import curve.<sup>65</sup>

The obvious, if partial, solution to the great instability in Indo-African trade was the diversification of the sources of supply of cotton goods and the markets for African ivory. India attempted, and to an extent succeeded, in stabilising the trade and retaining her share in it by re-exporting ivory. When the total English demand for ivory jumped from an average of about 135 tons between 1814 and 1819 to over 200 tons for the period 1820/26, India attempted to supply that demand through Bombay. Indian supply of ivory to the English market jumped correspondingly from 10 tons to over 60 tons. However, this was not an unqualified bonus. Though it brought profit to the merchants of Bombay, the inevitable competition between Indian and English markets for ivory gradually raised the price of ivory above the level which the poorer Indians could afford. The Indian market thus shrunk and ivory was initially merely diverted to the external market without any immediate absolute increase in Indian imports of ivory from East Africa.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, Bombay's position in the trade was vulnerable since the

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65 By. Govt. to Court of Directors, 9.1.1833, N.A.I.: By. Pol. Despatches to the Court of Directors, 2/1833, p. 16. Bhatia, 1-16. By. Gazetteer, V, 156. See graphs II & IIIb.

66 See graphs II & IIIb.



system of trade could be short-circuited by direct entry of English merchants at Zanzibar, as happened intermittently in the 1830s and 1840s. As far as the supply of cotton goods is concerned, cloth manufacturers of Kutch tried to reduce their utter dependence on local cotton by using English yarn. Bombay also began to import English cotton goods on a very large scale by the 1820s, some of which may have been channelled to satisfy East African demand. India's position, however, remained as vulnerable. The Americans were even more successful in short-circuiting the system by directly supplying Zanzibar with their famous "Merekani" from the 1830s.<sup>67</sup>

While the volume of Indo-African trade seemed to remain steady, and later even increase, serious dislocations had occurred by the 1830s to diminish greatly the advantages accruing to India. There is no better illustration of the changes that had occurred than the less catastrophic effect the famine of 1833-35 had on the trade curves. Thus, East Africa derived two clear advantages from these changes, the greater stabilisation of its foreign trade and the more favourable balance of trade. While the price of its ivory increased as a result of competition between English, Indian, and ultimately American, demand, the price of cotton goods probably decreased when the rapidly expanding European and

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67 See pp.230, 365 below. Bahtia, 16. Dutt, 183, 209-11.

American supply of machine-made cotton goods competed with hand-woven Indian cloth.<sup>68</sup>

The Indians were thus under the influence of two conflicting rhythms of economic life, that of the stagnant or declining Indian influence in the East African trade, and that of the rising prosperity in East Africa as other foreign merchants traded directly at Zanzibar and thus expanded the trade. Both of these rhythms contributed to Indian settlements in East Africa.

The general aridity of Kutch made her dependent for nearly half her normal food requirements on imports in return for her cotton manufactures. Foreign trade, therefore, formed a regular and significant part of her economic life. Poverty of economic life at home conditioned her people to a hardier life and perhaps imbued them with "quasi-Protestant ethics". They had a strong commercial sense, capacity to work long hours, low propensity to consume, and therefore, an ability to accumulate capital rapidly in more favourable circumstances. It also conditioned them to migration, for varying degrees of permanence, to improve their economic position. Some of the migration was rather local, shifting between one Indian region and another. These shifts were naturally at their peak during periods of famine, and although some returned after the scarcities had passed, nearly half

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68 See graph IIIa, and pp.217, 267 below.

never came back.<sup>69</sup> Kirk believed that the failure of Indian cotton manufacturing to compete with Manchester was the chief cause of increasing Indian migration to Zanzibar,<sup>70</sup> but the connection may not have been direct. They may have initially trickled into the major towns and ports, or flooded into them during famines. Some of these, after an initiation into an urban and commercial life may have eventually joined the stream of migration to foreign countries, including East Africa. This may explain why rural memories are strong among the oldest Indian immigrants, as Morris has emphasised. Without the initiation period in the ports it is hard to explain how agriculturists are transformed into traders, a transformation so complete that hardly any Indian in East Africa took to agriculture. Indian famines thus constituted an important, though indirect, "push" factor in Indian migration to East Africa. The migrants were not furnished refugees for they needed at least to pay for their fare to East Africa, and needed some capital to get established or trading skill to find employment with an established firm.

However, it was the rhythm of the expanding East African economy which was to be the determining factor in the growth

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69 MacMurdo, 225. Ev. Gazetteer, 103, 150, 173-6. Ghai, 103.

70 Kirk's Administrative Report, Zanzibar, 1870. 18.7. 1870, FOCP, 1936. Colomb, 367.

and prosperity of the community. The 25% interest rate at Zanzibar in 1811 perhaps accurately portrays the handsome returns to be expected from a commercial outlay in East Africa, and it constituted a powerful "pull" factor in Indian migration to East Africa. East Africa's fame may have spread widely in Kutch as an "Eldorado", and attracted men of some capital to migrate there. There is a tradition among Khojas in East Africa that the early Aga Khans actively encouraged some of their followers to migrate to East Africa. It is there that most of the Indians probably made much of their capital through their low consumption, and, from 1830 on, with the help of the six month loan of goods American merchants were forced to grant them.<sup>71</sup> The extent to which they had been indigenised and had freed themselves from the narrower, more specifically Indian, economic forces made them increasingly immune to the vicissitudes of the Indian branch of the trade and in harmony with East African forces.

### 3. The Expansion of the Northern Hinterland

The evolution of the Indian mercantile community was a by-product of the growth of Indian trade at Zanzibar as a result of failure of the Mozambique supply of ivory. The other important consequence of that failure was the expansion of the hinterland to the north of Cape Delgado. The deep hinterland behind Kilwa which had been developed to supply

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71 Walji, 31. See pp. 244-5, 346-7.

the Omani and French demand for slaves was probably exploited for its ivory resources as well but, as Smee and Hardy reported in 1811, the ports of southern Tanzania still exported slaves mainly, and only a "small quantity of ivory". The description of the extent of the hinterland of Kilwa given by Hardy in 1811, though vague, seems to correspond with that given by Morice in 1775. Trade routes from the southern Tanzanian ports extended through the countries of the Ngindo, Matumbi and the Yao to the "Black Mountains", 45 days' march into the interior. These may well be the mountains skirting the eastern shore of Lake Nyasa. The lake itself is not mentioned, but the reference to two islands in a river is reminiscent of Morice's similar confusion. There is a strong possibility that the lake is intended, especially when these details are taken in conjunction with the names of the tribes living around it. They are the "Menjoge" (Manganja?), the "Maslungo", the "Jagomanjer" and the "Besar" (Bisa?).<sup>72</sup> While the hinterland may not have further expanded, the evidence from Lacerda and others from the other end of the trade route would seem to suggest a diversion of ivory to Kilwa where, in view of the decline of the French slave trade during the Napoleonic wars, it appeared to Prior to have been an important commodity in 1812.<sup>73</sup>

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72 See pp. 62-4. Hardy, ff.194-5.

73 See p. 97-8. S.D., 210

Further north, apart from penetration along natural corridors at various times, there is little evidence of direct long distance contact between the coast and the interior before the nineteenth century. We might recall the "Nyika" belt which runs closely behind the coastal belt in Kenya but is more broken and recedes farther into the interior southwards into Tanzania. Some time during the second half of the eighteenth century, however, there is some evidence of such contact in oral tradition which refers to imported chinaware in Buganda.<sup>74</sup> A recent hypothesis attempts to explain the filtration of specific exotic objects over long distances by postulating a series of regional trading networks in the interior. These developed as a result of unequal distribution of commodities useful to a subsistence economy, such as iron and salt. Under specific stimuli these networks might be linked to provide a framework within which not only exotic objects, but also the knowledge of demand, or taste, for commodities throughout the region could spread. The framework could permit the transmission of commodities for trade, rather than merely as an exchange of exceptional gifts, in the form of "relay" from one network to another. It could also stimulate direct long-distance trade as apparently in the case of the Yao. The Cisi smiths are said to have come across imported calico

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74 Freeman-Grenville and Oliver in *HEA*, 153, 190. The former gives Kyabugu's dates as c. 1763-80. Tosh, in *PAT*, 111, gives Kiwanuka's dating as 1744-71 (-36).



in a district nearer the coast while peddling their hoes, and proceeded to the coast to procure it directly.<sup>75</sup> Presumably they simultaneously realised the demand at the coast for slaves and ivory to pay for the cloth. The hypothesis as presented above is neutral as far as the source of initiative in linking these networks is concerned, and we shall try to test the hypothesis as well as Alper's pronouncement that "long distance trade routes ... were established exclusively through African initiative."<sup>76</sup>

The above-mentioned recession of the "Nyika" in Tanzania implies a progressive enlargement of the potential immediate hinterland extending as far as the broken chain of mountain from Usambara to Usagara and the "Nyika" belt of the Masai Steppe and Ugogo beyond it. Within this maritime region a series of trading networks centered around the coastal towns probably developed during the eighteenth century when there seems to have been a recrudescence of urban development along the coast. By 1811 there were about ten such towns between Pangani and Mbwamaji alone. It is not unreasonable to assume that in view of the lack of an unsurmountable natural barrier these towns could easily develop a number of short distance trade routes as far as the chain of mountains when demand for commodities procurable from the hinterland

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75 Alpers (1969) 43-4. Roberts (1970) 43, 45-7. I have modified and amplified the thesis.

76 Alpers (1967) 13.

appeared at the coast. Sadani appears to have been ringed by the Doe ("Minduah" or "Maddoa") who have the reputation of being cannibalistic in almost all the existing sources. According to Hardy coastal traders were "obliged to fight their way through" to the Zigua ("Zugua") country where "a large trade" was carried on for ivory, slaves and cattle in exchange for Indian cotton goods and metals.<sup>77</sup> Coastal initiative in this case is obvious, at least as far as the mountain chain.

Further south a constant exchange was maintained with the "Mrima" tribes for the exchange of grain in return for Indian cloth. The Zaramo ("Whoserungo" or "Whosameah") are mentioned for the first time as inhabiting the country about seven days' march in the interior. Little is said about their commercial relations with the coast, but at least one of the two routes, extending from the unnamed town near the mouth of the Ruvu which was probably Bagamoyo, must have passed through their country. Hardy obtained two itineraries from two brothers who traded along these routes and who died at Zanzibar while Hardy was still there. The supposition that they were Swahili is therefore reasonable. Moreover, the itineraries are more detailed in the coastward section, at least as far as the chain of mountains, suggesting a coastal base for the routes, though there are also a couple of hints

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77 Hardy, ff. 188-91. Smee (1811b) entry for 7.4.1811. S.D., 238.

which would support a proposition that traders from the interior were also by this time trading at the coast. Though most of the "place-names" on the itineraries are not easily recognizable, at least some of the tribes traversed fortunately are.<sup>78</sup> This first literary evidence of long distance trade routes between the coast and the interior deserves careful examination to determine as far as possible their direction and the initiative that led to their establishment.

One of the routes seems to extend in a south-westerly direction through the Kutu ("Kacote") country and then along the Ruaha ("Luaha") into the Hehe ("Whohabah") country. The route followed seems to correspond to the one leading to Isanga on the Kimbu eastern border which Speke calls the "old caravan route to Ujiji" on his map,<sup>79</sup> though the terminus of the route at "Gugu" which was reached after 45 days cannot yet be identified. This appears to have been the first route of coastal penetration into the interior and Isanga was reached some time before 1825. This route did not seem to have had to contend with any overwhelming natural obstacle since it skirted the Sagara along the pass formed by the Ruaha, and it also avoided the Gogo region which suffered so much from drought and scarcities. The

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78 Hardy, ff. 178-82.

79 Speke (1863) map

route does appear to be more detailed for the Kutu country in which a place-name is given for every two and a third days' journey on an average, while the stations beyond are placed on an average every twelve and a half days' apart.<sup>80</sup>

Who pioneered the route? The area has not been studied in detail but it may be proposed that the regional trading network in the coastal region may have been linked with the one to the west of Usagara by a particular mechanism such as the migrations reported by Shorter from Usagara to Ukimbu or a system of "relay" or "filtration" by which the conus-shells, used as chiefly emblems, and therefore not likely to constitute a massive trade, reached the interior. Shorter holds that the Nyitumba Kimbu pioneered the route linking the mountain chain with Ukimbu, but he does not propose either that they were in direct contact with coast before the early nineteenth century or that they acted as middlemen

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80 Hardy, f. 180. The "towns" along the route, their distance and the names of the tribes inhabiting them, as given by him, are:

Mas du ras su	3	Macote	[Kutu]
Changogo	5	"	"
Toon doon gush	7	"	"
Eaturne	10	"	"
Ganger	14	"	"
Luerra	20	"	"
Wlio Luaha	[Ruhu] 32	Whohahah	[Hehe]
Gugu	45	"	"

in the trade between the coast and Unyamwezi.<sup>81</sup> It is therefore possible to argue that once the increased demand for ivory began to be felt along the coast from about 1800, that knowledge spread rapidly through the coastal hinterland and along the proposed Nyitumba route. Since the Kimbu did not play a middleman's role in the trade, the fact that markets were established at Isantga and Isengi on the eastern Kimbu border some time before 1825 would seem to suggest that coastal traders came upon the Kimbu before they could extend their trade to the coast. According to Burton, these centres:

"were the great terminal of the Arab  
trade before it extended throughout

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81 Shorter's note in *F.A.T.*, 228-9. From his researches Usagara emerges as a dispersal centre for several "waves" of migration to central Tanzania, the earliest dating to the early eighteenth century. He is almost certainly wrong in ascribing these migrations, following Mónica Wilson, to slave raiding. Wilson may have based her speculation on Coupland. For one of the last waves Shorter asserts that "the specific motive for which the Igulwibi people say they entered their countries was elephant hunting", but this factor seems to refer only to that part of the migration from Irumba where they "may have learnt of the value of ivory .... from traders using the central route", which is discussed below. Alpers had seized on this attractive hypothesis to suggest that the coast was linked with central Tanzania by this economically motivated migration from Usagara, which can no longer be maintained. Shorter (1968a) 367; (1968b) 100, 105-6.

Unyamwezi in 1830-35 .... At Usanga and its adjoining district, in those early days of exploration, the Arabs and the coast merchants met the caravans from Unyamwezi bringing with them the slaves and ivory collected from the inner countries."<sup>82</sup>

Elsewhere Burton mentions that this penetration of Unyamwezi was initiated in 1825 by the Indian trader "Musa Mzuri".<sup>83</sup> Along this route, therefore, the demand for ivory seems to have sustained coastal commercial initiative as far as the eastern border of the Nyanwezi trading network where it met its counterpart similarly responding to that initiative. Soon thereafter the coastal route extended into central Unyamwezi. In 1831 Lief b. Said travelled from Isanga/Isenga to Itumba, Ugunda, Usagusi even as far as Lake Tanganyika across which, he says, there was "a great trade in ivory ... and slaves" with the Guha on the western bank.<sup>84</sup> The rapidity of coastal penetration from 1825 would suggest a well-developed Nyanwezi network which had already inculcated the

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82 Burton (1859) 300.

83 Burton (1860) II, 223-4.

84 Macqueen (1845) 371-3. Cooley (1845) 206-7; (1854) 53-60. He gives the itinerary of "an aged Arab merchant of Zanzibar", Muhammed b. Nasur, which apparently extended as far as Uha, about four days from the Lake.



necessary attitude to trade, and taste for imported goods, as well as providing the organisation for the production of ivory.

Roberts argues that this regional trading network had developed to supply commodities of immediate usefulness in the subsistence economy. Iron and salt of good quality were procurable from a limited number of locations, and he has "inferred" that a trade in such necessities "is likely to be relatively long-established". He goes further in suggesting that Nyanwezi long-distance trade grew out of this regional system which permitted the accumulation of commodities such as ivory as a by-product, and which produced as it were, the capital to finance long-distance trade. The precise relation between the two systems is not very clear. The localised resources of iron and salt would appear to have given rise to more or less exclusive specialist classes, while hunting of the more mobile and widespread elephants and long-distance trade were fitted into the agricultural cycle as part-time activities. It is likely that the more important role of the regional trade in stimulating long-distance trade was in transmitting information about the demand of the new commodities to the rest of the society and, in some cases, triggering the vital linkage between two trading systems. The Yao case already discussed, and the visit to the coast of a couple of Nyanwezi while peddling their iron hoes could have served the function as in the latter case it is stated to have led

to trade in ivory.<sup>85</sup>

It is not known exactly when Nyamwezi contact with the coast was established. The earliest evidence seems to be the reference to a Nyamwezi trader at Zanzibar, Lief b. Said, who was born there in c. 1805. His Islamic name may suggest slave parentage though he himself may have been a freedman. Some Nyamwezi ("Monnamoojee" or "Monnug") slaves were found in the cargo of a slaver, probably French, captured in 1810 by "Sir Edward Hughes" Indiaman.<sup>86</sup> It is from Smee and Hardy, however, that we get evidence of Nyamwezi trade primarily in ivory; though slaves also figure. Smee says that the "Meeamizee" country, at three months' distance, abounded in elephants' teeth.<sup>87</sup> Hardy, in describing the other or "western" trade route from Bagamoyo says that it is called the "Condohee" branch by the "Manna-wa-sees", probably a reference to the Mkondon branch of the river Wami which forms a gap in the chain of mountains and which the modern railway follows west of Kilosa. It is likely that the informant was not a fresh slave but probably a Nyamwezi merchant. This supposition receives some confirmation from the fact

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85 Roberts (1970) 42-7, 51-2, 65, 68.

86 Macqueen (1845) 371. There seems to be a typographical error in the first letter of the first name, Sief or Saif is more likely than Kulaf as suggested by Burton (1860) II, 56. In 1845 he was stated to be about 40 years old. Smee (1811b) Document 5 in Smee's Sailing Orders, "List of different tribes composing the cargo of slaves taken by Sir Edward Hughes Indiaman".

87 Smee (1811a) 510.

that the second itinerary seems to be detailed only as far as Usagara ("Meshuggaru") showing, perhaps, the limit of coastal penetration at this time. The region beyond is stated to be inhabited by the "Man na Uau" tribe as far as two lakes called Wangarah and Zawarah, about 28 days apart. In the latter lake there was said to be "a high rocky hill with a few trees on it" which might well refer to Ukerewe island which was conspicuous enough to give its name to Lake Victoria in the early missionary accounts at the coast.<sup>88</sup> The two lakes, taken conjointly, suggest a strong possibility that they refer to Lakes Victoria and Tanganyika as the only major bodies of water in the region likely to attract attention at the coast.

It appears most probable that this northern route which had to traverse the "Niyika" region of Ugozo was pioneered by Nyamwezi traders from the interior, perhaps during the first decade of the nineteenth century. By this time the "filtration" of foreign objects to Buganda may have begun to stimulate a significant response. According to Ganda traditions Kabaka Semakokiro (c. 1797-1814) employed an army of

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88 Hardy, ff. 178-81. The "Meshuggaru" [?Zigu?] tribe is mentioned for the first eight stations: Moharrer (on coast), Luare (seven days), M. Bihe (10 days), Ma Sorti (12 days), Masuah (14 days), Engure (19 days), Corsah (21 days), Kasanga (24 days), Oharne (25 days, tribe Macarne), Kanon (27 days, Kingare), Shuarpangu (30 days, Shuarpangu), Rugu (36 days, Ruga), Meambo (39 days, Meshuggaru - [?Sagaru?]). The ninth station can be identified with Ocum in Cooley's map, the 11th with Shipanga, and the 13th with Wiombo, just east of Usagara. Cooley (1845) map. Macqueen (1860) map

hunters to obtain ivory which he traded down the western shores of Lake Victoria for cloth and cowrie-shells. Ganda expansion in this region has, in fact, been ascribed to the desire to monopolise this long-distance trade.<sup>89</sup> The rapidity with which the increase in the demand for ivory at the coast began to stimulate trade as far as Buganda would seem to suggest the pre-existence of regional networks, some of which may have begun to establish informal links, such as the exchange of gifts, even before the demand for ivory appeared. Unfortunately the process by which the trade routes to the coast were established is somewhat obscure. Oral traditions seem to remember perhaps only the more illustrious successors of the real pioneers. Traditions collected by Roberts give credit to Mpalangombe and Ngogomi, unsuccessful claimants to Usugusi chiefship, whose adventure has been dated to 1830.<sup>90</sup> Sumbwa traditions speak of Kafuku as "a great merchant, and a ... caravan leader, (who) when traversing Ugogo with some thousands of followers" got embroiled in a skirmish and was killed. Burton dates the incident to "within the memory of man", and elsewhere, to "about one generation ago", therefore probably not before 1830.<sup>91</sup> By then, however, Nyanwezi trade considering Kafuku's "thousands of followers", was already

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89 HBA, 153, 191. Tosh, 111.

90 Roberts (1970) 49.

91 Ibid. Burton (1860) I, 263, 307.

well-developed. Coastal penetration along this route did not take place until c. 1825 when Sayf b. Saïd al Muamiri pioneered it.<sup>92</sup> Sangu eruptions and disruption of the southern route forced coastal traders to the Ugogo route in the 1840s, and thereafter both Nyanwezi and coastal traders used that route along which the former seemed to predominate even by the late 1850s.<sup>93</sup>

As we have seen the Pangani River and the adjoining series of mountains from Usambara to Kilimanjaro and Meru forms a natural corridor into the interior, almost bisecting the "Nyika" belt. The early history of its commercial contacts with the coast is unfortunately shrouded in obscurity. Baxter asserts that by the early eighteenth century Arabs were settled for at least 25 miles up the Pangani, but unfortunately he does not cite his sources.<sup>94</sup> This is not unlikely, for in the absence of major natural obstacle, coastal traders might have responded to the demand for slaves or ivory to advance up the corridor, and the distance penetrated by that date is fairly modest. The first significant literary source is Hardy's report of 1811 by which time coastal penetration may have proceeded as far as Kilimanjaro. At three days' distance from the coast there was a "very large town"

92 Burton, (1972), II, 292.

93 St. John, (1970) 214. Burton (1860) I, 341. See p. 386

92 Burton, (1972), II, 292.

93 St. John, (1970) 214. Burton (1860) I, 341. See p. 386 below.

94 Baxter, 21.

of the Sambara called "Rezoungo" which appears as "Kisungu" on Wakefield's map, situated on the Pangani and at the foot of the Sambara mountains. It is probably to be identified with the modern Kwasunga near Korogwe, about fifty miles from the coast. The items of trade were ivory and slaves, given in that order in exchange for metal wire and "very few coarse cloths". The route extended beyond that point along the river for twenty seven more days to "Gazitae" where, as Hardy significantly says, "it becomes thick with woods and bushes, which prevents its source from being known to the Traders" (my italics). This is, therefore a clear indication of commercial penetration. "Gazitae", appearing as "Gazita" in Cooley's map above the Sambara, should be identified with Rebmann's "Kaptei" inscribed just north of Kilimanjaro, and described as "native country of the Wakuafi".<sup>95</sup> The missionary visited the mountain and his information is likely to be fairly reliable. However, in view of the running battles between the Kwavi or Iloikop and their Masai cousins, and the progressive displacement and dispersion of the former, the precise location is uncertain except that it should be near Kilimanjaro where the Pangani rises.

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95 Hardy, ff. 186-9. Wakefield (1870) map. Cooley (1845) map; (1854) 75. In the latter Cooley says Vuga was the capital of Kazita, showing a confusion with Usambara. His informant, Khamis b. Uthman, does not seem to be reliable as Cooley himself suspected (*ibid.*, 56). He probably never was in the interior. Rebmann's map is reproduced in Stahl, opp. p. 12.



Lamphear has attempted to link the development of trade along this corridor with the expansion of the Kilindi kingdom in Usambara, even calling it a "commercially oriented kingdom". Perhaps the strongest evidence adduced is the fact that the kingdom expanded towards the coast during the reign of Shebuge (c. 1800-1820) who is said to have visited a hill near the coast to trade with coastal merchants. In consequence of the co-existence of the Shambala kingdom and the Omani commercial empire a sort of dyarchy was evolved for the Mrima towns of Pangani and Tanga in the reigns of Kimwari and Seyyid Said. The Diwans of those places were said to be Kimwari's appointees who, however, had to be confirmed by the Sultan of Zanzibar. These towns paid an apparently nominal tribute every two or three years.<sup>96</sup> That the kingdom had an interest in the developing trade with the coast cannot be denied, whether it was conducted at the foot of the mountains, or in the form of a royal consignment of ivory, which may have been received as tribute within the kingdom, to the coast to be exchanged for imported goods, beads and metals, and perhaps guns later on.<sup>97</sup> Recent field

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96 Lamphear, 93-4. Krupf (1860) 369, 382-3, 396, 416-7.

97 In 1825 it was reported that "800 frangals of ivory had been brought into Marema by the inland natives". The extent of the Mrima is discussed on p. 316-7. The report may be referring to southern Mrima which was already the terminus of the routes from Unyamwezi, and which was more likely to receive such large caravans. F.R.O. Emery's Journal, entry for 17.9.1825.

research, however, seems to suggest that the generally self-sufficient population on mountain blocks were involved in only a limited amount of inter-regional trade, and for the most part were content to trade with coastal traders at the foot of their mountains.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, with the centralised form of government and royal monopoly<sup>over</sup> trade, there was little scope for commercial initiative except in royal trade. On the other hand, the security in such a centralised state, and the apparent lack of attempt to restrict Swahili trade permitted the Swahili to conduct a substantial trade along the corridor. If anything, the conclusion from field research seems to be that when trade emerged as a significant political factor in the history of the corridor after the death of Kimweri, it caused a shift of the centre of political power from the mountains to the Pangani valley.<sup>99</sup>

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98 Fierman, in Roberts (ed) (1968), pp.

99 Lamphear, 93, further suggests that the kingdom may have expanded "to include the easiest avenue" to Unyamwezi, following Shorter's suggestion that Sumbwa caravans were beginning to journey to the northern coast of Tanzania at approximately the same time as Shebuge's expansion. Apparently, this supposition is based on Krapf's speculation that an early route from Unyamwezi ran along the Ruvu River by which name the upper reaches of the Pangani are known. But the name is common, and refers also to the river with its mouth at Bagumoyo which the main routes followed. Cooley doubts Krapf's information and there is no other evidence to confirm it, though a route did later develop as far as Ngorongoro to the west of Arusha, and another more north-westerly one to Kavirodo, neither of which seemed to have linked up with the Nyamwezi routes. Cooley (1854) 55, 79. The dynastic history of Usambara, Habari za Ukilindi, is singularly silent on this subject, perhaps

The corridor had a side door opening on to the Uмба plains north of Usambara, linking it with the northern Krima ports of Wasin and Tanga. Hardy adds a very significant detail that these ports traded only with the people of Mombasa who exchanged coarse cloth and iron wire for ivory and rhinoceros hides.<sup>100</sup> Before the development of Kamba trade, therefore, Mombasa's trade with the northern Krima ports assumed a special significance in the deepening struggle between Mombasa, anxious to retain control over an adequate hinterland, and Zanzibar which sought to break the power of its rival. The Omani conquest of the Krima by 1825 and their refusal to allow Mombasa merchants to trade there<sup>101</sup> may have cut off their initiative for the penetration into the interior of Kenya by the back door, via the Pangani corridor. The development of Kamba trade to Mombasa during the first quarter of the nineteenth century further postponed that initiative until after the absorption of Mombasa into the Omani commercial empire. With the first signs that the Kamba were faltering, the Swahili could revive that initiative to penetrate into the interior and capture some of the Kamba trade.

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reflecting the dynasty's non-commercial preoccupations. Abdallah b. Bemedi l'Ajjemy, *The Kilindi*, ed. and tr. by J. W. T. Allen (Nairobi, 1963).

100 Hardy, p. 138.

101 F.R.O.: Emery's Journal, entry for 14.3.1825.

The increasing Kwavi, Masai and Galla incursion into the "Nyika" determined that Swahili advance should be along the convenient and well-known corridor, at least initially.<sup>102</sup>

The hinterland of Mombasa provides the clearest case in which geography posed a substantial barrier to expansion of the hinterland. It is here that the wedge of Nyika wilderness, the least densely populated belt in Kenya of at least thirty miles width, most sharply separates the narrow coastal belt from the highlands of the interior. Mombasa owed its medieval prosperity not to the exploitation of a vast hinterland, but to its location as a convenient port for Indian vessels in a commercial system based on the Sofala trade.<sup>103</sup> The detachment of Sofala and the simultaneous assumption by the Portuguese of the role as India's supplier of ivory robbed Mombasa of its entrepot role. During the century of direct rule at Mombasa the Portuguese may have attempted to develop the hinterland but the fact that they continually had to bribe the tribes in the immediate hinterland to prevent them from raiding the island shows that a stable and sound economic relationship had not yet been evolved. Hindered by the Nyika wilderness, Mombasa could initially expand mainly its maritime hinterland when new economic opportunities arose: thus her active maritime trade

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102 Lamphear, 97-8.

103 Morgan and Shaffer, 10-11. Datoe and Sheriff, passim.

to Mongalo and even Mozambique grew at times during the eighteenth century.<sup>104</sup>

Simultaneously, however, a more positive relationship was developed between Mombasa and the Nyika tribesmen in the immediate hinterland. It is probable that, freed once more of Portuguese over-rule, Mombasa began exploiting the coastal belt for staples, such as grain, mangrove poles and timber, among other commodities.<sup>105</sup> The inclusion of representatives of the Nyika tribes in the delegation to Oman to seek aid in overthrowing the Portuguese in 1729/30 is an eloquent testimony to growing economic relations and political alliance. With the rupture between the Mazrui and the Busaidi, the former became gradually woven into a series of alliances with the Swahili tribes of Mombasa, and through them with the Nyika all of whom "looked upon certain leaders of the Swahili tribes of Mombasa as their intermediaries with the outer world". In 1746 the Mazrui leader, Ali b. Othman sought refuge among the "Vanikat" who were later rewarded for their support by privileges similar to those granted to the people of Mombasa. The Nyika visiting Mombasa on public business were entertained and maintained by the ruler of Mombasa. Though relations with them were not uniformly smooth, it was reported in 1825 that, in a conflict between

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104 See p. 47.

105 Cashmore, 154-65.

the Nyika and the Galla, "the inhabitants of Mombasa will take up the Whanika's cause as they are duty bound to do".<sup>106</sup>

It is clear that these political and military alliances were based on a triangle of economic relationships between the Mazrui, the Swahili and the Nyika. Each side recognised their inter-dependence and the value of cooperation, though neither side flinched from taking a full advantage of its strategic position. The Nyika brought a large amount of gum copal from their own territory almost throughout the year, though peak periods coincided with monsoon trading season between December and April, and again in August and September. They were freely allowed to enter the island and were a regular feature of the island's population. However, they kept a tight control over the inhabitants of Mombasa when they began to penetrate the Nyika country to Kwa Jomvu where a fair was annually held in August. At the fair, trade had to be conducted through interpreters who bought goods first on their own account and then sold to the Swahili. Commercial transactions conducted in Nyika territory were, moreover, subject to heavy tolls so that coastal traders seldom cleared 5% by the transactions. The latter may well have resented their dependence, but they were probably as well placed, by their control over the imports, to nullify the ill-effects of that dependence. During nearly three years of British

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106 Cashmore, 164. Berg, 133-4. P.R.O.: Emery's Journal, entry for 9.10.1824. Owen, II, 154.



"protection" there were only two conflicts, one of which was over the harbouring of runaway slaves by the Nyika. Neither conflict was allowed to disrupt their relations. Only a couple of months later the people of Mombasa were prepared to take the side of the Nyika against the Galla.<sup>107</sup>

The attitude of Mombasa revealed here was probably governed by a desire not to alienate the Nyika allies during this very critical period in its economic history. The nineteenth century had opened with a wonderful opportunity for Mombasa to supply the new demand for ivory in India by expanding its maritime hinterland in both directions. The Omanis, however, were equally determined to deny Mombasa the opportunity to make itself economically as unassailable as its Fort Jesus. They sought to restrict Mombasa to a small hinterland by depriving it of a foothold on the Mriani coast and in the Lamu archipelago as well as cutting its food life-line to Pemba.<sup>108</sup> Though Mazrui efforts continued in all these directions they were eager to develop the potential of Mombasa's own hinterland. The role of the Nyika in this project was therefore of critical importance.

The Nyika collected some ivory from their own territory, but the increasing tempo of hunting as the demand for ivory

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107 P.R.O.: Emery's Journal, entries for 9.10.1824; 12.7.1825.

108 Ibid., entries for 14.3.1825; 24.11.1825. Owen, I, 426. Boteler, II, 24. Said to his Vukeel at Bombay, n.d. [1827]. M.A.: 283/1827-8, p. 160.

increased, drove elephants into the less accessible parts of the wilderness. Apparently the Nyika were unable to arrive at an arrangement with the Galla to allow them to organise caravans and hunting parties to the interior. The Nyika were therefore left with their intermediary position which became significant when an interior tribe took up the commercial initiative. Lamphear argues that the retreating elephants fell into the net of the Kamba in their commercial drive to the coast.<sup>109</sup>

Lamphear has shown that after a period of confinement in the Mbooni hills, on which they had developed agriculture and where population pressure may have begun to build up, the Kamba began to expand during the early part of the eighteenth century.<sup>110</sup> However, they were expanding into lower and drier areas, subject to decreasing reliability of rainfall, and therefore more prone to periodic famine. It was probably part of their adjustment to ecological factors that they increasingly turned to hunting and trade to supplement their economy. Low has argued that dispersion as a result of famines permitted the development of a network of inter-relationship between the various sections of the Kamba which could be used to establish a commercial network for the exploitation of economic resources over a vast region. One such documented migration was that to Rabai in c. 1836 where

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109 Lamphear, 78, 80.

110 Ibid., 79.

a colony was established which maintained intimate commercial relations with the homeland.<sup>111</sup> Lamphear accepts that Kamba hunting and trade were in response to the decreasing reliability of rainfall but feels that famines were too catastrophic an event to yield a positive result, such as the establishment of the admirable Kamba commercial network. He argues that the later famines were more disruptive than conducive to trade, which is very probable.<sup>112</sup> However, his hypothesis that Kamba long-distance trade grew out of the pre-existing regional trading network in which the Kamba exchanged iron, hunting poison and cattle, does not necessarily call for a total rejection of Low's thesis, but only for a refinement of the probable role of famines in the process of transformation of their commercial system. He has not considered adequately the extent to which these famine refugees, forced by circumstances to migrate over long distances and yet maintaining links with the homeland, could act as an important channel of communication by which the supply and demand of

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111 Low in H.E.A., 314.

112 Lamphear, 83. It is doubtful if, as he says, "most of these ... famines occurred during the middle or latter part of the nineteenth century, well after Kamba commercial activity was in full swing". Lindblom reported that the Kamba remembered "a whole series" of famines dating back to the 1830s but does not reproduce the information. At the end of the century they were recurring every ten years. There will have to be only nine famines before the minor one in 1908-9 to maintain that average. Unfortunately, we do not have information about the crucial first quarter of the century.

the coast and the interior could become known and initiate trade. Many of the refugees apparently did not abandon their refuge as soon as conditions improved in the homeland. On the contrary, in the well-documented case of refugee settlement at Rabai in 1836, they formed an important permanent node in the Kamba network of trade.

What is the antiquity of Kamba trade with the coast? Lamphear is somewhat elusive, but tends to see a fresh spurt of Kamba activities "by the early part of the nineteenth century".<sup>113</sup> This speculation does receive some confirmation when viewed with the sudden increase in the demand for ivory during the first decade of the nineteenth century. It is significant that the first literary reference to the Kamba occurs in Hardy's report of 1811 in which he places the "Mare-Mungon" at a distance of ten days from Mombasa, and beyond them were the Kwa-vi. There is not direct indication of their trade with the coast, but these details could justify the supposition that some commercial contact, however indirect, was already in existence.<sup>114</sup> Krapf suggests there were already Kamba settlements in the Nyika territory by the 1820s, and in 1826 the "Maremogon" are specifically stated to be trading ivory at Kwa Jonvu near Mombasa.<sup>115</sup> It is probable that the fresh spurt in Kamba

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113 Lamphear, 80.

114 Hardy, f. 187.

115 Lamphear, 83. P.R.O.: Emery's journal entry for 6.7.1826. Boteler,

trade noted by Lumphreys was stimulated by the coastal demand for ivory at this time which, in turn, probably stimulated further Kamba commercial expansion of the hinterland as far as the Tana, Mount Kenya and Lake Baringo by the mid-century.

This survey of the expansion of the hinterland during the first quarter of the nineteenth century shows clearly the momentous effect of the sudden demand made upon the coast north of Cape Delgado for ivory in view of the catastrophic decline in the supply from Mozambique. From a narrow belt bounded by the "Nyika" wilderness at the dawn of the century the hinterland had expanded to Ukamba and Kilimanjaro in the north, and to Unyamwezi, and indirectly even to Buganda, in the centre, while in the south the already extensive hinterland was perhaps expanded, penetrated to a greater degree by coastal traders, and altogether more efficiently exploited for both ivory and slaves. The primary impetus was coastal - thus the close correspondence in time of their development - but the ability to respond to that impetus depended on geographical and other factors. In places where geography posed no significant natural obstacles coastal traders themselves were able to respond to the increased demand and organise caravans into the interior, such as along the Pangani and along the southern route to Unyamwezi. Elsewhere, where the "Nyika" appeared in its harshest form it seemed easier for the people of the interior, conditioned, perhaps, by the environment to a life of hunting

and trade, to undertake the establishment of long-distance trade to the coast once the demand at the coast became known in the interior either by migration of famine refugees or by the "relay" form of trade. The Kamba and the northern Nyamwezi route are notable examples. The fact that coastal traders were able later on in the century to supersede the people of the interior even along the latter routes speaks of the relative commercial strength of the coastal drive backed as it was by an insatiable demand and Indian finance.

#### 4. Conclusion

In the economic history of East Africa the first quarter of the nineteenth century emerges as a crucial period for momentous expansion in the two fields for which Seyyid Said has previously been given credit - the expansion of the northern hinterland and the development of Indian trade with its consequence, the evolution of the Indian mercantile community. Both of these developments can most clearly be traced to the failure in the supply of ivory from Mozambique at the turn of the century. At a time when the French slave trade appeared to be a spent force, these developments were bound to be of momentous consequence for the history of the Omani commercial empire. The development of the northern hinterland reduced Zanzibar's dangerous dependence on the terminus of the only long-distance trade route from the interior, reminiscent of Kilwa's earlier catastrophic dependence on the trade of Sofala. The development of the



ivory hinterland in the north shifted the economic centre of East Africa to the north and sharpened the unequal struggle between Zanzibar and Mombasa for the domination of that centre. Omani naval might ultimately ensured the former's victory.

The development of the ivory trade eventually entailed the reversal of the relative importance of slaves and ivory in the foreign trade of Zanzibar. The fact that during the first quarter of the century or so India was the only important source of East Africa's cotton goods and the only market for its ivory ensured the development of an Indian commercial organisation in East Africa to conduct that trade. That organisation was to provide a fertile ground for Indians to sink their roots in East Africa deep enough to survive the severe dislocation that Indian trade was soon to suffer. It permitted them to shift their weight from the roller-coaster of Indian trade to the escalating East African trade. On the eve of a further expansion in the trade of Zanzibar with the entry of American and European traders, the Indians had already defined their new role in the economy as a native class of traders who were well-placed to play the middle-man role.

## CHAPTER IV

The Slave Trade and the Economic Development  
of the Islands, 1810-50

The expansion of the southern and northern hinterlands to satisfy the twin demands for slaves and ivory had balanced the structure of the commercial empire. The Napoleonic wars and the anti-slavery assault on one of those foundations, however, threatened this stability and prosperity. As the European slave trade gradually declined during the 1820s there seems to have been a determined attempt at the seat of the empire to find a viable substitute. The Arab slave trade to the north could not be expanded. Perhaps there could have been no better substitute than the agricultural exploitation of the offshore islands themselves by developing a plantation economy. It provided a greatly expanded local demand for slaves to keep the southern sector of the commercial empire alive during the whole life of the empire. At the same time it provided a new and lucrative economic opening to those denied a living in the southern branch of the foreign slave trade.

The economic development of the offshore islands had a long-term significance which may not have entered the thinking of the builders of the commercial empire. They may not have realised the fragility of an empire whose hinterland extended far beyond their direct control, and which they had little

political and military power to defend. They may not have realised the gravity of the potential conflict between the principles of a commercial empire and those of a political empire. When the political rivals came to partition the empire, the descendants of the builders could do little more than hold on to the islands themselves where those conflicts of principles were minimal. At this critical time the economy of the islands, despite its instability, was able to sustain the well-being of the islands and continued to do so almost up to the present.

1. The East African Slave Trade:

a. The Stagnant Arab Slave Trade

Accounts of the East African slave trade have been bedevilled by emotionalism arising out of the British anti-slavery crusade. The crusade had developed from the milieu of the West African slave trade, and when it was extended to the Indian Ocean it found itself ignorant of the nature of slavery and the slave trade, and of the numbers involved. A series of wild estimates thus grew up in the fertile minds of the crusaders where it seemed to flourish more wonderfully than in the desolate lands of Arabia. These estimates formed the basis of the hitherto standard work on East African history. Even some of the modern historians, while they were deprecating Coupland's exaggerations, have swallowed his highly inflated estimates, and even succumbed to the temptation of over-playing the Arab slave trade in order to set it up

as one of the crucial factors in the history of East Africa. Thus Alpers quotes only the higher estimate for the trade in 1811 rather than the lower or at least the mean, and he refers to the estimate of a "modern historian" of between fifty and seventy thousand for the 1860s when the more accurate trade figures available for the decade would entirely discredit it.<sup>1</sup>

It has been estimated above that the Arab demand for slaves in the eighteenth century stood at about two thousand per annum.<sup>2</sup> Alpers has argued that the Arab slave trade grew during the nineteenth century "not because there was an increased demand, but because there was now a more efficiently organised state in East Africa which had an active interest in promoting this trade.". This piece of argument makes economic sense only if it can be shown that there was a higher demand previously which had remained unsatisfied. As a result of French competition the price of slaves may have been raised above the level of some people, but the size of this unsatisfied demand was probably small in view of the fact that the Arabs were not able to take advantage of the crippled state of the French trade to expand their own. Prior, who visited Kilwa in 1812, commented that "at present the demand is confined to the Arabs, who

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1 Alpers (1967)

2 See p. 48 above.

do not take many".<sup>3</sup> This explains the great hostility that British naval officers met at Zanzibar towards the end of the Napoleonic wars for the interruptions in the French trade were interpreted at Zanzibar not as fresh opportunities but as calamities.<sup>4</sup>

In view of the decrepit state of the slave trade at Zanzibar at this time, Smeeth's estimate for 1811 that from 6,000 to 10,000 were exported from Zanzibar to the Ile de France as well as to Arabia and India appears most unlikely. He was not at all sure of his own estimate, for he gives 10,000 in his unpublished journal and apparently felt compelled to moderate it in his published account. Although he and Hardy spent one whole trading season at Zanzibar, the French were prevented from trading there by the very presence of British warships, and therefore we do not know the proportion of the French slave trade in the estimate. Nor are we given the basis of his computation of the Arab slave trade. At the height of the season he enumerated the total shipping in the harbour. Of the seven square-rigged vessels, two were British warships and Hardy escorted four Indian ones to India which were unlikely to have been slavers. The last was the Omani vessel Salah which sailed to Calcutta for repairs. There were also forty dhows of various sizes and

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3 S.D., 210.

4 P.R.O.: Adm. 1/62, under "Zanzibar". Smeeth (1811b) entries for 24.2 and 7.3.1811.

two "large boats building".<sup>5</sup> In the late 1860s when the Arabs were under considerable pressure from British anti-slavery measures to specialise in the trade, the average number of slaves per dhow varied between sixteen and eighty seven. At those averages the forty dhows would have carried between 640 and 3,500, probably closer to the former since the fear of capture in 1811 was much smaller than in 1868.<sup>6</sup> Even after allowing a wide margin for a temporary decline at Zanzibar in 1811 where Smee says upwards of a hundred large dhows formerly visited the port, it is difficult to arrive at an estimate at anything above 2,000. In 1818 Albrand pointed to twenty five or thirty dhows involved in the slave trade,<sup>7</sup> which again, can hardly give a higher total.

Evidence from the other end of the trade seems to confirm our suspicion that many of the contemporary estimates were highly inflated. From the accounts about the Persian Gulf

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5 Smee (1811a) 492-3, 512; *id.*, (1811b) entry for 1.4 and 7.4.1811. Hardy to Hamilton, 14.10.1811, I.O.: M.R. Misc. 586, ff. 162-3.

6 See p. below. Some individual vessels may have carried fairly large numbers, such as the dhow of Makulla which had 86 slaves. Nukeeb of Makulla to ~~By~~ Govt. 12.9.1817, MA: Diary 438/1817, pp. 2130-1. The three South Arabian dhows captured in 1835 at Forebunder give an average of 26. Rana of Forebunder to Lang, 6. 11.1835, MA: 19/1835-6, pp. 59-63. The average in the local transport for the short distance between Kilwa and Zanzibar was much higher. Gray (1967) 172-3, quotes a case of 300. Kirk to F.O., 1.2.1870, F.O. 84/1325, gives an average of 147 for the late 1860s. Smee (1811a) 512.

7 Albrand, 75.



from the 1830s, Muscat and Sur emerge as the main entrepôts and Basra the main market. Most of the smaller ports in the Gulf appear to have played an intermediary role deriving most of their slaves from the former, and re-exporting many of them to the head of the Gulf. In 1830, about 1,200 slaves were imported into Muscat, of whom 700 were re-exported into the Gulf. In 1841 a reliable count of all the slave dhows passing Kharaq en route to Basra was kept during the most active months, giving their origin. The two sets of information can be tabulated to give a fairly complete picture of the slave trade in the Gulf:

<u>Muscat</u> (1830)		<u>Kharaq</u> (1841)	
Total Imports	1150-1200	Imported from other ports	45
Re-export to Joasmee Ports	210	Joasmee ports	168
Bahrain	300	Lingah	253
Bushire/Basra	190	Muscat	390
		Sur	279
		Sauhar	82
			<u>1217</u> <sup>8</sup>

A most unfortunate gap remains in the data for the trade of Sur, though its re-export to Kharaq, and possible contribution

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8 Resident, Persian Gulf, to Norris, 28.1.1831, MA: 1/1830-1.s. to Willoughby, 4.3.1842, MA: 78/1841-2, pp. 346-362. The trade was not illegal at this time and duties were not charged at Kharaq, so there was no reason for smuggling. Kharaq appears to have been a regular port for water, though some may have proceeded direct.

to Lingah and the Joasmee ports, are included. Fusing the two sets of figures to fill some of each other's gaps would give perhaps not more than between 2,000 and 2,500 as a fair estimate of the slave trade from East Africa to the Persian Gulf in the 1830s.<sup>9</sup> Kelly has argued that the volume of the slave trade increased after 1830 because he alleges there was a decline in the price of slaves. However, from the sources he quotes it is fairly clear that while the figures quoted for 1830 refer to prices in the Persian Gulf, those for the early 1840s give the prices in East Africa. Allowing for 20% profit, which was considered normal at Muscat, the alleged decrease in prices entirely disappears.<sup>10</sup>

9 The estimate has been worked out as follows:

Retained in Muscat	500		
Muscat's re-export to Joasmee ports	210	(partly re-	exported to Basra)
"	"	Bahrain	" 300
"	"	Basra	" 290
Sur's	"	Basra	" 279
Sauhar's	"	"	" 82
Lingah's	"	"	" 253 (including Sur's re-export)
Total			<u>1914</u>

Of these three-fourths came from East Africa, i.e. about 1,425. The estimate quoted thus allows up to 1,000 slaves retained at Sur or to places outside the stream to Basra. It is very strange that even while he was conveying these detailed figures, the Resident could not resist the temptation of giving his estimate of the slave trade at 30,000. Kemball based his calculation on a slightly different set of figures to arrive at a total of 2,597 for the trade within the Gulf. Kemball to Reid, 16.7.1842, MA:80/1842-3, pp. 285-6.

Slaves were also exported to the Red Sea which appears to have been a smaller market, and many of these were re-exports from the South Arabian ports. These ports played a similar role in the supply of slaves to India. In 1835 three South Arabian dhows were apprehended at Porebunder carrying 79 slaves to India, many of whom originated from East Africa. The demand in India, however, must have been very small. In 1837 the total African population in the whole province of Kathiawar was stated to be 450, and therefore the annual demand for fresh slaves probably did not exceed a hundred. In 1838 only 26 slaves were imported into the main Kutch port of Mandavi, for the most part domestic slaves brought by returning Indian merchants from East Africa. The total import of slaves into the three Portuguese Indian colonies was formerly said to amount to between 250 and 300, but in the late 1830s it amounted to about thirty five only. The agent at Muscat estimated that four to five hundred slaves were carried to India annually.<sup>11</sup>

- 10 Kelly, 417. Resident, P.C., to Norris, 28.1.1831, MA: 1/1830-1, pp. 18-21. Nott's report, 19.9-27.9.1840, F.O., 54/5, pp. 363-6. Kemball to Robertson, 8.7.1842, MA: 80/1842-3, pp. 289-99.

(1831) <u>Prices in the Persian Gulf</u>		(1842) <u>Prices in East Africa</u>
Females	£25-45	£35 for stout females
Males	£20-35	£15-30 for males 10-20 years
		£7-15 for males 7-10 years
		£17-20 for full-grown males
Profit at Muscat	20-30%	20% at Muscat
		50% at Basra

- 11 Run of Porebunder to Lang., 6.11.1835, MA: 19/1835-6, pp. 59-63. Sen. Magistrate of Police to Sec. to By. G.

b. The Declining French Slave Trade

The French trade in East Africa had suffered a severe dislocation during the Napoleonic wars though it managed to survive through it. In 1808 a ketch reported that there were four French vessels at Zanzibar, one of which was a merchantman waiting for slaves and the other three were privateers. The following year Tomkinson was informed at Mozambique by an English merchant, who had been captured by the French and landed at Zanzibar, that in March there were two French vessels trading there and that "during his stay on the island the port was never without a French vessel, sometimes two or three, waiting for cargoes collected along the coast". He added that they always went to the Seychelles and not directly to the Ile de France.<sup>12</sup> Evidence from the Seychelles end confirms this. In a period of just over a month two vessels arrived there from Zanzibar, one of which carried 130 slaves, and two vessels from Kilwa with a total of 230 slaves.<sup>13</sup> These may have been the last vessels to

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11.1.1836, NAI: 10.9.1836-P.C.-14 Pol. Agent, Kattenaar to Willoughby, 1.12.1837, NAI: 18.7.1837-P.C.-50. Resident, Kutch to Pol. Sec. to Government, 26.7.1838, MA: 106/1838-9, pp. 131-4. Agent at Surat to Willoughby, 4.12.1840, MA: 111/1840-1, pp. 153-5. Reuben to Hennell, 3.6.1841, F.O. 54/5, p. 386.

12 Foote to Warden, 19.10.1808, MA: Diary 249/1808, pp. 119, 89-91. P.R.O.: Adm. 1/63, entry for 8.6.1809.

13 Quincy to Decaen, 25.2.1809. Information kindly provided by B A Dato, from the ANF.

depart from the latter place for some time, for Fisher reported later the same year that no French vessel had visited it for eleven months. Acute demand, however, ensured its continuation despite the war. When it became difficult for the French to trade under the tricolor they were not averse to employing a dhow to carry forty slaves at a time to the Seychelles, there to be transhipped onto larger vessels for the voyage to Ile de France, or to use the Arab flag to transport slaves directly to that island or via Madagascar. In early 1811 two small vessels trading for slaves had to quit Zanzibar when they received the news of the approach of Smee and Hardy. A French ship, commanded by M. Dulong, also departed in early February with a cargo of slaves and a number of Arab passengers, bound for Ile de France.<sup>14</sup>

M. Dulong, however, was not to arrive at the French island. News of its fall to Britain was received at Zanzibar soon thereafter, an event which was to cause a further disruption in the trade. The war may have played havoc with French shipping and the loss of Ile de France deprived the French of an important market. In 1812 Prior reported that the demand at Kilwa was confined to the Arabs. For a brief moment Farquhar, the governor, tried to turn a blind eye towards the continuation of the trade to Ile de France, arguing that "without a fresh importation of slaves these islands .....

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14 P.R.O.: Adm. 1/62, under "Quilon". Caledon to Vansittart, 27.6.1810, R.S.E.A., IX, 13. Smee (1811b), entry for 25.2.1811.

cannot continue in cultivation", but he was quickly rebuffed by London. Nevertheless, smuggling of slaves to both the French and the British island continued by vessels under both British and French colours. In 1816 H.M.S. Tyne captured two schooners transporting slaves from Madagascar to Ile de France. As if to deny the British a monopoly of anti-slavery zeal the French captured eight French vessels, six of which were condemned as slavers at Bourbon in 1818 and 1819. They could also detract British pretensions by pointing to the capture of two English vessels attempting to import slaves into Bourbon, and by charging that 4,000 slaves had recently been imported into Ile de France. In fact, it was admitted that by 1817 the slave population of the island had risen far above the limits of any possible natural increase.<sup>15</sup>

The slave trade to Ile de France was ultimately checked by measures taken in 1818 and it was reported in 1827 that "no direct importation of an entire cargo of Negroes has taken place in Mauritius since March 1821". These measures were so effective that "the introduction of fifty slaves into Ile de France was more profitable than ... the whole cargo at Bourbon, from their superabundance there".<sup>16</sup> This

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15 S.D., 210. Coupland (1938) 193, 195-6. His point that the guilty persons in the two English slavers "though doubtless British subjects, were probably not Britons", argues for a very rapid purification of the British.

16 Coupland (1938) 196-7. Farguhar to Moresby, 5.4.1821, B.M.: Add. Mss. 41, 265, f. 17.



statement would indicate that, in fact, the Mascarene market had been greatly reduced by the 1820s as a result either of restriction or of over-stocking.

The trans-Atlantic market, however, remained open. The trade from Mozambique had greatly diminished as a result of the war, allegedly from 10,000 to 3,000 by 1812, but towards the end of the decade it had apparently begun to pick up. In 1817 four slavers from Mozambique landed 1,880 slaves at Rio de Janeiro apart from 541 who had died en route, and the following year eight vessels from Mozambique and Quilimane landed 2,416 slaves after losing 1,110 during the voyage.<sup>17</sup> It is not unlikely that some of these slaves were obtained from the coast to the north of Cape Delgado either directly or by transshipment from coasting dhows from Kilwa like the one Owen met at Mozambique in 1823.<sup>18</sup> By the beginning of the 1820s a definite attempt for a direct trade there was made. It was said that 24 slave-ships had been fitted out from Nantes similar to La Success which was captured to the north of Ile de France with 340 slaves and whose next voyage was to have been to Havana. Moresby claimed that eight vessels had recently sailed from Zanzibar with an average of from two hundred to four hundred slaves, most of whom were probably destined for the Americas. Of these perhaps

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17 Coupland (1938) 189.

18 Owen to Elphinstone, 23.11.1823, MA: 22/1823, pp. 1-4.

the French captured two British vessels, and Moresby chased the Industry which he thought carried 400 slaves but which contained only 140 when captured in Zanzibar harbour. A strain of exaggeration is already apparent in the pronouncements of this "good hater of the Slave Trade" which prepares us for his claim that there remained at Zanzibar nearly 20,000 slaves still to be disposed of. In view of the comparatively small volume of the Arab slave trade, the twenty four Nantes vessels, even if all of them were to take slaves exclusively from Zanzibar, could not have taken more than about 7,000 slaves at an average of 300.<sup>19</sup>

Moresby's exaggerated claims, however, were not designed to unravel the truth but to excite action against the slave trade. With Farquhar now firmly towing the Abolitionist line, they set out to impose the first limitation of the slave trade to the south of Cape Delgado. Seyyid Said appears to have wished to pre-empt British pressure by ordering his governors to prohibit sale of slaves to the French. The British preferred a formal treaty prohibiting the sale of slaves to the south and east of a line drawn from Cape Delgado to Diu Head at the western extremity.

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19 Moresby to Farquhar, 4.4. and 7.8.1821; Farquhar to Moresby, 5.4.1821, Farquhar to Said, 1.10.1821; B.M.: Add. mss. 41, 265, ff. 12-18, 42, 45. Lloyd, 204, mentions the French vessel "Cailla" captured in Zanzibar harbour with 140 slaves, which directly conflicts with Moresby's own letter of 7.8.1821.

of the Gulf of Cambay. The ease with which Seyyid Said acceded to the limited British demands, in comparison with his stubborn resistance to any British encroachment into the "domestic" slave trade, would seem to suggest that the value he placed on this branch of the trade was somewhat limited. Nevertheless, he was determined to impress the British of the enormity of his sacrifice in the hope, perhaps to extract the maximum amount of concession from them and preclude further demands of that nature. In 1819 the revenue of Zanzibar had been estimated at about 80,000 piastres and yet in 1822 he claimed that the concession cost him from \$40,000 to \$50,000.<sup>20</sup> Having played the exaggeration game themselves, the British had to swallow the figure especially as neither the East India Company nor the Government of Mauritius felt compelled to pay compensation as was the practice with other European powers. Seyyid Said, however, kept on counting the growth of his revenue in this eradicated source. By 1834 it had risen to \$60,000 and by 1838 to \$100,000. He was apparently never caught at the game, and the most probable loss of revenue was probably much less than the figures given in 1822. At a duty of \$10 per slave the maximum number of slaves exported to the south was 4,000 to 5,000,

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20 Albrand, 78. Bruce to Warden, 25.2.1822. MA: 20/1822. See Appendix A. The piastre was apparently used by the French to refer to dollars.

and the more likely figure was perhaps half that number.<sup>21</sup>

What is a fair estimate for the total slave trade in East Africa during the first half of the nineteenth century? The discussion above would seem to suggest that the northern slave trade from East Africa was probably stable at a level of about 3,000 to 3,500.<sup>22</sup> The southern slave trade fluctuated more widely as a result of the Napoleonic wars and probably declined initially when the Mauritius market was closed and the Bourbon market was over-stocked. The trade for the American markets probably found it difficult to maintain a high level under a constant threat of capture. The trade, which undoubtedly continued,<sup>23</sup> nevertheless probably exhibited some decline during the 1820s, if for no other reason than the shrinkage of the market in the Mascarenes. In view of this, Moresby's and Farquhar's estimates for the slave trade of Zanzibar between 1819 and 1822 of up

- 21 Coupland (1938) 212, 214. Memo from the Persian Secretary, 11.4.1834, NAI: 29.5.1834 -P.C.-6/11. Cogan's Memo. 5.1.1838, F.O. 54/2. Hennell to Willoughby, 10.1.1838, MA: 106/1838-9, p. 226. Hamerton to By. G., 1.2.1842, F.O. 54/5, p. 422. Albrand, 77.
- 22 Allowing for 2,000-2,500 to the Persian Gulf and about 500 to India and the Red Sea each. See pp.162-3.
- 23 P.R.O.: Adm. 52/3940, Emery's Journal, entry for 29.5.1825. Said to Agha Mahomed Shoostree, n.d. [1828], MA: 8/1828, pp. 136-7. Roberts to Willbury, 19.12.1828, L.C.: Roberts Papers vi. Several Portuguese, Spanish and Havana vessels called at Zanzibar in the 1830s. P.M.: Waters Journal, entries for 13.10 and 21.10.1837, 30.3.1839. NEMA, 147-8, 205. E.I.: Waters' Papers, "List of foreign vessels at Zanzibar, 1832-7", e.g. "Socorro", "Aquila Vengard".

to 25,000 are hardly credible.<sup>24</sup> Albrand in 1819 hazards an estimate of 13,000 which also appears inflated, and his reference to twenty five or thirty dhows in support of this figure hardly lends credence to his speculation. The first reliable contemporary estimate dates to the mid-1830s and is followed by a series of figures which seem to be reliable and which show an increase from about 6,500 to about 13,000 in the mid-1840s.<sup>25</sup> However, as no corresponding increase in the export of slaves to the north or the south can be shown, the trend points to a new and internal market for slaves. Ruschenberger reported in 1834 that some individuals in Zanzibar owned as many as 2,000 slaves. It is hard to imagine that they were held for any purpose other than a plantation economy.<sup>26</sup>

## 2. The Development of the Clove Economy

The instability of the foreign slave trade since the

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- 24 Moresby to Farish, 23.9.1822, MA: 20/1822, pp. 254-7.  
Farquhar to Clarkson, n.d., P.S. dated 6.11.1821, B.M.  
mss. 41, 265, f. 54.
- 25 1834 6,000-7,000  $\overline{\text{mean} - 6,500}$ , Ruschenberger, I, 40.  
1841 8,000-10,000  $\overline{\text{mean} - 9,000}$ , Hamerton to Willoughby,  
13.7.1841, MA: 78/1841-2, pp. 218-23.  
1838-41 15,000 s. to s. 21.5.1842,  
F.O.54/5, p.419.  
c. 1841 11,000-15,000  $\overline{13,000}$  s. to Aberdeen,  
1843 ? 20,000 s. to s. 21.1.1844,  
pre 1847 12,000-14,000  $\overline{13,000}$  Loaner, 5/23(5) "Esclaves".
- 26 Ruschenberger, I, 40.

last decade of the eighteenth century but especially since the first quarter of the nineteenth century would appear to have encouraged the local population to seek alternate means of livelihood. The transition was undoubtedly difficult and many of them probably hoped or attempted to revive the trade. The loss of the Mauritius market, however, must have led to a more determined action on the part of some individuals to take a lead. There was little chance for the expansion of the foreign markets, but they must have realised that if the slaves could not be exported, the product of their labour could. In the Mascarenes, they had seen the employment of slave labour for the production of sugar and cloves, and the latter was particularly lucrative. The decision to imitate those examples was momentous for East African economic history for it not only revived and even further expanded the southern hinterland to supply slaves for Zanzibar itself, but it also provided Zanzibar with a valuable cash-crop and an additional commodity in its trade.

The islands of Zanzibar and Pemba are situated at about the same latitude near the Equator as the Moluccas, the original home of the cloves, though a quarter way round the earth west of them. They thus enjoy a warm equable climate, with the temperature ranging in Zanzibar and Pemba between a mean daily maximum of about 85°F and a minimum of about 76°F. The home and the diaspora, however, appear to offer more contrasts than similarities, such as to leave the



question why cloves thrive in certain areas and not in others unanswered, for while they flourished on Zanzibar and Pemba, German attempts to introduced them into Mafia failed.<sup>27</sup> The original homeland is part of the Pacific "Ring of Fire", and the conical islands, rising to over 5,000 feet, thus offered volcanic soil for the support of the ancestors of the clove trees of Zanzibar. Zanzibar and Pemba, on the other hand, owe their origins to the industrious coral polyps, and with the highest elevation at less than 400 feet, they are lili-putian in height. Both areas enjoy monsoonal rains at about the same seasons, but whereas the East African islands enjoy a rainfall of between 60 and 80 inches, the East Indian islands receive a rainfall, perhaps influenced by their mountainous nature, of nearly twice as much.<sup>28</sup>

Geographic differences between the two East African islands isolate some of the critical factors in the cultivation of cloves. Both of them are marginal as far as rainfall requirement of the tree is concerned, and the extra 20 inches which Pemba receives is "probably the main reason why the tree flourishes better in that island". The greater number of wet days and the slightly larger range in the daily temperature may similarly contribute to the phenomenon.<sup>29</sup>

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27 Pearce, 296. Coupland (1938) 314-5.

28 Tidbury, 23-5. Crofton (1936) 1.

29 Tidbury, 24-5. Carlton, 60.

Topographically, although the highest point in Pemba is lower than that in Zanzibar, the former island is more dissected and gives the appearance of being decidedly hillier. The clove areas of Pemba are a series of small hills divided by deep swampy valleys suitable for rice. Zanzibar, on the other hand, has a much flatter topography. The clove areas consist of four main low, longitudinal ridges separated by broad flat swampy valleys.<sup>30</sup> On the sides of these hills or ridges, which are situated in the western half of the islands, are found the red loams of great depth which are well-drained, an essential requirement. Apart from the fact that those soils are more widespread in Pemba, it has been argued that the Pemba soils have a greater water-holding capacity, are less degraded, and contain more soluble constituents than the Zanzibar soils.<sup>31</sup> The geographical factors would thus suggest a greater prosperity for cloves in the smaller island. However, the Zanzibar soils were probably more fertile when the clove trees were first planted. Coupled with the greater isolation of Pemba, it delayed the emergence of the latter as by far the greater producer until after the hurricane of 1872.<sup>32</sup>

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30 Tidbury, 15-7.

31 Tidbury, 18-23. Pearce, 296. Middleton (1961) 10-11.

32 See below, p. 462 Crofton, 98-9. Tidbury, 6-7.

a. Introduction of the cloves

There seems to be little dispute as to the ultimate origin of the clove tree or the line of transmission. It is agreed that it was introduced to the Ile de France in 1770 from the least-frequented parts of the Moluccas. It flourished in the Mascarenes enough to produce nearly 400,000 lbs. in the second decade of the nineteenth century; and it flourished long enough to serve as a nursery for transplantation elsewhere. The Mascarenes, however, are right on the thoroughfare of the cyclones. Considering that clove trees take five to seven years to produce the first crop, and considering the herculean effort to replant the trees in Zanzibar after the 1872 hurricane, it is obvious that it was not a process to be contemplated more than once in a century at the most. As it turned out, soon after 1820 a cyclone uprooted many of the trees on the island of Bourbon, the larger producer, and they were not replaced, bowing to producers elsewhere.<sup>33</sup>

The date of its introduction into Zanzibar, however, has been a matter of debate. Coupland considers the question of who and exactly when cloves were introduced as "uncertain and unimportant". He goes on to argue that "what was important, indeed momentous, was Said's decision to make clove-culture the primary industry of Zanzibar".<sup>34</sup> Said's role

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33 Crofton, 83-5. Tidbury, 4. Coupland (1938) 313-4.

34 Coupland, 314. Guillain, II, 49.

in the matter was hardly self-evident and Coupland does not present overwhelming evidence to support either of his contentions. The questions of the introduction and the spread of the culture in Zanzibar are not necessarily unrelated, especially in view of the high prices the spice enjoyed. Their re-examination may reveal the economic forces at work and perhaps define more precisely the role of the characters involved.

Guillain asserts that cloves were introduced at the beginning of the nineteenth century or at the end of the eighteenth century, by a M. Sausse, a creole from the Mascarenes. This individual appears to have had long-standing slave trade connection with the East African coast, dating at least from 1785. He also seems to have been linked somehow with the clove industry, but there is no corroborative evidence to Guillain's assertion.<sup>35</sup> His compatriot, Albrand, who visited Zanzibar in 1819 gives credit to a M. Desplants about whom little is known. Considering, however, the importance of the French slave trade at this time at Zanzibar, it is not unlikely that he was associated with it. Albrand

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35 Capt. Sausse was a slaver who transported slaves from Kilwa to the Seychelles in 1809. Quirin or Quincy to Decaen, 25.2.1809. Information kindly supplied by Dr B A Datoo. Gray (1864a) 21, 23. He claimed to have been an eye-witness to the Arab recovery of Kilwa in 1785. Albrand, 83. Burton (1872) I, 363-4, mentions a M. Sausse who succeeded in extracting an excellent oil from cloves which became a universal favourite with the Zanzibar public.

also gives a more precise dating of the introduction, saying that they had been planted seven years previously and that they were then already fifteen feet high.<sup>36</sup> Cloves were, therefore, introduced in the early 1810s, and French slave traders were probably associated with that introduction.

That association, however, is not obvious, beyond the fact that the Frenchmen also originated from the Mascarenes. Although Smee alleged that there was, previous to his visit, a French "factory" at Zanzibar,<sup>37</sup> obviously for the conduct of the slave trade, there is no reference to any French land-owning in any of the sources for the early nineteenth century, English as well as French. The clove trees which Albrand observed, therefore, must have been on an Arab plantation, and we should look for an Arab associate of the Frenchmen, involved in the slave trade with them, who may have experimented with the tree on his land.

From Arab tradition apparently current in Zanzibar until recently, such a person appears to be Salch b. Haramil al-Abmay. In the earliest version, as recorded by Fitzgerald, Harameli

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36 Albrand, 69. This first-hand evidence, therefore, clearly supersedes the previously accepted date of 1818 given by Ruschenburger, I, 73-4. It also supersedes Pearce's speculation, giving 1829, as well as Learer's deduction of 1822. Pearce, 297. Learer, 5/23 (4 and 5) "girofle".

37 Smee (1811b) entry for 25.2.1811.

b. Saleh accompanied a French officer from Zanzibar to Bourbon at the end of the eighteenth century and obtained permission to take back a small quantity of seeds and plants with him.<sup>38</sup> Sh. Abdallah Saleh el-Farsy specifically points out the mistaken order of the name and says he was related to an early governor of Zanzibar who was imprisoned by Seyyid Said because of his oppression. Saleh escaped to the Mrima and accompanied M. Saussure to Bourbon from where he brought clove plants for Seyyid Said, for which he was pardoned. They were planted at Mtoni and Kizimbani. Farsy's account is clearly contaminated by Pearce whom he quotes,<sup>39</sup> and since Seyyid Said's earliest visit to East Africa occurred only in 1827/8 it places the introduction of cloves much later than Albrand's first-hand account in 1819 would suggest.

Nevertheless, this tradition permits us to identify him with the character who is mentioned by several early nineteenth century sources. Fisher in 1809 describes "Sale" as a friend and interpreter of the governor of Zanzibar who was "a perfect Frenchman". This may well be the same person mentioned by Dallons in 1804 as "the interpreter, a subtle and pliant man" who obtained the maximum advantage for the French slave trade.<sup>40</sup> Albrand in 1819 mentions "Saleh" who

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38 Fitzgerald, 553-4. Pearce, 296-7. Tidbury,

39 Farsy, p. 29.

40 P.R.O.: Adm. 1/62, under "Zanzibar". S.D., 199.



was born at Muscat about fifty years before. He left his home young to visit Seychelles, Mauritius and Bourbon. He spoke "the creole of Mauritius passably" and knew all the Frenchmen who visited Zanzibar. Albrand adds that he "appreciated the superiority of our arts" by which he earned his fortune.<sup>41</sup> He had thus incurred the hatred and jealousy of the Harthi and therefore formed his own party to protect him against their violence.<sup>42</sup> Finally, Guilloin mentions that "Saleh" had acquired great wealth by the European slave trade which excited the envy of the chiefs of the locality. He had apparently continued to trade to the south even after the Moresby Treaty of 1822. The envious denounced him to Seyyid Said who confiscated Saleh's plantations at Mtoni and Kizimbani of which the latter was already planted with cloves.<sup>43</sup> The confiscation may have occurred in 1828. By 1834 the clove trees at Kizimbani were yielding an average of six pounds of cloves per tree, which is the normal crop of a fully mature tree.<sup>44</sup> Although none of the contemporary sources directly credit him with the introduction of cloves it is not unlikely that Albrand implies it among the French "arts" which he appreciated and from which he profited. The correspondence in details

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41 Albrand, 78.

42 Ibid., 78-9.

43 Guilloin, II, 49.

44 Ruschenburger, I, 71.

between the traditional and contemporary accounts leaves little doubt about the identity of the man who introduced cloves to Zanzibar early in the second decade of the nineteenth century, probably in partnership with MM Sausse or Desplants.

b. The Spread of the Clove Culture

The incentive which led Saleh b. Haramil and his French associate to introduce the spice are not hard to seek. It was a rare commodity as a result of the Dutch monopoly. As late as 1834, when that monopoly had already begun to crumble, cloves were yielding a profit of over 1,000% on the original cost of production.<sup>45</sup> By any standards this was a very strong economic incentive for the spread of the cultivation of cloves. Kizimbani was not the only clove plantation that passed into the hands of Seyyid Said. He bought the plantation at Mbangeni from the sons of Saleh, and inherited that at Bumbwini from his slave, Alkida Tengweni, both of which also were already under cloves.<sup>46</sup> It is reasonable to assume that there were some other clove plantations in private

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45 Crofton, 80, gives the profit margin of 2,122% for an unspecified date, perhaps at the height of the Dutch monopoly. Ruschenberger, I, 73-5, quotes the Chinese Repository, II (1834) which gives the figure of 1,258%, which, perhaps, indicates the effects of the crumbling of the monopoly.

46 Guillain, II, 49-50. He mentions Moukangagnene and Bomboui.

hands by the time Seyyid Said visited Zanzibar in 1828.

However, considering the fact that the establishment of clove plantations implied long-term investment - the trees take five to seven years to yield the first crop and several more before the average for a mature tree is reached - it was not a culture that one would jump to if there was an equally lucrative form of economic activity. The slave trade with the French was such an activity as is proved by the continuance of Saleh b. Haramil in the trade after he had established the clove plantation and despite the risk of capture after the Moresby Treaty. As that trade was gradually strangled, however, the Arabs were under compulsion to look for an alternative. Loarer is certainly wrong in suggesting that the "first clove trees were planted on Zanzibar after the definitive abolition of the slave trade" to the Mascarenes, but the cause specified by him appears to be applicable to the big upsurge in the planting of cloves from the early 1830s.<sup>47</sup> Saleh's experiments had shown the viability and profitability of the cultivation of cloves in Zanzibar, and the cessation of the French slave provided a strong economic motive for a shift in the direction of a plantation economy which would utilise the now surplus supply of slaves. The traditions that Seyyid Said actively encouraged the planting

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47 Loarer, 5/23 (4 and 5) "girofle".

of cloves,<sup>48</sup> presumably during his short visits to East Africa between 1828 and 1840, should therefore be taken merely as an opportune direction of a largely self-propelled band wagon onto which he had jumped.

Seyyid Said participated in this economic movement by extending the cultivation of cloves on his own plantations. When Ruschenberger visited Kizimbani in 1834, he estimated that there were 4,000 trees on the plantation. They ranged in height between five and twenty feet,<sup>49</sup> suggesting that the younger ones may have been planted since Seyyid Said acquired the plantation. Guillain, a decade later, suggests that there were about 3,000 mature trees.<sup>50</sup> This expansion

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- 48 Tidbury, 5, records the tradition that Seyyid Said "literally forced plantation owners in Zanzibar to plant cloves under the threat that he would confiscate their land if they did not do so". Middleton (1961) 12, records another tradition that he ordered his subjects to plant three clove trees for every one coconut palm. Burton, I, 219, gives that proportion but the purpose seems to be to reinstate coconuts after cloves had all but wiped them out. He threatened to confiscate plantations which did not plant a certain proportion of coconut to clove trees. The passage is obscure, and it is uncertain whether the proportion was to be 1:3 or 3:1. Middleton seems to have misunderstood the purpose.
- 49 Ruschenberger, I, 71. He says that the average yield was 6 lbs. per tree. This is an average of a mature tree, and he may similarly be referring to mature trees. Tidbury, 106-7.
- 50 Guillain, II, 47-8. He actually counted 2,000 trees, and estimated the yield at 5 lbs. The total production of the plantation was 15-16,000 lbs. which would need 3,000 mature trees to produce them. Waters who visited the plantation in 1837 grossly exaggerates the number of trees. He says there were "200,000 trees ... set

appears to have occurred on his other plantations as well. Thus, whereas in 1840 the production of cloves from his plantations, perhaps mostly from the trees planted by his predecessors, amounted to 5-6,000 frasalas, by 1845 the figure had jumped to about 10,000 frasalas.<sup>51</sup>

The spread of the cloves on Seyyid Said's plantations, however, was part of a wider spread throughout Zanzibar. "The easy profit which clove plantations yielded made all the inhabitants of Zanzibar turn their eyes towards this cultivation", and contributed towards what Learer called the clove "mania" which he saw raging in the 1840s. As the trees planted in the 1830s reached maturity in the 1840s, so the clove production figures jumped from about 8,000 frasalas in 1840 to 30,000 frasalas in 1845. What is significant, moreover, is that the production of cloves from

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out in rows of a mile or more in length and about 20 feet apart". At that spacing a plantation of even a mile square would hold only 70,000 trees. Waters Journal, II, entry for 2.8.1837; NEMA, , 201.

51 Learer, 5/23 (4 and 5) "girofle". In 1840 the total production was 8,000 frasalas of which two thirds came from Seyyid Said's plantations. In 1840, one third of 30,000 frasalas came from the same source. Burton, I, 364-5, gives the figure of "barely 9,000" for 1839-40. Kerdudal in 1843 gives a ten year average of about 20,000 frasalas. Mission Extraordinaire en Chine to M Guizot, 9.6.1844. AOM: O.I. 15/65 P.2. I, 1-13. /Osgood/ 23. His report, which dates to the period between 1840 and 1854, gives the production from the royal plantations at 60,000 frasalas "in good seasons", i.e. seasons of bumper crops. NEMA, , 349.

private plantations showed the most spectacular increase, from 3,000 to 20,000 fransalas during the same period. There was a corresponding increase in the proportion of cloves from private plantations from a third to two thirds, and a corresponding decrease in the proportion of cloves from the royal plantations.<sup>52</sup>

From 1840 clove plantations began to be established on the sister island of Pemba. Lorrer says that at that time two thirds of Pemba was covered with a very good forest which began to be cleared for cloves. Seyyid Said, Seyyid Sulaiman b. Hamud and other rich inhabitants of Zanzibar took an active role in that process. By 1845 the young trees were yielding 1,800-2,000 fransalas, and by 1848/9 10,000 fransalas.<sup>53</sup> Lorrer commented that the Pemba produce was of a better quality, probably because of the greater amount of rainfall that island receives. As previously remarked however, Pemba did not take a lead over Zanzibar until the 1872 hurricane which uprooted most of the clove trees in Zanzibar but left Pemba untouched.<sup>54</sup>

So feverish was the spread of the culture that it began to encroach seriously upon crops in areas which were best suited to the latter. As Burton puts it in his characteristic style:

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52 Lorrer, 5/23 (4 and 5) "girofle"

53 Ibid., "girofle". Lorrer, 2/10(2)D, "Pemba".

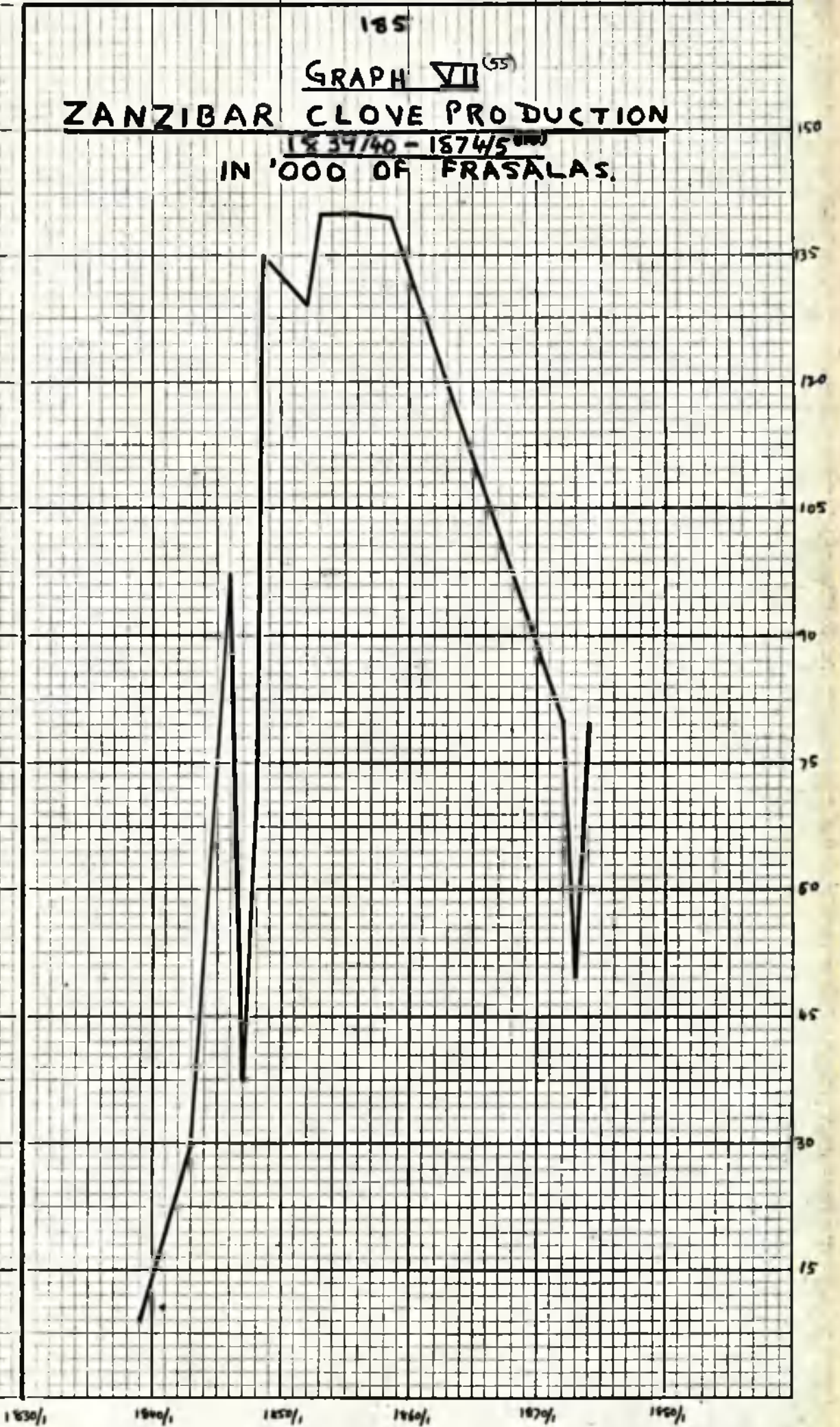
54 Crofton, 98-9.



GRAPH VII<sup>(55)</sup>

ZANZIBAR CLOVE PRODUCTION

IN '000 OF FRASALAS.  
(1839/40 - 1874/5)



"requiring little care, [~~cloves~~] speedily became a favourite, and in 1835 the aristocratic foreigner almost supplanted the vulgar coconut and the homely rice necessary for local consumption."<sup>56</sup>

Loarer adds to the list manioc, potatoes and grains.<sup>57</sup> Even allowing for Burtonian exaggeration as to the date and completeness of the encroachment of cloves, it is necessary to examine the assertions to determine the exact extent of that encroachment. Some have blamed cloves for the conversion of Zanzibar from an exporter into an importer of rice.<sup>58</sup>

55 Zanzibar clove production: Sources for the graph:

	<u>Frasalas</u>	
1839/40	9,000	(1872) Burton, I, 364-5.
1843/4	30,000	Loarer, "girofle".
1846/7	97,000	" "
1847/8	35-40,000	" "
1848/9	70,000	" "
1849	120-150,000	(1872) Burton, I, 364-5.
1852/3	128,840	NAV :R.G. 84:Z:C-3, Misc. Record Bk. 1852-60. Another list in the same source gives 119, 740.
1853/4	140,356	<u>Ibid.</u>
1856	142,857	Burton, <u>loc.cit.</u> , says 5 mill. lbs.
1859	138,800	Rigby to Secretary of State for India, 1.5.1860, F.O. 4/17: L/P & S/9/37, pp. 597-659. Burton says 200,000 <u>frasalas</u> equal to 7 mill.lbs. <u>loc. cit.</u>
1872/3	80,000	Crofton, 98-9.
1873/4	50,000	"
1874/5	80,000	"

56 Burton, I, 361-2.

57 Loarer, 5/23 (4-5) "girofle".

58 Russell, 339. Guillain, III, 312.

Such an assertion is curious in view of the fact that rice thrives on the flat, swampy valleys, conditions which are anathema to cloves. It is possible that cloves caused a diversion of labour and attention from rice and other food crops to the more profitable cloves, though there is little indication of a shortage of labour. Except in the early years when the Shirazi were required to contribute labour,<sup>59</sup> most of the work on the plantations was done by imported slaves. Even if additional labour was necessary during the harvest seasons, especially during the bumper seasons, the harvest seasons of the grains and of cloves were more complementary than competitive.<sup>60</sup> The transformation of Zanzibar into an importer of grains can be better explained by an increase in the demand of the growing and opulent urban population and the infusion of a large slave population to work the plantations, though some of the food requirements were satisfied by the cultivation of their plots by the slaves themselves.

The displacement of coconuts by cloves was more significant. Coconuts appear to have been widespread on the Kiongo soils which received a moderate amount of rainfall outside the hilly areas of both islands. It is probable that

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59 This corvee labour was soon replaced by a head tax on the Hadimu at the rate of £2 per person.

60 Cloves are harvested in August/September and December/January. Maize in November/December. Millet in July/August. Rice is sown in January, transplanted in April and harvested in June/July. Piggot, 16. Middleton, 12. Guillain, III, 312-4.



before the exact requirements of cloves were fully recognised, the clove "mania" led the landowners to cut down the coconuts to plant the more lucrative cloves. Unfortunately, these areas did not prove to be the most suitable for cloves, and they became the poor clove areas which yielded less than one lb. of cloves per tree per annum. Once planted, however, inertia and the comparatively higher price of cloves appear to have allowed them to retain their hold on the land up to the present.<sup>61</sup>

c. Land Alienation

The best clove plantations were established not in these marginal areas, but in the hilly areas which enjoyed a heavier rainfall and had the well-drained mchanga soils. An argument has developed between Gray and Middleton whether the expansion in these areas occurred at the expense of virgin forests or of the indigenous population. From a list of properties that Seyyid Said acquired since his first visit to Zanzibar in 1828, Gray defines the area already, though not completely in Arab hands extending from the city northwards for twelve miles to Mumbwini, and to a depth of six miles from the west coast of the Zanzibar island to Kichwale and Kizimbani. In the wake of Seyyid Said more Arabs established clove plantations in the hilly areas of Zanzibar. From a promise that "local custom regarded all

(1872)

61 Tidbury, 108-9. Burton/I, 363, mentions that on many plantations 30 trees rarely yielded more than 35 lbs. per annum. Christopher, 377.

land as being communal, incapable of permanent alienation", he concludes that a great deal of the development was brought about by "expropriation of the original landowners". However, he adds in mitigation, that apart from a few cases of forceful eviction or outright fraud, "the general impression is that many of these changes of ownership were brought about by means which would have borne scrutiny by a court of law". The net result of these expropriations, he asserts, was "the general trend ... for the Hadimu to remove out of the more fertile area in the western portion of the island into the less fertile areas in the eastern and southern portion of the island".<sup>62</sup>

As the chief justice of Zanzibar, Sir John Gray might have investigated cases of land tenure of which only one has been reported.<sup>63</sup> We are, however, denied an access to his store of knowledge through accurate footnotes. Nevertheless, the available evidence permits us at least to question his reasoning. He makes no distinction in tenure between the different types of land. Surely there must be differences between cleared or kiambo land whose "ownership is shared by all who are patrilineally descended from the man with the right of occupancy", and the uncleared msitu

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62 Gray (1962) 167-8.

63 The former Registrar of the High Court of Zanzibar, H A Rahim, informs me that he does not think there were any other cases of this nature, than the one mentioned below. p.192.

used as a refuge, to hunt or obtain firewood.<sup>64</sup> Gray allows for some amount of disafforestation, but he seems to assert that most of the clove areas had already been cleared by the time the Arabs expropriated them. Needless to say, he presents no evidence to support this assertion. Loarer clearly states that Pemba was heavily forested until the introduction of cloves in 1840.<sup>65</sup> Gray similarly provides no evidence for his other bold assertion of Hadimu migration. As early as the 1840s an American visitor mentioned that the "Moheideens" lived in the eastern half of the island and had little intercourse with the Arabs.<sup>66</sup> If the migration did occur as a result of the expansion of clove cultivation, it is unlikely that it would have been accomplished in such a short time.

Middleton, on the other hand, utilising anthropological tools, arrives at a diametrically opposed conclusion. He argues that the hilly areas, due to greater soil fertility and a heavier rainfall, were forested before the introduction of cloves. He was told that "although the Shirazi sometimes planted plots in the forest area, these were covered with weeds so fast that cultivation became impossible".<sup>67</sup> He

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64 Prins (1961) 62.

65 Loarer, 2/10 (2-D) "Pemba".

66 Osgood, 69-70.

67 Middleton, 11.



presents a very interesting type of evidence to substantiate his assertion. He argues that the large villages which developed in the plantation areas were not indigenous and lacked the social characteristics of such villages as Donge, Chaani and Dunga.<sup>68</sup>

The two views are not necessarily irreconcilable, especially if we view them in geographical terms. What appears to have happened is that the core of the hilly areas were cleared by the Arabs and the Hadimu specifically for cloves using slave labour.<sup>69</sup> Both Gray and Prins have argued that the surrounding villagers exercised some claim over these areas<sup>70</sup> but the strength and depth of that claim is hard to determine. It is clear, however, that some of the initial planting of cloves occurred at the expense of cocconut trees in the peripheral belt around the core, and therefore in the cleared kiambo land. It is probable that most of the transfers to land ownership occurred in this belt. These transfers may have occurred as a result of fraud, cross-cultural misunderstanding of what was being conveyed or legal sales.<sup>71</sup> The influence of Islamic law in

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68 Middleton, 42.

69 Ibid., 36.

70 Prins, 61. Gray (1956b). The report was on land tenure in a non-clove area which Gray seems to have used in his discussion of land alienation in both the islands.

71 Gray (1962) 167. Prins, 62.

the creation of freeholds seems to have been minimised despite the fact that Zanzibar has been under Muslim influence for centuries. The only relevant reported case on land tenure refers to a sale of plots of land by the indigenous Tumbatu to an Arab before 1855 at which date they bought back some of the plots, thereby recognising the legality of such a transfer.<sup>72</sup>

Pemba offers a considerable contrast in the pattern of Arab settlement and the expansion of clove cultivation. Much of the explanation is offered by Pemba's topography which is more dissected. Villages were established throughout the island on the top of the ridges, where the forest was less than on the slopes. Middleton feels that, in contrast to the villages in Zanzibar's clove areas, those in Pemba are indigenous and may date to the period before the introduction of cloves. The villagers utilised the numerous small narrow valleys for rice which made the island famous as a granary, exporting rice to Mombasa and even to Arabia. The hillsides which were fertile and received a heavier rainfall offered the same problems for cultivation as in Zanzibar and were not cleared before the introduction of cloves.<sup>73</sup> Thus in 1849 Loarer reported that Pemba, the proverbial "Green Isle" of Arab authors was, until a decade before, "a very good forest" which was then being cleared

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72 Windham, 282-92.

73 Middleton, 62-3.

for cloves.<sup>74</sup> As late as the middle of this century there still were a few forest areas which were considered suitable for cloves.<sup>75</sup> Part of these forests were cleared as in Zanzibar, using slave labour, but a very interesting, and according to Tidbury a very common, method of establishing a plantation, was for the Arab to supply clove seedlings and the Shirazi to clear the forest. The lands were then divided between the Arab and the Shirazi.<sup>76</sup> Coupled with the ease with which land changed hands between the Arab and the Shirazi in both directions, which is suggested by the case cited above, a large number of Shirazi became owners of clove lands. Thus in 1922 there were nearly three times as many Shirazi plantation owners as Arabs in Pemba and four times as many in Zanzibar, though Shirazi plantations tended to be smaller.<sup>77</sup>

The conclusion emerging from this discussion is that as a general rule the best clove areas in both islands were formerly forested and were little used except for hunting or collecting firewood. It is therefore unlikely that much expropriation of Shirazi kiambo land by Arabs occurred in these areas. In the case of Zanzibar more particularly there

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74 Loarer, "Pemba".

75 Tidbury, 163.

76 Ibid. Middleton, 53.

77 Tidbury, 172. Troup, 8.

was a marginal belt at the foothills which had already been cleared and planted with coconuts, fruit trees and food crops. The impression is that by the 1830s some of these lands were already in Arab hands, and that cloves initially encroached upon coconuts in the plantations held by both Arabs and the indigenous people. Arab encroachment into Shirazi lands may have resulted from the feverish expansion in the cultivation of cloves at this time in this belt. There does not appear to be any justification for the assertion that the industry was monopolised by the Arabs to the exclusion of the indigenous people or the Indians,<sup>78</sup> though it is likely that the pattern that obtained in 1922 of large plantations owned by the Arabs and the smaller ones by the Shirazi had begun to develop with the inception of the industry.

d. Zanzibar's Fragile one-crop Economy

Such a rapid and apparently unplanned expansion of the industry brought in its train some problems of massive proportions, with both temporary and long-term effects. Those authors who have commended Seyyid Said for his far-sightedness in extending the cultivation of cloves have shown an amazing amount of economic naivete. None has considered the effects of Zanzibar's bursting the dam of the Dutch monopoly over the

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78 Loarer, 5/23 (4) "girofle", mentions Indian participation in the industry as plantation owners already by the 1840s.

spice. It should have been obvious that the market of this luxury was very delicate, and that the profit margin was maintained artificially at the high figure. That profit may have nearly been halved by 1834 as a result of the crumbling of the monopoly. The massive expansion in the industry, not only in Zanzibar but also in Cayenne, buried the monopoly, and with it the huge profit margin. As production soared from 8,000 frasalas in 1840 to 135,000 frasalas in 1849, so the price tumbled from about \$5 to \$2, and Learer expected it to fall to \$1 in 1849.<sup>79</sup> What was needed, in fact, was a controlled and gradual expansion to avoid producing a huge age-class of the trees which matured at the same time, while confining that expansion to those areas most suited for it. Seyyid Said himself "saw with pain the depreciation of his beautiful plantations". Learer had proposed to him to control further planting by imposing a tax of \$2 for each new clove tree and to prohibit the destruction of coconuts. Seyyid Said replied that the measures proposed "will need surveillance which will cost money, whereas he wishes to save money". Nevertheless the situation was serious enough to move him to impose a duty of  $\frac{1}{4}$  piastre per frasala of

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79 Learer, "girofle". Crofton (1933) The effect of the cayenne source is, unfortunately, not easily apparent. It would appear that cloves had more or less failed there by 1872. The steep rise in the price of clove after the hurricane at Zanzibar suggests the island had already acquired a virtual monopoly. See graph II.

Pemba cloves and to threaten to confiscate plantations which did not re-plant a certain proportion of cocoanut trees.<sup>80</sup> There were some half-hearted attempts at diversification, but apparently with no great success.<sup>81</sup>

Nevertheless, as the trees planted in the 1830s and the 1840s reach maturity, the production of cloves from Zanzibar reached its first plateau during the 1850s.<sup>82</sup> At the same time Zanzibar may have begun to emerge as the most important producer of cloves.<sup>83</sup> Consequently the prices were probably stabilised at a level that made the cultivation of cloves lucrative enough to ensure its continuance, and even gradual expansion. The net result was Zanzibar's increasing dependence, within the borders of the two islands, on what was developing as a single crop economy. The subsequent economic history of Zanzibar, if it can be seen separately from her entrepot role, is akin to a nightmarish honeymoon.

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80 Louren, "girofle". See note 20.

81 Guillaud, II, 146, mentions an experiment to produce indigo, which failed.

82 See graph VII. The cyclone of the early 1820s put an end to Bourbon as a major producer. Madagascar did not apparently emerge as a great producer until the twentieth century, and as late as the first decade of this century, production amounted to an average of about 5,450 frscales only. The only other major producer were Cayennes and the East Indies, whose production figures are not immediately available.

83 Troup, 2.



The industry had several built-in weaknesses, of which the most critical was the great fluctuation in the yield of the clove tree. Tidbury thinks that the two main factors influencing the size of the crop are the weather and the previous crop, and the inter-action between them.<sup>84</sup> Pemba, with a higher rainfall, perhaps experiences less critical annual variation, and this may contribute to the fact that her crops reveal a smaller fluctuation.<sup>85</sup> Attempts to find a regular cycle in the yield have not been fruitful. Statistically for all its worth, it has been worked out that, in a five year period there are, on an average, two good crops, two poor crops and a medium one. The average fluctuation in the forty-year period between 1895/6 and 1934/5 was more than 50% on both sides of the mean. Despite the great range that it does indicate, however, this statistical symmetry hides the depressing actual range of fluctuation from as low as 126,000 frasalas to as high as 990,000 frasalas.<sup>86</sup> The only remedy to this situation was to "De Beers this clove show",<sup>87</sup> as Rhodes typically put it in 1893 when Zanzibar had undoubtedly emerged with almost a monopoly over the production of

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84 Tidbury, 109-110.

85 Lyne, 249. By critical variation I mean the fall below the minimum amount of rainfall necessary for the well-being of the clove tree.

86 Troup, summarised in Crofton, 109. The averages have been worked out from the table in Crofton, 125. Seward gives the variation in the yield of some plantations in the 1860s which gives a similar range. Adm. Report on Zanzibar for the year ending 30.4.1866, MA: 73/1866, pp. 7-25.

87 Crofton, 106. Tidbury, 7.

the spice. In fact it was not until the 1930s that the clove Growers' Association was able to regulate the supply of cloves to the international market and thus stabilise prices.

However, once Zanzibar had emerged as the most important producer, the industry acquired a compensating mechanism which somewhat stabilised the general prosperity of the country. With a limited market the price generally varies inversely with the supply. Thus a bumper crop at Zanzibar had the effect of deflating clove prices, but the total income derived from the crop was partly compensated by increased production. Similarly, a small crop was compensated by an increase in the price. Since, during most of the nineteenth century, the labour force, consisting of slaves, formed part of the permanent establishment, the stabilised prosperity percolated through much of the industry. Ironically, with the emancipation of the slaves and the introduction of wage labour, this partial remedy was nullified to the detriment either of the grower or of the clove picker. Wages would rise during bumper seasons precisely when clove prices would be expected to fall. This is a season of extreme but short-term prosperity for the labourers at the expense of the growers. Poor seasons, on the other hand, deflated the wages when the price of cloves are rising, allowing the grower a fat margin of profit.

The second major problem of this plantation economy is the great seasonality of its activities. The clove tree is

a perennial which yields two crops a year in Zanzibar, the mwaka (July-September) and the vuli (November-December). The spice itself is the dried unopened bud which has to be picked at the precise time before it opens to become the useless "mother of cloves". This characteristic, therefore, imposes a heavy demand on labour during those five months. Under the former slave system it meant that the plantation owner had to keep a large enough slave population on the plantation to perform the necessary activities.<sup>88</sup> This is probably the explanation behind the very large proportion of slaves in the population of Zanzibar in the nineteenth century.<sup>89</sup> The cultivation of food crops, such the manioc may have suffered, but it was probably found more economical at certain critical times to import grains to feed the slaves. On the other hand, the remaining seven months of the year were comparatively idle, for the clove tree in Zanzibar rarely needed or received any attention beyond the normal clearing and under-planting of food crops. The slaves were undoubtedly employed during these months on their plots of land in the cultivation of food crops, some of which were perhaps stored for the harvest seasons. In economic terms as far as the clove industry was

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88 Crofton, 95.

89 Ruschenberger, I, 64, says  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the population was slave in 1834. F.O. Memo /Cogan's/ 29.1.1846, F.O. 54/10, says  $\frac{1}{4}$ . Putnam in 1847 says 60,000 out of 150,000 were slaves. NEMA, 400, 403.

concerned, these months were unproductive and imposed unnecessary overhead costs. Some owners may have sold their slaves at lucrative prices during the seasons hoping to acquire a fresh supply later in time for the harvest. But such a practice could not have been so general since experience in clove picking was a great asset. It contributed greatly to the size of the subsequent crop by minimising the breaking of branches. Moreover, the seasons of demand for slaves for the Arabian market, in April and August, were not as complementary as competitive with the clove harvest season.

### 3. The Sugar Industry

The development of the sugar industry can also be traced to the cessation of the slave trade to the Mascarenes. It is significant that experiments for the cultivation of the sugar cane began in the late 1620s when the screws against the slave trade were tightening. Unlike the clove industry, however, the sugar industry required operation on a larger scale, a heavy investment in machinery and the importation of technical aid. It therefore appears to have been beyond the reach of any but the merchant prince himself. His role in the industry thus remained central especially in its initial stages. In a letter to his agent at Bombay in 1826 he succinctly puts the case.

"In consequence of the abolition of the slave trade the collections [revenue] of Zanzibar have been diminished; it has

therefore been deemed necessary to make plantations of sugar cane in the island of Zanzibar, but the Arabs are ignorant of the mode in which sugar is manufactured, whilst there are certain Frenchmen who are inclined to come to Zanzibar. The revenue deriveable from this article will be more than \$150,000."<sup>90</sup>

Seyyid Said thus looked in the same familiar direction, as the introducer of cloves had done earlier, for inspiration and cuttings. Both the commodities were flourishing in the Mascarenes at the times when they were introduced to Zanzibar.<sup>91</sup> The partnership between Seyyid Said and various sugar manufacturers, both English and French, was one of the standard features of this industry.

By the time Seyyid Said wrote to ascertain the reactions of the Bombay government to his proposal, it appears that some experiments in the cultivation of the sugar cane had already been conducted. Roberts, who visited Zanzibar in 1827/8, expected that sugar would shortly be an article of export.<sup>92</sup> However, nothing more was heard of this particular

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90 Said to Aga Mahomed Shoostree, n.d. but under consultation 9.7.1828, E.A.: 1828-8/299.

91 The sugarcane probably grew in Zanzibar before the 1820s, and the introduction must refer to better varieties suitable for the manufacture of sugar.

92 Roberts to Woodbury, 19.12.1828, L.C.: Robert, VI.

project, perhaps because the Frenchmen, like so many Europeans after them, succumbed to the climate.

A new period of activity coincided with Seyyid Said's shift to Zanzibar in about 1840. A large number of European "adventurers", as Hamerton calls them,<sup>93</sup> thronged around him, advocating all sorts of schemes. Some of them advocated the sugar scheme in the hope of receiving orders for machinery.<sup>94</sup> Cogan had worked in Seyyid Said's navy and had negotiated the British Treaty of Commerce. He was thus familiar with the conditions in East Africa and was on good terms with Seyyid Said. He appears to have been the first in successfully establishing the industry in partnership with the Omani ruler. That partnership set the pattern of such ventures, for it was convenient to both sides. Free labour was scarce in Zanzibar and the direct employment of slave labour by the Europeans would have been embarrassing to them. A convenient formula was thus devised under which the European planter was to provide machinery and supervision while Seyyid Said undertook to provide the land and labourers, i.e. slaves. The produce was to be split equally.<sup>95</sup> In 1842, therefore,

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93 Hamerton to Aberdeen, 24/9/1846, FO 54/10.

94 Extract, Journal of Capt. Freemantle [20.5.1842], FO 54/5.

95 Rubil b. Aslan to Persian Secretary, 4/1841, M.A.: 1840/1-54/1155, pp. 324-6. Freemantle, *loc. cit.*, mentions that the manufacture of sugar will come into operation the following year, i.e. 1843. Hamerton to Aberdeen, 13.4.1844, F.O. 84/540.



Seyyid Said bought 700 slaves, apparently for the sugar plantation at Kizimabani where Waters saw a steam sugar mill in operation in 1844.<sup>96</sup> By the end of the year, a consignment of Zanzibar sugar was seeking entry in London on the terms of "the most favoured nation".<sup>97</sup> By 1848, however, the local representative as well as one of the directors of the firm were dead and its business at Zanzibar wound up.<sup>98</sup> The fate of the sugar factory is not clear.

According to Learer, the English consul, Hamerton, also lent his support to the sugar scheme. Guided by his advice, Seyyid Said sent a vessel to Mauritius and Bourbon to buy heads of sugar cane and engage some planters and chief overseers. He also ordered two very powerful sugar mills from England which were found to be too large for his use and were sent off to Mauritius to be sold.<sup>99</sup> This was hardly an

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- 96 Waters Notes, 18.10.1842, 22.6.1844; NEMA, 253, 257.
- 97 Memorial of Wm. Henderson & Co. to the Treasury, 18.12.1844; Customs House to Canning, 1.1.1845; Board of Trade to Canning, 16.1.1845; Canning to Board of Trade, omitted in final draft, 14.2.1845, F.O. 54/8. Henderson demand the "most favoured nation" treatment for this sugar from Zanzibar with which the Commercial Treaty had been concluded. The legal obstacle was that since it was imported in an English vessel and Henderson was not a Zanzibar subject, it fell in the category of imports from a foreign country only. Coupland, 488-9. He is mistaken in thinking that nothing came of Cogan's sugar schemes.
- 98 Ward to Fabens, 3.1.1848, Fabens, IV. Hamerton's Journal, entry for 1.10.1848, NEMA, 390, 412.
- 99 Learer, I, 5/23(5), "sucre". Said to Palmerstone, 30.6.1847, F.O. 54/11.

auspicious way to start an industry, and coupled with the salary offered to chief overseers, which was too low to attract any but the scum of the industry, it is not surprising that it never got off the ground. Seyyid Said may have been more enthusiastic than prudent. He even engaged a mariner from Mauritius whom he offered land, slaves and machine, half the produce and 100 piastres per month as an advance. But in fifteen or sixteen months the mariner and his companions hardly ever stirred from the city.<sup>100</sup>

Although Cogan thought that Seyyid Said was showing partiality towards the British in accepting his offer to establish the industry over a rival one, Seyyid Said was not granting him any exclusive privileges. Admiral Bazoche was given a distinct impression that Seyyid Said wished to see Europeans, "and notably colonists from Bourbon to whom he offered concessions in land and help, in men and money", to establish sugar factories in Zanzibar.<sup>101</sup> In 1850 he sent his brig to Bourbon to bring M. Classum, two European foremen and various workmen, with their families, numbering 32 persons in all. M. Classum, a creole of Bourbon, was considered to possess all the qualities required to make the industry prosper. He had a fine sugar estate there for 18 years though for some unstated reason he was now ruined. He was to establish the factory at Mwera on the usual terms.

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100 Learer, "sucre".

101 Cogan to Forbes, 28.10.1842, F.O. 84/425.

The Zanzibar climate, however, was apparently strongly opposed to the establishment of French influence. Within six weeks M. Classum and the two European foremen were dead.<sup>102</sup>

Despite these reverses, however, the industry appears to have obtained a footing. "Reasonably good quality" sugar was obtained from the mill at Ikokotoni to produce ayrap for local consumption and sugar for export. By 1847 about 10,000 frascas of sugar were being produced which Seyyid Said wished to send to England or the United States for refining. The Americans were less co-operative but Seyyid Said's English agent was able to get it refined and sent back, at least part of it, for local consumption. The success achieved at such cost, however, was to be marred by the British resolution against importation of sugar from the so-called "slave states", though apparently, that measure did not kill the industry.<sup>103</sup>

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102 Commandant de la Station de la Reunion et de Madagascar to Min. Marine, 10.9.1850; de Belligny to Min. Marine & Colonies, 2.4.1851, AOM:O.I. 15/65. de Belligny to M. A. L., 17.6.1850, C.C.Z.I., ff. 437-44. Burton, 71, 221-2. He mentions that the plantation was at Moheyra, or Mwera, but is wrong in saying that the factory was established "three years ago (1857)" i.e. 1854. M. Classum died in August, 1850.

103 Learer, "sucre". Ward to Buchanan, 13.3.1847. NEMA, 384, says 250,000 lbs. of sugar was produced. Ward to Shepard, 20.12.1847, E I Ward's Letter Book, 1848-9 mentions 10,000 frascas which he suggests the Americans buy from Seyyid Said over an experimental period to discourage Seyyid Said from undertaking his own commercial operations to the U.S. and keep him happy. Said to Shepard, 12.12.1848, Shepard's Papers 10; Ward to Shepard, 14.12.1848, Shepard's Papers 44 (iii); NEMA, 398. Shepard to His Highness, 5.4.1849, Shepard's Papers, 11.

#### 4. Conclusion

The economic development of the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba came to an opportune moment to compensate for the loss of the market for slaves in the Mascarenes. By providing a new market for slaves in the plantations of the two islands it reduced the gravity of the economic dislocation that was otherwise inevitable. The development of the clove industry, however, did not have a merely negative effect of compensation. It introduced into the islands a commodity that was most suited to them and which was lucrative. It provided a heaven-sent economic refuge for Arab and Shirazi investment after they had found themselves unable to compete with the Indians in commerce. It provided a commodity in which a wide circle of the population of Zanzibar could draw a living. The sugar industry had a more limited effect on the whole population since it demanded a larger investment and technical know-how on a scale less suitable for the smaller landowners. Nevertheless it had a significant role in the expansion of industry and the substitution of imports. The two industries, and other minor ones such as the manufacture of coconut oil, greatly expanded the economic activities of the entrepot and diversified the economic base of the commercial empire.

Of greater significance to the history of Zanzibar

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Derche to M. A. E., 2.5.1860, C.C.S. II, 199-213, mentions that the production was 20,000 kg. per annum.

specifically, this development, especially of the clove industry, provided the island with an independent economic base which turned out to be her insurance policy once her larger hinterland was parcelled out amongst the colonial powers. In this sense it was indeed momentous; but it was not an un-mixed blessing. It led to the creation of a plantation economy, using slave labour and based on an erratic and seasonal luxury crop of a limited and only slowly expanding market. While the other major exports of East Africa were able to benefit from a generally rising trend in prices, cloves experienced an unstable, and a generally downward trend in prices. Thus, though cloves provided the only base over which Zanzibar had a direct physical control, it was a very shaky base even after direct government management of the industry succeeded in somewhat stabilising the economy. Before the 1930s, however, the internal economy of Zanzibar and especially the population directly involved in the industry, had to withstand all the buffeting of this agricultural economy. Chronic indebtedness of the landowners and their loss of land were probably partly attributable to the inherent weaknesses of the industry. In the nineteenth century only the diversified base of the commercial empire spared Zanzibar a wild bout in a roller-coaster.

## CHAPTER V

## THE DYNAMO OF ECONOMIC EXPANSION

## UNTIL THE MID-CENTURY

The expansion of Indian trade at Zanzibar during the first quarter of the nineteenth century initially had a limited purpose of making up for the decline in the supply of ivory from Mozambique. As we have seen, that supply had been halved by 1801, and there was a further reduction by 1817 when it stood at a third of the peak in the mid 1790s.<sup>1</sup> The market was then largely confined to India where the demand was steady at a certain plateau. (see graph III) It is, therefore likely that though the expansion of supply from the coast north of Cape Delgado was rapid during the first two decades of the century, that expansion may have been arrested once that plateau was reached. The price of ivory, once East Africa had succeeded in filling the gap in the supply, declined from the astronomical heights of the late 1800s to stagnant levels indicating that the market was being fully supplied. (See graph II) Moreover, dependence on a single market subjected East Africa to violent fluctuations as a result of Indian famine which, if it had persisted, would have greatly weakened the economy. East Africa had gained a valuable market for its unexploited ivory, but by the beginning of the third decade it appeared as if it had reached a dead end. Indian trade and settlement would have continued but the volume of trade would have remained relatively small and the significance of Indian settlement minimised. The hinterland might have

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1 See page 90.



continued to expand as sources closer to the coast became exhausted but at a slow pace. The major economic transformation that East Africa experienced during the nineteenth century would have been on a smaller scale.

East Africa's bright future, however, was not thus to be dimmed thanks largely to the affluence of the industrialised societies of the North Atlantic. During the second decade of the century British demand for ivory appears to have been at a stable level of about 2,800 cwt. of which over 2,000 cwt. were supplied by West Africa.<sup>2</sup> During the early 1820s the market suddenly expanded to a new plateau at about 4,500 cwt., and then again in the mid 1830s to another plateau at about 5,600 cwt. Thus within two decades the demand had doubled. (See Graph IV .) This peculiar stepped escalation is probably related to the popularization of new uses of ivory. What is readily apparent from the graph is that the traditional sources in West Africa were not able to expand their supply. It is possible that their inability to expand their supply was related to problems of demand, not so much the total demand, but the quality of ivory in demand. It is worth pointing out that ivory from the western half of Africa tends to be "hard" and brittle, and is harder to polish. It is therefore possible that a particular shift in the use of ivory may have initially

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2 Wilburn, I, 63, gives the average total import of ivory from 1788 to 1799 at 1,576 cwt. Combined with the three figures available for the first decade of the nineteenth century, they give an average of 1,718 cwt. Thus already by the second decade there was a marked increase in the demand.

prevented West African sources from expanding their supply, and later the decline in popularity of the original use may have lowered the demand for "hard" ivory.<sup>3</sup>

This interpretation seems to receive some support when we consider the source that was most able to take advantage of this new demand. Before 1822 the "soft" ivory from East Africa went to India for her own internal consumption, and a very small quantity was re-exported to England. During the early 1820s, apparently as a result of the rising demand for "soft" ivory in England, there was an increase in the price of ivory at Surat which was more representative of the home market, and a diversion from it to the English market. That rise in ivory prices was also observable at Bombay which soon emerged as the main market for both the home and the re-export market. (See graphs II & III). At London, India appears to have been entirely successful in meeting the increased demand, supplying over 1,800 cwt. of ivory while West African sources were able only to maintain their level of supply until the mid 1830s. The second escalation in the demand of ivory appears to have had a direct influence on the supply from West Africa which now began to decline, strongly suggestive of shifts in the quality of ivory in demand. Here again it was

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3 Encyclopaedia Britannica (1911), XV, 92, (1970) XII, 806-7. In the 1840s when "hard" ivory began to appear at Zanzibar, probably from the Congo, the Americans tried desperately to avoid taking it. NEMA, 410-1. Maris to Shepard, 12/9/1851, P.M.: Shepard's P.36. He says that "hard" ivory was used for cutlery and "soft" for combs and piano keys.

the Indian source which was able to rise to the occasion and expand its supply to its new plateau of about 3,300 cwt. (See graph IV.)

This second escalation in the Indian supply was facilitated by a net increase in the import of ivory at Bombay from East Africa rather than diversion from the home market. It appears, however, that the supply to London from this source had now reached its optimum. From about 1850 the demand at London rose steeply rather than as a series of steps, more than doubling within twenty-five years, and yet the India source does not seem to have been able to take advantage of it. There does not appear to be any ceiling reached in the supply of ivory from East Africa to Bombay which continued to rise steeply. (See graphs III & IV) The reason seems to be that the continued increase in the demand at London had stimulated the exploitation of other sources in Africa, particularly Egypt (i.e. the Nilotic Sudan) and South Africa which now assumed the role of filling up the gap between the rising demand and the stagnant supply from India and West Africa. As more or less virgin sources, they may have been able to offer ivory at lower prices, and thus somewhat lower the price of ivory at Bombay. (See graphs II/ & III) The arrest in the re-export of ivory from Bombay permitted the home market to claim a larger share of the ivory.

It is indeed remarkable that East Africa was able to expand its supply of ivory during the first half of the century not only to make up for the declining supply to India from Mozambique, but also to meet via Bombay the increasing British

demand for "soft" ivory which West Africa could not supply. But these were not the only markets which East Africa was supplying during the nineteenth century. West Africa had also formed the main source of ivory for the American market before the 1820s. It is perhaps not entirely accidental that American merchants expanded their trade on the East African coast at around the same time as there was an increase in the demand for "soft" ivory at London, and probably in America as well for the same uses. Zanzibar was thus supplying ivory to two ever-broadening streams which by the mid-century were mighty rivers.

Despite this ability to expand the supply it should be pointed out that the expansion was not instantaneous. The exploitation of such a primary commodity by hunting placed a ceiling on the yield per unit of area. In some cases, perhaps in many, the exploitation was vicious, threatening to exterminate the species altogether, and elsewhere it was bound to lead to dispersion and retreat of the elephants into less accessible parts in the interior. This, however, was probably not the only cause which pushed traders farther afield in search of ivory. Alison Smith has argued that nearer areas may have been overstocked with goods to such an extent as to raise the price of ivory to unattractive levels.<sup>4</sup> While instances

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4 H.E.A., 276.

of such a case can be quoted, it should be pointed out that the people were unlikely to price themselves out of the market deliberately unless the trade was no longer profitable for them and there was a lucrative alternative. Under competitive conditions it was always possible that some traders would be satisfied with a smaller margin of profit especially when coupled with shorter distances to the market, or that the people of the district themselves may undertake to transport the ivory to the coast. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that adventurers were tempted to advance into the "frontier" areas before nearer areas were exhausted because of the quick returns offered from people not yet acquainted with the full value of ivory.<sup>5</sup>

These two possibilities are not necessarily diametrically opposed and the process of expansion of the hinterland probably involved a combination of them. They had a similar effect on trade since they involved the lengthening lines of communication between the source and the market and the attendant problems of transport and organization of the trade. The *tsotso* are widespread in East Africa and were probably so in the nineteenth century. They may have restricted the use of beasts of burden. All of Burton's donkeys died within six months and before he arrived at Unyanyambo. He was able to acquire Nyemwezi donkeys and early accounts seem to suggest that they were regularly used for transportation. Nevertheless, all the later

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5 See pp. 396-7



first-hand accounts emphasize the role of the Nyanwozi porter in the trade. It is not clear whether such a change in fact occurred, nor the reasons for such an apparently retrogressive step. Roberts says that the small animals were not suitable for carrying ivory, an argument that would have applied to the earlier period as well. Donkeys could carry twice as much as a porter, and Stanley went to great lengths to show that they were more economical. For some reason, however, they never caught on, and the main reason probably was the great mortality.<sup>6</sup> Long-distance trade was therefore forced to rely on human porters who could carry a normal load of 70 lbs. Thirty two porters would thus be required to transport a single ton of ivory from Ujiji to the coast at a cost of about £190, or nearly 25% of the value of ivory at the coast, in the early 1870s.<sup>7</sup> Only ivory could withstand such high transport costs, and then apparently only so long as the price of ivory at the coast kept far in advance of any possible inflation in transport costs.

The increase in ivory prices was, therefore, a necessary condition to the expansion of the hinterland to supply the

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6 Cooley (1845) 213. Stanley (1872) 52-5, 540-1. Burton (1872), I, 349-350; *id.* (1860), I, 341. Roberts (1970), 58

7 Beachy, 275. He estimates the cost of transportation from Ujiji to the coast at £50 a ton, but does not give a date to which it applied. Wrigley's estimate for the 1890s from Buganda to Mombasa is £130. Wrigley, 75. Stanley (1872), 52-4. He estimated the cost of transporting ten loads from the coast to Unyamwebe at \$185, and if we allow half as much again for the march from there to Ujiji, it should cost about \$280. They would have carried 20 fr. of ivory at a cost of about \$14 per fr. or £193 per ton. The price of ivory at the coast in 1870 was about \$58. See graph II Bennett (1963), 89. He gives the price of ivory at \$60.



steeply rising demand. It seems, however, that other factors contributed to the tardiness in expanding the supply to meet the demand, and thus caused ivory prices to rise even higher. With the greater distances involved, a larger commercial organization was required to finance the caravan and direct it in the interior for long periods of time. It has been shown<sup>8</sup> that many of the Indians who migrated to East Africa were probably men of limited capital. All of them took full advantage of the six month loan of goods which they forced the Americans to grant to conduct their trade on the coast. It was probably by this method that they accumulated their own capital to finance longer term caravans into the interior. Scarcity of capital was therefore a likely factor also in retarding the expansion of the supply.

The caravan system, moreover, entailed a very slow turnover of capital and the volume of trade was likely to be small.<sup>9</sup> The need for protection called for the organization of either large well-armed parties of between 200 and 1,000 and even more, or the banding together of a large number of smaller trading parties. Protection was necessary to guard against not only the occasional band of marauders but also against unreasonable tolls along the route through a region devoid or exhausted of the commodity in demand. Thus Tippu Tip's return caravan in 1880 with 2,000 tusks of ivory apparently needed 1,000 askaris

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8 See pp. 244-5.

9 Weber, 208-9.

to guard it,<sup>10</sup> though in this case the number bears some relation to the aggressive personality of Tippu Tip himself and the very disturbed conditions along the route as a result of Mirambo's wars. These wars are an indication of the instability of relations between the traders and the intervening politics. They could prolong the duration of a commercial expedition which often took at least a couple of years to complete anyway. The Mwa Solo conflicts of the early 1860s made ivory pile up at Tabora for two years causing the price of ivory to rise at Zanzibar, and when the large quantity eventually arrived at Zanzibar in 1863-4 it was bound to depress prices for a couple of years.<sup>11</sup> Famines and diseases, especially smallpox and cholera which periodically affected the routes with dreadful results, further intensified the organizational problems and introduced elements of uncertainty and instability to the commercial system.

These factors in varying degrees contributed to the delayed response in the expansion of the supply of ivory from East Africa to meet the rapidly rising international demand. At least initially, however, this slow response was not detrimental to the East African economy for it ensured that the demand constantly outstripped the supply and the consequent steady rise in the

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10 Thomson to Shufeldt, 21/11/1879. N.A.W. Misc. Letters of the State Dept., M.179/Roll 554. Tippu Tip, 15.

11 Seward to By. Govt., n.d. No. 65/1866, MA: 73/1866, pp. 7-25. See graph II for 1862 to 1865, and graph V

price of ivory throughout the first three-quarters of the century which was so momentous for the East African economy. Though the price was not permitted to rise unchecked because of the opening up of other virgin fields, the rise was nevertheless steady and steep. At the same time this clear economic advantage was not nullified by the inflation in the price of manufactured imports which were invariably given in exchange. On the contrary, as a result of mechanization, the price of cotton goods, brasswire, muskets, gunpowder and beads tended to remain stable or even decline (see graph II). The diverging price curves of ivory and of the industrial imports thus enabled the traders at the coast to pay not only for increased transportation costs but also higher prices to the producers of ivory in the interior and to the caravan traders, as well as allowing a favourable margin to permit the accumulation of capital at the coast. It also created a strong incentive for economic integration of the coast and the interior and the involvement of an ever-increasing number of the people of the interior in the international market-economy.

#### 1. Anglo-American Trade at Zanzibar.

The phenomenal rise in the English demand for ivory through Bombay had rejuvenated East Africa's "northern circuit" of trade with India and broadened the arteries without fundamentally altering the pattern of trade as far as East Africa was concerned. However, the triangular pattern of trade thus instituted with its points at Zanzibar, Bombay and London

carried with it a great potential for a profitable short-circuiting of at least part of the ivory by the establishment of direct trade between the industrialised societies of the North Atlantic and East Africa. Anglo-American trade thus posed a multiple challenge to Indian trade. It threatened to subject it to the higher international price of ivory and divert at least part of the ivory from the Indian home market. It was also bound to detract from or retard Bombay's middleman role in the re-export of ivory to London. Finally, it threatened to displace Indian cotton goods at Zanzibar. Many of these threats were similar to those posed by the French trade in the eighteenth century to the Omani slave trade, but without the political connotations. Some of them materialised for the trade with India, but by this time Indian traders already had a firm foothold at Zanzibar though with the other foot still in India. These economic changes had begun to shift the centre of gravity from the northern Indian Ocean to a more secure fulcrum at Zanzibar with its two major commercial arteries to the south as well as the north. They permitted the Indians to shift their weight to East Africa to benefit from a larger middleman role there.

a) The Extension of American Trade to East Africa.

The "southern circuit" was initially actuated not by the English demand for ivory but by the American demand for hides, and later for copal and ivory. This American initiative originated from the small port of Salem which was trying desperately

to stave off its demise by pioneering into the "backwaters" of American foreign trade. It had a shallow harbour able to take vessels of up to about 300 tons only, and was thus being displaced in the larger markets by the deeper ports of Boston and New York. It also suffered from a locational disadvantage as the centre of American population and market shifted westwards. It initially attempted to overcome its lack of convenient lines of inland communication by re-exporting the imported commodities to the larger ports to the south or even to Europe. This was only a stop-gap solution and by the late 1840s merchants from the larger ports could not be kept out of its preserve. Ultimately the Salem merchants themselves were forced to decamp to Boston.<sup>12</sup>

Earlier in the century, however, East African trade offered bright prospects to Salem. Its small vessels served the new market well by not creating too huge a demand at one time as to raise the prices too rapidly. As the trade expanded Salem merchants were able to send more of their small vessels in an ultimately unsuccessful bid to keep out the vessels from the large ports. Moreover, they specialized in a few commodities with high proportionate value and thus hoped to monopolise the supply to a limited but expanding market. These considerations characterized Salem's trade with Zanzibar and constant fears were expressed that the trade might be "overdone". From these arose Salem's strategy for a controlled

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<sup>12</sup> Northway, , 123-131. Phillips (1947), 1-2, 6.

growth of the trade. In view of the rapidly expanding international demand for East African commodities Salen's hopes were to be dashed eventually, though by that time its merchants had established deep roots at Zanzibar and were able to survive almost throughout the nineteenth century.

Salen's extension of the trade to the East African coast took the form of a two-pronged advance from the south-east and the north-east. One of the pioneers of the trade, N.L. Rogers, was later to claim that he opened up the trade from information obtained while trading at Ile de France and Bourbon between 1804 and 1816.<sup>13</sup> There was apparently a gap of several years after the latter date during which American trade first extended to Madagascar to trade in hides for Salen's rapidly expanding tanning industry, and in jerked beef for the slave workers of Cuba.<sup>14</sup> The Americans may have been introduced to the East African staples at Madagascar. Copal may have been a product of Madagascar itself or the Americans, on information obtained there, may have extended their voyage to the East coast while waiting for their cargo to be collected at Majunga. Small quantities of the commodity began to arrive at Salen in 1823.<sup>15</sup> The first recorded visit to the East coast appears to be that of Captain Johnson who visited Zanzibar and Mombasa in 1823

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13 Putnam, IV, 31.

14 Northway, 130. NEMA, xxvi.

15 Emerton to C. & Howard, 5/12/1823; C. & Howard to Emerton, 3/3/1824; Acct. Sales, 21/3/1824. Harvard: Emerton Papers VI.



and is specifically stated to have traded for copal and ivory.<sup>16</sup> It is not entirely clear why he ventured up north. About thirty years later Jairar Sewji, the custom master at Zanzibar, related that his father, "learning that a vessel manned by whites was at Majunga, went over in a buzalo to induce the captain to visit Zanzibar".<sup>17</sup> This would suggest an attempt by Zanzibar to widen its market by crushing Americans in it.

While beef and hides from Madagascar remained the main objectives, copal and ivory began to form a regular and growing part of the return cargo. However, demand had apparently begun to grow gradually, and from 1825 small schooners began to be employed for trade primarily with the African coast.<sup>18</sup> The arrival at Zanzibar of 231 ton ship "Black Warrior" in 1831 with gunpowder and \$30,000 in specie demonstrated confidence in the trade. According to Paine, Captain Bortram met the Sultan who was on the point of despatching a large cargo of copal to India. \$13,000 worth of the cargo was immediately transferred to the American ship which returned to Salem with the largest quantity of uncleaned copal from East Africa thus far.<sup>19</sup> a

Beverley:

- 16 Lefavour, Mss. 16,977. Tagnery, 65-8.P.M. ✓ "Imports Books", for "Fawn" 6/1/1824.
- 17 Osgood, 54. Trumbull, 94.
- 18 S.C.H.R.: Laurel. Return of Merchandise from Morbasa, 6/6/1826; Nourus. Return of Merchandise, 10-14/3/1827; Landing certificates for the Virginia, signed in Arabic by Said b. Muslim and Amir Said b. Sulaiman al-Shayfi at Zanzibar, and her Entry of Merchandise, 19/6/1826; Sny's Manifest of cargo loaded at Zanzibar and East African coast, 11/8/1827. Northway, 150.
- 19 Paine, 443-4. Putnam, I, 52. S.C.H.R.: Outward Manifest, 1/12/1830; Goods landed at Majunga, 19/3/1831; Entry of Merchandise, 3/4/1832.

clear example of diversion from India. The Americans, however, may already have over-estimated the capacity of the supply to expand fast enough, and they were forced to revert to smaller schooners. This may be the first case of American merchants being stopped short in their tracks, retrenching and then gradually expanding again in step with the supply.

The second prong of American trade was stimulated by information received along the northern rim of the Indian Ocean about the prospects for trade in East Africa. Small quantities of copal and ivory were exported from India to the United States where "Indian" ivory acquired a reputation of being finer than the "African", presumably West African.<sup>20</sup> In 1826, while trading for coffee at Mocha, Captain Millet found a great shortage of grain and sailed to Zanzibar to supply it. He had bought ivory perhaps from the northern markets the previous year, and he now took the opportunity to buy nearly \$12,000 worth of ivory in East Africa. Significantly, he returned the following year, this time stopping in East Africa first, and unlike his previous cargo which was 99% specie, more suitable for the Mocha market, the present one contained cotton goods to the extent of nearly 30%, indicating an understanding of the demands on the East African

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20 I.O.: P/419/54 & 55, Exports of ivory from Bombay. Howard to Emerton, 31/5/1828. Harvard: Emerton Papers, VI.

const.<sup>21</sup> Towards the end of the year Roberts, who had obtained information at Bombay about the commercial potential of "the Arab ports on the east coast of Africa"<sup>22</sup> arrived at Zanzibar. Nearly half the cargo consisted of textiles and a third of gunpowder, muskets and lead. Unlike the later American cargoes, however, the textiles consisted of a great variety of cloths, many of which suggest Indian provenance, and perhaps more suited to the urban tastes of Zanzibar rather than that of the African interior. In return Roberts took a large amount of copal, some dates, Colombo roots, etc., but no ivory at all.<sup>23</sup> The reason for this may be that he arrived at Zanzibar in October, too late for the ivory which would have been shipped by then in the dhows departing with the tail-end of the monsoon. Copal, on the other hand, was available at the coast and could be dug up after the short Vuli rain season. The Zanzibar merchants were not prepared to see him go without making an added profit from this unexpected visitor during the off-season. He was thus detained for four months which he claimed contributed to the failure of the voyage.<sup>24</sup>

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21 Northway', 149-150. NZML. 148-51. S.C.H.R.: Ann's Outward Cargo bound for the East Indies, 4/3/1826. P.M.: Shepard's Papers I: Invoice of Merchandise from Zanzibar and Mocha, 1/1/1827; Invoice of goods shipped at Mombasa & Lamu, 1/1/1828 ditto. Brava, Lamu & Mocha, 10/11/1828.

22 Roberts to Woodbury, 19/12/1828. L.C.: Roberts Papers I & VI.

23 Mohamed b. Sef, gov. of Zanzibar, Sewar, Banyan Collector of Customs in account with Emd. Roberts, 10/1827-1/1828. This is the earliest direct reference to the farming of customs at Zanzibar by the Indian firm of Sewji Topan and his more famous son Jairam Sewji. Ibid., V.

24 Roberts to Said, 27/1/1828. Ibid.. I & VI.

The failure of his voyage led Roberts to determine the causes and crusade for the removal of what he considered the disabilities under which Americans had to trade at Zanzibar. Seyyid Said for his part probably saw the potentialities of American connection. Perhaps his first consideration was for the supply of arms and ammunitions from a source independent of the British authorities in India. Immediately upon arrival from the expedition against rebellious Mombasa and Pate, he asked Roberts to send him a large number of bombs and mortars, ostensibly for use against his Portuguese enemies to the south but perhaps Mombasa was the major consideration. He told Roberts that he was anxious the British should not know about it, though he informed Roberts that they could be delivered either at Zanzibar or at Bombay where the secret could not perhaps have been kept. Seyyid Said may also have expressed a general desire for an increase in the American trade, and may even have considered extending his own commercial activities to America and negotiate a treaty by sending one of his vessels there, but he did not have a suitable navigator.<sup>25</sup>

One of the major complaints which Roberts thought could be remedied by such a treaty, was that the Americans were not received on the same footing as the "English", presumably the Indians from British India. Roberts says that favourable treatment meted out to the "English" was due to a commercial treaty between Britain and Zanzibar which, however, was not

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25 Roberts to Woodbury, 19/12/1828; s. to s. 25/12/1828, ibid.

concluded until 1839, but commercial relations between British India and Said's dominions were undoubtedly regulated by conventions of long standing. Roberts suggests that the British government had obtained these privileges by paying Seyyid Said "a large sum of money for the suppression of the slave trade".<sup>26</sup> As we have seen, no such compensation was paid after the Moresby Treaty,<sup>27</sup> and Seyyid Said may have bluffed to ward off Robert's arguments though he eventually agreed to grant the Americans similar privileges.

The Americans at this time were subjected to a 5% duty on both imports and exports, a compulsory commission of 2½% "for the benefit of ... Bon Amody", and \$100 anchorage money.<sup>28</sup> Roberts' assertion that British subjects paid 5% duty on imports alone is most interesting for it confirms the indignization of the Indians who, as we have seen, were subject to similar charges in 1811.<sup>29</sup> The Americans, moreover, were not allowed to trade freely but had to transact all their business with the governor and the Indian collector of customs. Roberts concluded that "American vessels labor under such heavy disadvantages that they are unwilling to come here the second time". He described his voyage as "unsuccessful" though he

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27 See p. 169

28 "Bon Amody" is probably an attempt to represent Swana Hemedi, who may be the same person as Hemed b. Sulaiman who was to become governor of Zanzibar until his death in 1873. Guillois to M.A.E., 17/12/1873, P.Z. IV.

29 Roberts to Woodbury, 19/12/1828. L.C.: Roberts Papers I & VI. See p. 106 above.



probably was sanguine about the future. He was determined to free American trade from such disabilities as could be removed by diplomatic means by initiating a process to conclude a commercial treaty between the two nations. Even before he left Zanzibar he asked the Sultan to make him "Bearer of Dispatches to my government stating upon what terms American vessels shall be received into Your Highness' ports and in fact, sending a commercial treaty", but Seyyid Said does not seem to have heeded this request.<sup>30</sup> By 1832, when American trade may have begun to reveal potentialities more clearly than in 1828, Seyyid Said himself was anxious to encourage expansion in this new direction by sending a message to the President of the United States in connection with the proposed commercial treaty.<sup>31</sup> By then Roberts's scheme was well under way. In January 1832 he received his commission as "agent for the purpose of examining, in the Indian Ocean, the means of extending the commerce of the United States by commercial arrangements". He was to be rated as Captain's clerk to keep his mission secret from other powers who might wish to thwart American objectives.<sup>32</sup>

The subsequent negotiations centred around the demand by the Americans to be placed on the same footing as English subjects, i.e. to be treated as "the most favoured nation".

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30 Roberts to Said, 27/1/1828, *ibid.*

31 Bennett (1959), 244-5.

32 *Ibid.*, 245. Livingstone to Roberts, 27/1/1832. NAW: "Special Missions", microfilm M77/152, p.73.



According to Roberts the Sultan acceded to the demand apparently without debate. Export duty and all other charges were officially abolished apart from the 5% import duty. The treaty included a provision against price fixing by the Sultan and against government monopoly over foreign trade. As the first of the commercial treaties it offered the most favourable terms of trade with no specified limitations on where and in what to trade, except in the articles of muskets, powder and ball which could be sold only to the government in the island of Zanzibar itself.<sup>33</sup> This was stated later to have been due to the rebellion in Mombasa and the limitation was removed in 1837.<sup>34</sup>

By its very nature as the first commercial treaty, however, it was vague on many questions and did not even consider others, which were to cause strains in American relations with Zanzibar. Said must have assumed, for example, that the Americans would always trade at Zanzibar, and never on the Mrima coast which had been reserved for the local traders. The question of transshipment duties, and adjudication of disputes between the Americans and Zanzibar subjects, were not even raised. Roberts reported that specie was not charged any import duty,<sup>35</sup> and

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33 President Jackson to the Senate of the United States, 30/5/1834. L.C.: Roberts Papers, VI, E. Roberts, 361-2 Ruschamburger, I, 151-4.

34 NEMA, 220. Said to Waters, 13/6/1837. P.M.: Waters Papers, X.

35 NEMA, 163. See pp. 261, 288.

yet the treaty does not contain any reference to it. On the other hand the temporary limitation on arms and ammunitions was included and when it was unilaterally removed by Said the treaty was not even amended.

Imperfect as it was, the treaty governed American relations with Zanzibar until they lapsed in the 20th century. Its imperfections were realised at various times but the Americans could never hope to negotiate a more favourable treaty once competitors from other nations had entered the Zanzibar market. By the same token they could not accede to Said's pleas for modifications. They, therefore, turned to verbal understandings often with veiled blackmail on both sides, that while the wording of the treaty would not be changed the Americans would refrain from exercising their treaty rights contrary to Said's desires.

It is worth pointing out that while American trade undoubtedly benefitted from the regularization of commercial relations and the reduction in duties as a result of the treaty, it had not waited for the treaty before expanding. Between Roberts's first visit to Zanzibar in 1827/8 and the time when Seyyid Said ratified the treaty in October, 1835, about thirty-three American merchant vessels are known to have visited East Africa or returned with substantial quantities of ivory and copal. Of these twenty-eight originated from Salon, and the remaining five from Boston and New York.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, their trade remained on a rather primitive level.

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<sup>36</sup> See appendix C.

involving the system of "annual voyage" and coastwise collection of the commodities. Captain Hart remarked in 1834 that they had "great difficulty in collecting a cargo, and their plan was to touch upon different parts of the coast, and leave one or two of their crew..."<sup>37</sup> This is confirmed by a typical letter of instruction in 1836 which ordered Capt. Smith to proceed to Mozambique, Ibo and Zanzibar, where he was to invest all his cargo and specie in ivory and copal. In case he found a rival vessel in Zanzibar he was to leave his supercargo there and then to proceed to Brava and leave his second officer to collect hides. His itinerary was also to include Bombay and Cochin as well, "to see what can be done there".<sup>38</sup>

Capt. Smith was further advised that in making his contracts he should pay a fourth or a fifth in goods in order to sell his merchandise, an indication of a rather large amount of specie that they still carried and the effort they had to make to push the merchandise. Hart found two American brigs at Zanzibar one of which had brought goods the previous year which "did not answer" and had thus brought dollars on the present voyage, as had the other vessel.<sup>39</sup> Specie, however, was a poor substitute for the right type of merchandise. Muskets

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37 Hart, 37-8.

38 Owners of Cherokee to W.B. Smith, 4/4/1836. P.M.; Shepard's Papers 3.

39 Ibid.. Hart, 40.

and gunpowder were probably always in demand and continued to be imported, but their demand was limited and perhaps selective. In 1831, four hundred and seventy six kegs of gunpowder out of nine hundred and seventy six were returned on board the Monmouth and two kegs of specie were landed instead.<sup>40</sup>

The Americans, in fact, had not yet begun to concentrate on their one strong staple in the future, their unbleached cotton goods, the famous "Merokani". However, the smaller cargoes of American cottons had apparently begun to establish a reputation along the coast, and from at least 1834 they began to form about a third of their cargoes.<sup>41</sup> By 1835 when Ruschenberger visited Zanzibar "Merokani" was apparently well established.

The American cotton manufactures have taken precedence of the English... The English endeavour to imitate our fabric by stamping their own with American marks... but the people say the strength and wear of the American goods are... superior.<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, Zanzibar had begun to act as the distribution centre of American cottons for Arabia and Persia as well<sup>43</sup>

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40 Beverley: Journal of the Monmouth, entries for 8, 11 & 29/11/1831.

41 Thomas Perkins. Sales at Zanzibar, 25/7/1834; Outward Invoice, 14/6/1836. P.M.: Shephard's Papers 24, S.C.H.R.; Shawmut's Outward Invoice of merchandise, 18/12/1833.

42 Ruschenberger, I, 65-6.

43 Burns<sup>(1835)</sup> III, 360.

Ruschenberger is generally sober but he seems to anticipate the capture of the East African market by "merakani". It may not have as yet found favour in the interior trade which may perhaps explain why at least part of the still small consignments of American cottons were re-exported to the north. Even at an average of about \$5,700 worth of cotton goods per American vessel in 1834 and 1836, the average import of American cottons in the mid 1830s amounted perhaps, to no more than about \$45,600.<sup>44</sup> Exports of cotton goods from India to East Africa do not seem to show any decline at this time, though their growth was probably being arrested by American cottons. Thus, whereas for the first quarter of the nineteenth century they show an average of about \$76,000 during the critical period between 1828/9 and 1839/40, the average is nearly \$95,000.<sup>45</sup> Even as late as 1859 India and America ran neck and neck in the supply of cotton goods to East Africa.<sup>46</sup>

Hart was certainly wrong when he said, apparently on the authority of the English rival, that the Americans began to buy ivory only after they saw Norsworthy do so in 1834.<sup>47</sup> In

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44 See Appendix C. Average of the 4 vessels, Thomas Perkins and Shawmut in 1834, and Generous and Thomas Perkins in 1836. There were eight American merchant vessels trading at Zanzibar in 1834, 1835 and 1836.

45 See Appendix A. The average for 1802/3-1827/8 was Rs. 168,000, and for 1828/9-1839/40 was Rs. 210,000. Converted at the rate of Rs. 2.2 = \$1. Milburn, I, 198.

46 Rigby to the Secretary of State for India, 1/5/1860. P.R.O.: FO 54/17. India supplied 46<sup>o</sup>/o of Zanzibar's cotton imports, and the U.S. 47<sup>o</sup>/o.

47 Hart, 40.

fact, ivory formed the larger part of many of the American cargoes in the 1820s. From about 1830 there seems to have been a partial reversal with copal forming the major portion. This pattern corresponds with the changes in the import of copal into Bombay,<sup>48</sup> and may indicate, perhaps, popularization of the commodity which was used in the manufacture of varnish. The reversal, however, was only temporary, and the two commodities formed the staples of American export trade from Zanzibar. They supplied the raw material to the ivory comb manufacturers of Connecticut as well as to the copal cleaning industry set up at Salem in the mid 1830s.<sup>49</sup>

By the mid 1830s, therefore, the Americans had established their trade with Zanzibar on the secure bases of the supply of "morkani" and the demand for the two major commodities of East Africa, ivory and copal. In the former they met competition from the pre-existing Indian supply of cotton goods. However, the instability of the Indian cotton manufacturing industry as a result of famine, and its decline in the face of English competition, as well as the increasing demand for cotton goods in East Africa as trade expanded, permitted the Americans a fairly easy avenue of penetration. Similar circumstances permitted them to enter the ivory and copal markets, which raised the

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48 See appendix A & C. During the first fifteen years copal formed only 2.5% of the imports of Bombay and Surat from the coast of Africa, rising to 7% over the following fifteen years. In the early 1830s it constituted nearly a quarter of the total imports.

49 Northway, 373-4.



price of these commodities. However, the expanding supply insured there was no necessary decline in the trade with India but only, perhaps, a retardation of its growth. The entry of the Americans into the trade of Zanzibar was thus not resisted even by the Indians; on the contrary they were eagerly welcomed as a new source of imports and a new market for the local commodities.

b) Direct English Trade with East Africa.

The establishment of direct English trade with East Africa would appear to have been an inevitable short-circuiting of the devious route by which East African ivory reached the London market via Bombay since the early 1820s. It may have developed out of the trade between Bombay and East Africa in India-based English vessels as they had formerly done with Delgoa Bay,<sup>50</sup> and the logic of transporting ivory and copal direct to London after the demand there had begun to rise must have appeared obvious. There is evidence of direct British trade with East Africa as early as the mid-1820s,<sup>51</sup> but the few British vessels known to have traded there may have been isolated cases. Nonsworthy appears to have been the first to appreciate the

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50 Extract from a letter to Croker, 1/6/1823, MA: 22/1823, pp. 29-43, mentions the Singapore which was fitted out at Calcutta in 1820. Having touched at Zanzibar she went to trade in Delgoa Bay.

51 P.R.O.: Adm. 52/3940, Emery's Journal, entry for 23/9/1825, mentions the Salisbury of Liverpool trading at Zanzibar and Mombasa.

the full potential of short-circuiting the ivory trade, and several circumstantial pieces of evidence seem to suggest that he acquired information about East Africa in India.<sup>52</sup> Hart garlanded him with a long string of adjectives, describing him as "a fat clean industrious active close-handed fellow [who] understands perfectly what he is about".<sup>53</sup> He may have visited East Africa before his first known visit in 1833 for he had by then already sent a report of the commercial prospects of the coast which induced the firm of Newman, Hunt and Christopher of London to embark on a large scale of direct trade.<sup>54</sup>

The firm appointed Norworthy their agent at Zanzibar at a salary of \$3,000, and he arrived there in August, 1833, as master of the 190 ton brig Sandwich, apparently from England via Kilwa.<sup>55</sup> Later he proceeded to Lamu where he had the occasion to interpret the letter from the "Queen of Madagascar" whose hand Sayyid Said had asked in marriage apparently to obtain a force of soldiers to help him subdue Mombasa. It was probably at this time that he made an acquaintance with Khamis b. Uthman, Sayyid Said's envoy to Madagascar, who had acted as interpreter to Owen and the British establishment at

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52 Such as his Memorial to R. Grant, Governor of Bombay, 23/11/1837, FO 54/2.

53 Hart, 40.

54 Hunt to Cogan, 10/10/1838, FO 84/425.

55 See Appendix C. ~~MEMO~~ 202.

Mombasa in the mid 1820s, and who accompanied him to London the following year to become Cooley's informant for the geography of inner Africa.<sup>56</sup> It was during this first voyage that Hart observed Norsworthy's trade at Zanzibar in early 1834 in competition with the Americans. His trade was apparently successful, for he was able to dispose the whole cargo of his inward merchandise and was then ready to return with a full cargo of copal, ivory, gold dust and tortoise-shell.<sup>57</sup>

The fact that the firm sent Norsworthy out on his second voyage towards the end of the same year, and went on to expand their activities rapidly over the next few years confirms the bright prospects East Africa seemed to offer to direct British trade. They used the larger brigs in their earlier voyages for coastwise collection of commodities at other ports on the coast as well as at Zanzibar. The Sandwich thus traded at Kilwa and Lamu in 1833 and 1834. In 1834 Norsworthy settled down at Lamu as a resident agent able to dispose of the imports and collect ivory and copal so that the vessels just needed to touch at Zanzibar to dump their cargoes or take on board what had been collected. By 1836 the firm had three brigs trading at Zanzibar on this pattern.<sup>58</sup> The appointment of resident

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56 Coupland (1939) 282-3. Norsworthy to Messrs. Newman, Hunt, and Christopher, 27/6/1834, FO 84/425. Cooley (1845) 199. Burton (1872) 11, 286-7.

57 Hart, 40.

58 Petition of Robert Newman Hunt, 5/12/1837, M.A.; 68/1837, pp. 51-5.

agent was of great significance and his appointment so soon after the start of their trade implied a rapid expansion of the trade was planned. Without a resident agent the foreign "annual" traders were forced to dispose of their cargoes within a short time and contract for the return cargo under conditions which were favourable to local traders. The presence of a resident agent permitted the firm to compete more successfully with its American rivals. Thus when Waters was negotiating with the Indians the English agents informed them that he expected a vessel with a large consignment of English cottons.<sup>59</sup> The fact that they hesitated to conclude the bargain with the American shows the continued competitiveness of English goods.

Perhaps in 1837 the firm took a further step in expanding its trade tremendously. There were now at least six vessels belonging to the firm in the trade of which probably three were brigs which continued to serve the same function, trading mainly at the major ports, such as Zanzibar and Bombay. The firm, however, had also acquired at least three "small sharp schooners from seventy to a hundred tons" whose function appears to have been to collect the commodities from the smaller ports. They traded between Mozambique, Majunga, Johanna, the Seychelles and even as far as Berbera,<sup>60</sup> and presumably

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59 NMA, 221.

60 Ibid., 190-1, 195, 199, 202-3, 207, 221.

collecting or distributing goods to the smaller markets.

Though there is no evidence they penetrated deeply into the Swahili entrepot trade, and they were probably effectively kept out of the Mrima trade, the Swahili may well have resented even limited English intrusion into a role which remained one of the few still open to them.

The firm's success in short-circuiting the ivory trade is indicated by the British "Ledger of I-ports" for the relevant years. They are somewhat defective in that they classify ivory imports from some improbable sources such as Madagascar, Arabia, Persia and Mauritius. There is little doubt that vessels which had picked up part of their cargo on the East African coast may have given these designations either as the last port they touched or merely as a general and imprecise description of their area of trade. Coupled with the fact that they coincide directly with the known commercial activities of the firm, we are justified in combining all these columns together to represent its trade with East Africa. Although we know of the return of the Sandwich in 1834 from her first voyage and her trade in ivory at Zanzibar,<sup>61</sup> the Ledger does not show any import of ivory from East Africa or any other related region during that year. From 1835, however, there seems to be a steep rise in ivory imports from the region, rising from 117 cwt. in 1835 to about 500 cwt. during the following two years. It seems, however, that its growth had been arrested, and after

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61 See p. 234-5.

such a steep rise, direct English trade appears suddenly to have crested and began to decline to less than 100 cwt. in 1840.<sup>62</sup>

Why had such a promising start led to such an ignominious collapse in such a short time? The firm itself blamed Norsworthy of embezzlement and mismanagement. Hunt gave details of large quantities of goods which were advanced to an Arab merchant, Amer b. Said, amounting to over \$30,000 much of which had not been repaid while the Arab suddenly emerged as a big shipowner and landowner. Norsworthy himself appears to have absconded, refusing to appear before his employers in London.<sup>63</sup> The basic reason for the collapse, however, was probably a miscalculation not so much of the full potential of the East African market as of its ability to expand rapidly. The English entry had led to a damaging competition between them and the Americans. The latter complained about how the English had suddenly swarmed along the coast and injured their trade. An apparently independent English brig, the Cocquette had also entered the competition and had traded for fifteen months in 1837/8, making "a most ruinous business" for the Americans. They complain<sup>ed</sup> of the "poor chance for hides" since the English entered the trade.<sup>64</sup> An eloquent indication of

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62 See graph. IV.

63 Petition of R.N.Hunt, 5/12/1837, MA: 68/1837, pp. 51-5. Hunt to Cogen, 10/10/1838, FO 84/425.

64 NEMA, 196, 206-7, 221. W. Cook to Plamerston, 2/5/1836, FO 54/1. He asked for a letter of introduction, "having made arrangements to proceed on a voyage to the territories of the Imam of Muscat".



the effect of this competition at Zanzibar is the steep rise in the price of ivory at Bombay from about Rs. 65 (\$25.90) in 1830/1 to Rs. 88 per maund (\$34.75 per frasila) in 1836/7.<sup>65</sup> It will be remembered that the Americans themselves were turning their attention again to ivory from about 1835,<sup>66</sup> and the competition must have been damaging to both.

The English attempt to short-circuit the ivory trade to India also threatened to disrupt an Indian commercial system which yielded freight charges for Indian dhows and profit from two transactions, at Zanzibar as well as in Bombay. Direct confrontation in this case, perhaps more than in the case of the Americans who were supplying a more distinct market, was probably inevitable. English intervention not only threatened to curtail Bombay's export role but also contributed to the decreasing competitiveness of the Indian home market for ivory as prices rose. Moreover, Nersworthy does not appear to have attempted to work out an arrangement with the Indian merchants, especially Jairam Sowji, the custom master, to soften the conflict as the first resident American agent, Waters, was later to do. He seems to have refused, at least initially, to work within the established system of trade in which Jairam had the dominant influence and the Indians as a whole played a crucial role in the trade with the Mrima. Nersworthy's indignant appeal to the governor of Bombay and the Bombay chamber of

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65 See graph. II.

66 See Appendix C.

Commerce provoked a somewhat ineffective British interference in the commercial affairs of Zanzibar,<sup>67</sup> but Norsworthy could remain at Zanzibar only as a mellowed and insignificant commission agent.

In the face of this competition and confrontation the English firm had expanded its trade and activities far too rapidly. The commercial system they set out to establish was too elaborate and too large to be sustained by the actual trade of East Africa in the 1830s when the Indians and the Americans were also active. As an acute American observed, the English firm maintained so many schooners "when their whole trade at the outports would not pay the expense of one vessel".<sup>68</sup> Their expenses in agents and clerks were also immense and contributed to a loss of anything between \$80,000 and \$150,000. In 1838 one of the owners arrived at Zanzibar to wind up the business,<sup>69</sup> and the effect on the Bombay ivory prices was immediate, declining from Rs. 88 to Rs. 68 per maund (\$34.75 to to \$26.88 per frasila by 1839/40.<sup>70</sup> The first attempt to short-circuit the ivory trade had failed, and it was not to be effectively revived until the 1860s.<sup>71</sup>

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67 Memorial of R.B.Norsworthy to R.Grant, Governor of Bombay, 3/11/1837, FO 54/2, in which he suggested that the Americans possessed an advantage by having a resident consul.

68 NEMA, 221.

69 Ibid.

70 See graph II.

71 See graph IV.

## 2. Salem's Strategy of Controlled Growth

The English boast that they would drive the Americans from Zanzibar must have appeared empty by 1838 but J.G. Waters, one of the American merchant captains who had so incisively analysed the economic ills of the English firm, was not overly jubilant. He must have realised that if the Americans persisted in the same haphazard pattern of trade with "annual voyages" they stood the danger of losing the trade altogether next time. The potential for short-circuiting the trade to Europe had not evaporated if the trade at Zanzibar was conducted with a greater degree of business skill and understanding of the local situation. The Americans must have understood the capacity for expansion of the East African market without upsetting the pre-existing Indian trade. Fortunately for Salem this situation fitted her own needs and objectives to specialize in a few commodities whose market in the United States was small but growing. Moreover, the Americans were supplying a more distinct market which reduced points of conflict with the Indians. Salem's policy was, therefore, controlled and gradual expansion of the supply to the American market under her own aegis. Secondly, she realised that she could hope to exercise that control at Zanzibar only by working within the pre-existing system of trade and with the full cooperation of Jairam Sowji. However, Jairam's and indeed Zanzibar's long term interests lay not in controlled growth once the economy began to respond fully to the increased demand, but in rapid expansion of the trade. Thus other American

merchants as well as Europeans were equally welcome. On this rock of basic conflict of interests Salem's hope for monopolising the Zanzibar trade were dashed, though her trade continued to grow.

a) Accommodation and Confrontation

Having begun to acquire a more secure footing based on the three main commodities of trade, cotton goods for ivory and copal, the Americans set about evolving suitable commercial institutions for their smooth exchange. When the Americans first extended their activities to the coast they must have depended almost entirely on direct purchases for cash or goods, which often involved waiting in port for the commodities. As we have seen, Roberts had been detained at Zanzibar for four months, and in 1831 Bertram bought a cargo of copal which had already been loaded on the Sultan's vessel for export to India.<sup>72</sup> Long, idle stops at Zanzibar were clearly undesirable and became less necessary once East Africa became the main objective of trade though other areas in the western Indian Ocean remained a regular feature of the itineraries. A common pattern was for the vessel to leave a member of the crew at the smaller markets to collect specific items while the vessel herself proceeded to other ports.<sup>73</sup>

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72 See p. 221

73 Owners of the brig Cherokee to W.B. Smith, 4/4/1836, P.M.: Shepard's Papers 3 Isaacs, II, 310, found the mate of the Black Warrior at Brava collecting hides while the vessel proceeded to Mocha for coffee.

The Americans, however, were soon to realise that their insistence on direct trade was superfluous in view of the existing Indian mercantile class which could perform the middle-man role adequately, especially as most of their direct trade was with the same Indians. What was needed, therefore, was merely to make their demands known beforehand to allow the local merchants to fulfil them in a specified time. They seem to have insisted on these arrangements being specified in a legal contract rather than left to verbal assurances. The earliest contract which has come to light dates from 1833 in which an Indian and an Arab merchant jointly agreed to deliver, at Majunga in 8 to 11 months, 3,000 frasalas of copal as well as hides and gum arabic, to be paid for in muskots, other goods and cash.<sup>74</sup> The arrangement was clearly for the following voyage and did not involve the advancing of goods or money, perhaps because of the uncertainty on both sides of meeting their commitment a full year later. Lack of credit probably also hindered the development of trade for it assumed a much larger amount of resident capital to be invested on such a large scale by local traders with no guarantee that the American would turn up at the appointed time. The fact that such contracts were very rare perhaps confirms the scarcity of capital in East Africa at this time and the unsuitability of such annual contracts.

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74 Contract between Amosa Wantan [Arabic signature - Khemis b. Uthman] and Javaroh [Gujarati signature - Javorshah Nathu] with J. Emerton, 4/3/1833, Harvard: Emerton Papers, VI.

The Americans were thus pushed to show a greater commitment to East African trade by providing short-term loans of goods to lubricate at least the entrepot trade. The evolving pattern of American commerce which involved their trade along almost the whole western rim of the Indian Ocean, at Majunga and Brava for hides, at Mocha for coffee, at Muscat for dates, and even as far as Bombay, permitted a more elaborate system of short-term contracts at many of these ports, and especially at Zanzibar. The first reference to such contracting at Zanzibar is the above quoted letter of instruction to Captain Bates in 1836 who was to pay a fourth or a fifth in goods for his contracts at Zanzibar, before proceeding to the north and making arrangements for delivery at the time of the return there.<sup>75</sup> The time allowed generally varied between four and six months, and goods were advanced as a matter of course. The pattern became so common that there was no talk of interest on the advanced goods until the 1860s, though allowance for it was probably made in the calculation of the merchants. These short-term loans of goods, and sometimes cash, allowed Indian and some Arab merchants to collect the needed commodities from the coast where they effected an exchange without needing to invest their own capital. This system probably permitted a larger number of Indians to play the middleman role, and even

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75 Owners to Smith, 4/4/1836, P.M.: Shepard's Papers 3.



the richer ones could expand their commercial activities.<sup>76</sup>  
 The profit from these transactions undoubtedly contributed on a considerable scale to the accumulation of Indian capital at Zanzibar which could then finance the long-term caravan trade to the far interior. The crucial role of American capital probably endeared the Americans to the Indians and Arabs and facilitated their accommodation within the indigenous commercial system.

American penetration into the Zanzibar trade, however, was not always smooth. Greater commitment to the trade also entailed a more direct supervision of the trade and the inevitable attempt to cut down the price of their dependence on the local traders as much as possible. One of the vested interests they were bound to attack sooner or later was that of the official agent for foreign trade at Zanzibar. As we have seen Roberts had resented paying the 2½% compulsory commission for the benefit of a "Bon Amedy" who had apparently not conducted his trade and who was then at Kilwa.<sup>77</sup> In 1832 Seyyid Said appointed Captain Hasan b. Ibrahim who transacted nearly all American business<sup>78</sup> though after the treaty he may

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76 All the merchants at Zanzibar took advantage of these advances including Jairem Sowji and Topan Tajiani as shown by the numerous contracts in P.M.: Waters Papers IV.

77 See p. 225.

78 NEMA, 162. Ruschenberger, I, 27.

not have played that role as a matter of right. The appointment of R.P. Waters as the first American Consul in 1837 and the establishment of his own commission agency at Zanzibar was therefore a direct threat to the livelihood of the amiable captain, as well as of other commission agents already established there, especially Nersworthy who had parted company with the English firm, and his American partner Botsford.<sup>79</sup> In January 1838 Waters destroyed a letter from Seyyid Said to the President of the United States because he said "he feared it contained charges against him... ~~written~~ at the instigation of the native merchants who wished to drive him from the island so that they could again get the American business". Perhaps not insignificantly the bearer of this letter to Waters was Capt. Hassan.<sup>80</sup>

Of greater consequence were his points of conflict with Jairam Sawji. The potentials for a conflict of interests between the custom master and the newly established American agency were considerable, and it is not enough to portray them merely as "difficulties" caused by the "wily" Jairam.<sup>81</sup> His resentment against the Americans may have gone back to Roberts's trick by which the treaty was made retrospective from the date

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79 Hamerton to Willoughby, 13/7/1841, FO 54/4.

80 Smith to Webster, 23/11/1841, NAW: T 100/1. Waters' relations with Capt. Hasan, nevertheless, was cordial.

81 Bennett (1959), 251, 255.

of congressional approval. The custom master was thus required to reimburse the Americans' export duties paid for more than a year previous to the exchange of ratifications of the treaty. Ruschenburger had admitted that it was "not customary to consider the provisions of treaties binding, until after the exchange of their ratification". He praised Scyyid Said's liberality whereas it was the farmer of the customs who had to carry the burden. The Sultan added, in justification, that Jairam had paid less for the rent of the customs in anticipation of the ratification of the treaty. Whatever may have been the reduction, only two years later the rent had jumped from \$110,000 to \$150,000.<sup>83</sup> Jairam must also have resented the abolition of the export duty. He attempted to recover it by charging the local merchants who sold merchandise to the Americans a similar duty. Waters protested to Said that this constituted an evasion of the treaty, and Said promised to have it discontinued.<sup>84</sup>

Waters also seemed to threaten Jairam's income from an activity which apparently formed part of the concession when he farmed the customs. This stipulated that all exports must pass through the Custom House transported by Jairam's labourers for which the exporter was charged labour.<sup>85</sup> It

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83 NEMA, 216.

84 Ibid., 218.

85 Ibid., 216-8.

obviously arose from the time when there was export duty on all foreign trade, and it was an established tradition by the time Waters arrived. Said himself conformed to the practice though he did not pay any duty.<sup>86</sup> Waters hotly resented the additional charge of \$100 or \$150, but Said effectively scotched the complaint by asking Waters to write home, offering to abolish it if Washington thought it violated the Treaty.<sup>87</sup> Washington does not seem to have heeded the complaint, as it was to ignore many minor disputes. This aspect of fiscal arrangements at Zanzibar, therefore, does not seem to have been upset.

Potentials for confrontation between the Americans and the resident, especially Indian merchants at Zanzibar, however, went beyond this encroachment into Jairen's and Capt. Hasan's private domains. . They related to the degree to which the American trade disrupted the previously established Indian system of trade, and to the compensatory advantages that it offered. Since the commercial sector of East African economy was capable of expanding slowly, the rapid expansion in American and English trade at Zanzibar tended to diminish the rate of growth of the trade with India. A glance at the curves of trade between East Africa and Bombay shows not only that the

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86 Said to Waters, 19/10/1837, P.M. Waters Papers X, NEMA. 365.

87 NEMA. 218.

expansion of trade had been arrested but also that there is a deep trough in the trade during the 1830s.<sup>88</sup> The trough is probably partly related to the famine in Gujarat which, as has been shown above, generally affected the Indian textile industry and the purchasing power of the people of such luxuries as ivory.<sup>89</sup> By the 1830s, however, English cotton goods had penetrated into India on a large scale<sup>90</sup> and could have been channelled to East Africa, in the same way as ivory was channelled to the London market where the demand was escalating to its third level at this time.<sup>91</sup> The fact that despite the fall in the home demand for ivory there was no decrease in the price of ivory<sup>92</sup> is a good indication that Anglo-American trade was keeping up the prices, and was preventing the growth of Indian trade. It affected the dhow traffic in which many of the Indian merchants at Zanzibar had a direct interest since several of them owned dhows of their own.<sup>93</sup> American cotton imports affected the Indian textile industry by threatening to displace it from one of its important foreign markets.

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88 See graph. III.

89 See p. 121-3.

90 I.C.: P/419/53-54, Imports from Great Britain.

91 See graph IV.

92 See graph II.

93 E.I.: Waters Papers - "Thermometrical Observations", mentions many dhows belonging to prominent Indian merchants.

Nevertheless, the potentials for a conflict of interests were being reduced by the changes in the character of the Indians in East Africa. Having found their own cottons failing them, they were not averse to finding alternate sources. The supply of American cottons at Zanzibar, therefore, was not more objectionable than the supply of English cottons through Bombay. At the same time, though Anglo-American competition tended to shrink the home-market, the Americans, in particular, were supplying a distinct and an additional market, especially useful for the surplus ivory during periods of famine. These considerations permitted the Indians to accelerate the shift of their economic interests to Zanzibar and broaden their middleman base there to compensate for their losses. The combined Indian and Arab middlemen network of collection and distribution of merchandise proved so convenient to the Americans that for many years the latter did not even consider trading on the Mriya coast. There were therefore strong economic reasons for Indo-American cooperation exemplified by relations between Waters and Jairam.

These relations have been described as a "partnership" placing the two partners on an equal basis.<sup>94</sup> An examination

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94 Bennett (1959), 252. His interpretation that "they soon recognized each other's shrewdness and saw that together they would be able to control the market and push out the English and other American merchants", does not take into consideration the conflict of interests between them. The strategy could only have been to Waters's advantage, not to Jairam's long term advantage.



of the terms of their relations, however, reveals that Waters had agreed to work within the pre-existing system despite certain disabilities. Though the American treaty placed no restriction on where the Americans could trade, initially Waters did not attempt to cut out the local merchants from their middleman's share. In fact, he obliged the local authorities by supplying an affidavit that no foreign traders had ever traded on the *Mrima*.<sup>95</sup> Even at Zanzibar he confessed to doing nine-tenths of his business with Jairam who offered greater security.<sup>96</sup> Nor was this entirely voluntary for the procedure that he recommended to his successor was the same that the other commission agents like Norworthy and Botsford were forced to follow against their will; they all had to apply first to Jairam who "calls the Native Merchants together, make /their offer, then takes it upon himself to say through what House the business must be transacted, and there is no alternative."<sup>97</sup> Thus it was a partnership which involved an utter dependence of one of the partners on the other, and was based on the fact that Waters accepted Jairam's terms while Norworthy and Botsford objected to them.

With their relations thus defined Jairam and Waters set about to protect their own and each other's interests. One

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95 Affidavit, dated 27/5/1839, a copy in C.C.Z.I., f.268.

96 NEMA, 223.

97 Ibid., 240. Compare with Waters' own description of the procedure on p. 225.

of the first strategies was to recognise, in practice, that Waters was the sole commission agent for all foreign trade, in an attempt to drive away the other foreign commission agents. This was not hard as far as Salen's trade was concerned since, so long as Waters remained unconnected exclusively with either of the two main groups of merchants, the Bertram-Shopard and Pingree-West groups, he was the natural choice for both groups. Thus the Cherokee and the Rattler belonging to the former, and the Rolla to the latter group were consigned to him in 1840 by their owners.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, Jairam used his considerable influence over local merchants in favour of Waters. Norsworthy complained, "if a vessel consigned to Mr. Waters is in want of copal and ivory, whether he has contracts or not, Jairam seized all that comes to the Custom House" to supply her needs.<sup>99</sup> He implicated Seyyid Said himself in this monopolist ring. He is alleged to have sent the Governor of Zanzibar, Seyyid Sulaiman, to the Mrima, to force the local merchants to sell their ivory and copal to Jairam at a price that allowed a large margin of profit.<sup>100</sup> To keep up the pressure against Norsworthy and Botsford during Waters's temporary absence and when his replacement was ill and about

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98 Ibid., 236-7. Waters's Statement, 2/7/1841; Norsworthy to Hamerton, n.d. [1841], FO 54/4.

99 Norsworthy to Richmond, 12/9/1841, FO 54/4. Hamerton to Sec. Committee, 9/2/1842, FO 54/5.

100 Norsworthy to Richmond, n.d. [1841] FO 54/4.

to leave, Jairam allegedly went so far as to demand from Botsford half the commission for Waters before he could transact the Rattler's business.<sup>101.</sup>

Waters's "partnership" with Jairam demonstrated the degree to which conflicts of interest between the emergent American trade and the pre-existing Indian system could be minimised. The American supply of the valuable short-term loans of goods, their demand for East African commodities for a distinct market without interfering in the Bombay-London market, and their supply of American cotton at a time when the Indian textile industry was under great stress, were points which favoured the accommodation of the Americans within the existing commercial system. The pre-condition of this accommodation, however, seemed to be American reliance on the existing systems which was not likely to last long. Already Waters's encroachment appears to have begun to arouse ill feeling, and it was reported during his short visit to the United States in 1840 that "there is not a man in the place who desires his return, not even the Sultan".<sup>102</sup> He seems to have either ignored or failed to notice the changing mood. The sending of the Sultan's first vessel

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101 Norworthy to Hamerton, n.d. [1847]; Jairam's Statement, 29/6/1841, FO 54/4. Jairam's contention was that Waters's replacement offered the job to Botsford at half the commission which the desperate Botsford accepted.

102 NEMA. 226.

the Sultana, to New York rather than to Salem, may have shown Salem's hostility to the venture or the Sultan's desire not to be tied close to Salem's apron strings, and his consignment of the Sultana's cargo to a New York firm contrary to Water's expectations was probably intended as a rebuff.

#### b) Salem's Strategy and its Fall

Jairam's cooperation raised Salem's hopes for a controlled growth of the Zanzibar trade. She now set her course to consolidate her hold over it by further evolving her commercial institutions with a view to a more rational exploitation of this field of her trade. The basic contradiction in the respective interests of Salem and Zanzibar now began to surface as soon as the strategy began to be applied. The clearest consequence of this contradiction were the disintegration of the "partnership" and the encouragement given by Jairam to all foreign traders to trade at Zanzibar. The economy had earlier refused to be limited in its growth by the idiosyncracies of the Indian trade; it could not now sacrifice so that a small New England port could live. Bennett has accepted without debate <sup>103</sup> Hamerton's claim that he broke the "partnership". <sup>104</sup> The claim was advanced when his position at Zanzibar was very weak. There is nothing in Water's correspondence

<sup>103</sup> Bennett (1959), 254-5.

<sup>104</sup> Bombay Govt. to Secret Committee, 30/8/1841, quoting from Hamerton's letter, 1/8/1841, FO 54/5, pp. 576-7. Hamerton to Secret Com., 5/1/1842. I.O.: L/P & S/S/12, Sa'eed Ali bin Wasseer to Aberdeen, 23/11/1842, FO 84/425 no. 223. Said to Aberdeen 3/4/1844, FO 84/540, s. to s. 13/10/1845, FO 54/7. Canning to India Board, 5/12/1845, FO 54/9. Cogan to Canning, 4/2/1846, FO 54/10. Hamerton to Bombay Govt., 24/4/1846, FO 54/10.

to substantiate the claim, and surely Waters would have recorded such a calamitous change of fortunes. What Hamerton did attempt to do was to try to break Jairam's overwhelming influence over the Indian mercantile community by claiming the right to arbitrate in disputes involving Indians. He claimed to have defeated Jairam's move to get all the Indians to sign a declaration that they were Zanzibar's subjects;<sup>105</sup> but, as it will be seen below, the question was not laid to rest for another two decades at least. He could hardly have challenged Jairam's commercial influence as the Collector of Customs and the most powerful Indian merchant over the lesser merchants of the entrepot.

In fact the fuller explanation of the break-up of the so-called "monopolist ring" is provided by a consideration of the gradual loosening of relations between Waters and Jairam. When Waters left for a visit to the United States in 1840 he informed his brother that he might "make arrangements while in America with some of our Salom merchants to be concerned in this trade with them";<sup>106</sup> in other words, to become part owner and exclusive Zanzibar agent of one of the two Salom firms. The set-up was to prove a tremendous financial advantage to Waters personally, but in the long run fatal to Salom's hope to regulate the growth of the Zanzibar trade under her control through the "monopolist ring". Waters had already

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106 NEMA, 224.

been approached earlier in 1839 by George West of the West-Pingree group.<sup>107</sup> By June 1840 Richard P. Waters's name appears as one of the part owners of the West-Pingree group, employing an exclusive agent at Majunga, and he himself returned to Zanzibar early in 1841<sup>108</sup> to set up business on the new agreed lines.

With the appointment of an exclusive agent at Zanzibar who was also part owner, American trade can be considered as having reached maturity. His ability to make major decisions on the spot introduced a certain amount of flexibility in their dealings. He could make contracts ahead of arrival of the group's vessels, so that they did not have to wait the full four or six months for these contracts to be fulfilled. And he could take advantage of any temporary advantage during the off-season, and, as West advised him, "keep a contract ahead so that any vessel coming there other than ours would be obliged to wait so long for it," that they would tire of the trade.<sup>109</sup> The disadvantage of the previous system was that the vessel's arrival could not be timed exactly to the best commercial advantage, and if there happened to be another vessel in port already, the market was glutted with cottons and the local merchants could set their own terms of contracts knowing how desperate both would be to make contracts. Waters was

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107 Ibid.

108 Ibid., 213, 225.

109 West to Waters, 27/1/1841, P.M.: Waters Papers III.



aware of this even before he became exclusive agent. In 1838 the Rolla was in port when another Salem vessel, the Richmond arrived injuring the trade of both vessels. Ultimately the Richmond was obliged to go away leaving some goods and money with him. The goods were immediately taken on board the Rolla without the local merchants knowing anything about it.<sup>110</sup>

This way the goods could be held back until the apparent falling off in the supply provided a better price.<sup>111</sup> An exclusive agent was even better placed to thus control the supply.

American trade therefore began to be increasingly a year-round affair, though not entirely since climatic considerations imposed a natural seasonality in the trade of Zanzibar. One of the consequences was a slight shift from the "annual voyage" pattern of trade by which each vessel was expected to dispose of her outward cargo and return with its equivalent. A more complex pattern emerges. It was not uncommon for a vessel to bring back part of the return cargo of another vessel belonging to the same group<sup>112</sup> so that both vessels were not kept waiting at Zanzibar for their cargoes to be completed, and both did not descend on Salem at the same time to glut the home

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110 Waters to West, 30/5/1836, P.M. West Papers 22.

111 Shepard to Webb, 4/1844, P.M.: Shepard's Papers 2.

112 The Brenda returned from her first voyage in 1841 with part of the Cherokee's cargo. Shepard's Papers, 4, & Shepard's acct. Bk. 5, pp. 36 & 39. On her second voyage she returned part of the Rattler's cargo & Shepard's Acct. Bk. 5, p.44.

market. An even greater sophistication is shown by the arrangement in 1840 by the Pingree-West group. An expedition of three vessels was fitted out. The Cavalier and the schooner North Star were sent to Mozambique, Majunga and Zanzibar where the outward cargo was to be disposed of, and a full return cargo for a third vessel, which was to be sent 30 days later, was to be collected. The purpose of the strategy was to provide the Zanzibar agent with a complete cargo of one vessel as a permanent capital in E. Africa to maintain a continuity in the trade.<sup>113</sup>

This strategy was not frustrated by the loss of the North Star in the Mozambique channel during her first voyage,<sup>114</sup> since she was promptly replaced by another schooner, the Rowena. The reappearance on the Zanzibar scene of the schooner was very significant and part of the strategy. She was not intended to make the familiar voyages of brigs and barques between Salem and Zanzibar, but rather to remain under orders of the Zanzibar agent to collect copal and hides at Zanzibar throughout the year so that larger vessels could return home quickly and with full cargoes.<sup>115</sup> This, therefore, was the reappearance of the ill-managed strategy practiced by the English firm of Newman Hunt and Christopher, and it is not surprising that the man who had critically analysed that mismanagement, J.G. Waters, was involved in this venture too. He

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113 NEMA, 227-8.

114 Waters to Pingree, 20/1/1841, P.M.: Waters Papers II.

had learnt the lesson and must have recommended that one schooner was enough. There were added advantages in insurance because the larger vessels avoided paying extra dues for each port they visited other than Zanzibar and Majunga if the schooner could do the job.<sup>116</sup>

The Rowena was bought and dispatched from Salem within a few days of receiving the news of the loss of the North Star because, it was said, "we are contending with a strong opposition".<sup>117</sup> She arrived at Zanzibar in May, 1841, and within days she was despatched to Tungi Bay, just south of Cape Delgado, with a cargo of muskets, gunpowder, cotton goods and specie worth about \$10,000 to procure copal, and ivory, from an Arab merchant resident there. "We ought to get it cheaper", Waters added, "as we go after it and thus save the duty which is paid in Zanzibar". Her captain was at liberty to stop at Lindi and Kilwa on the way back to complete her cargo.<sup>118</sup> In June he was despatched to Brava with a similar cargo worth about \$5,500 to collect hides which Waters had earlier contracted with Muhammad b. Abd al-Kadir, and ivory there or at Lamu. He was provided with Seyyid Said's order to the people of Brava not to charge him any export duty.<sup>119</sup> In late July the Rowena was on her way to

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116 Pingree & West to Waters, 30/12/1841, P.M.: Waters Papers VI.

117 s. to s., 28/1/1841, ibid. III.

118 [Waters?] to Shirley & invoice dated 18/5/1841, ibid.

119 s.s. to & invoice 19/6/1841, ibid. The contract is probably that dated 29/3/1841, ibid. IV. Syod b. Sultan to "the chiefs of the tribes of Barawa, Sumali and Arabs, 18/6/1841, E.I.: Waters' Mss.

Majunga with not only her own cargo, but also those of the Cavalier and the Rolla, both belonging to the same group, consigned to their exclusive agent, Marks, and his Indian partner, Ibrahim Hasan Ali, probably for hides and tallow.<sup>120</sup> In September she left on a voyage to Bombay via Muscat and returned to Zanzibar by December of the same year.<sup>121</sup> Thus, within seven months she had made four local voyages, indicative of the role she was playing in the local collection and distribution of merchandise. Early in 1843, however, Waters sold the schooner to Seyyid Saïd since her captain was anxious to return to the U.S. and Waters could not find a suitable replacement. He said he was sorry since he needed her service very much,<sup>122</sup> but there was no replacement, partly perhaps because of the contraction of the East African market due to the closure of Majunga to foreign trade.<sup>123</sup> By late 1844 Pingree informed Waters that they wished to confine their trade to Zanzibar as much as possible.<sup>124</sup> Waters seems to have been content to use the local network of collection and distribution, even claiming a hand in planning "out voyages for the

120 Waters to Marks & Ibrahim b. Hassan Ali, n.d. and invoice of merchandise landed at Majunga, 14/8/1841; P.M. Waters Papers, III.

121 NEMA. 214.

122 Northway, 272. Waters to Saïd b. Calfaun, 1/4/1843, P.M.: Waters Papers III. Waters' Notes, entry for 24/4/1844, id IV.

123 See p. 268.

124 Pingree to Waters, 23/10/1844, P.M.: Waters Papers IX.

Banian Dows".<sup>125</sup>

By recoiling from an active local trade, even though there is no evidence that he traded directly with the Mrima, Waters seems to have withdrawn the threat to the local merchants, some of whose incomes derived from such local carrying trade. One of the declared purposes was to avoid paying the duty on goods from the "outports" and thus directly affected Jairam's interests. The goods were transhipped from the schooner directly on to the brigs in Zanzibar, and although Soyaid Said obtained a decision from Washington about the legality of transhipment duties, Waters evaded paying from \$12,000 to \$15,000 in duties which had accumulated during his tenure at Zanzibar.<sup>126</sup>

While Waters's ever deeper penetration into the local system was beginning to weaken his "partnership" with Jairam, he was also attempting, with several years experience of trade at Zanzibar, to reduce his dependence on Jairam by trading directly with other merchants. Unfortunately his account books have not been found, but the numerous contracts among his papers

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125 NEMA. 245.

126 NEMA. 356-8. Ward to Pingree, 24/2/1846, E.I.: Ward's Official correspondence pp. 10-14.

appear to be a fairly complete record of his commercial dealings.<sup>127</sup>  
 from which a most interesting pattern of his activities emerges.  
 In 1839 he appears to have contracted with Jairam alone, on  
 behalf of Capt. Ward for ivory and copal worth over \$17,000.<sup>128</sup>

127 VALUE OF WATERS' CONTRACTS FOR AFRICAN COMMODITIES

<u>WITH:</u>	<u>1839</u>	<u>1840</u>	<u>1841</u>	<u>1842</u>	<u>1843</u>	<u>1844</u>	<u>1845</u>
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Jairam Sewji & Co.	17,100	44,100	38,600	45,000	13,200	31,700	11,700
Muhammad b. Abd al-Kadir		4,400	10,800	8,700	10,400	3,500	10,500
Isa Abd al- Rahman			7,600	7,200	8,300	8,300	2,500
Bandali Bhimji			4,500	4,900	3,500	13,700	13,100
Virji, Kanu & Kasu			1,300	10,700			
Topan Tajiani				21,200		30,600	21,800
Ramji							10,000
<u>Others</u>			5,500	17,300	2,100	3,300	800
Total value of Contracts	17,000	48,500	68,300	115,000	37,500	91,100	70,400
Total export value of Pin- grec Group			99,300	69,800	103,700	73,500	59,000
Number of Customers	1	2	14	20	8	8	7

NOTE: A more valid comparison is between one year's contracts with the following year's exports, allowing for the usual time-lag in the delivery of goods. The 1843-1844 and 1844-1845 appear somewhat skewed, but the total value of contracts in 1843 and 1844 corresponds with the total value of exports in 1844 and 1845.  
 Source: mostly P.M.: Waters Papers IV.

128 Contract dated 6/7/1839, P.M. Shepard's Papers 24.



He was quite precise in 1840 when he stated that he did nine-tenths of his business with Jairam. The only other merchant with whom he contracted was the Arab merchant Muhammed b. Abd al-Kadir for hides from Pemba and Brava.<sup>129</sup> The pattern radically changes after his return from the U.S. as part owner and exclusive agent of the Pingree group. He still did his largest business with Jairam, but its proportion to his total trade fell to 57%. His second largest customer was the same Muhammad b. Abd al-Kadir. He had also begun to trade with several Indians merchants, notably Isa b. Abdal-Rahman who was to be a regular customer until his death in 1845.<sup>130</sup> Waters also began contracting with many Arab merchants and perhaps plantation owners for hides and cloves. All these contracts were small, never exceeding \$1,000. The number of his customers had jumped in 1841 to fifteen, and his total trade to over \$68,000. 1842 was probably the peak period of his trade, reaching nearly \$114,000. He did only 32% of his trade with Jairam, and there were 19 other customers. Among his regular customers was added Topan, perhaps the second most important Indian merchant at Zanzibar.

Having reduced his dependence on Jairam and loosened his relations with him, Waters appears to have been somewhat

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129 Contract with Jeram 25/5/1841, P.M. Waters' Papers II.  
Contract between Webb and Jeram, 6/6/1840, *id.*, I.

130 ~~MEMO~~ 341.

unsuccessful in maintaining his dominance in the trade. In 1841 and 1842 he tried to trade with a large number of other merchants, few of whom were to become regular customers, and yet some of the same merchants appear to have traded on a considerable scale with the rival American firm at Zanzibar. This firm may also have taken the opportunity of expanding their own trade with Jairem in particular and at Zanzibar in general. Fabens, their agent at Zanzibar, concluded that by the end of Waters's stay control of trade had gone out of his hands, "with the exception of that which was done with those whom no one else would trust".<sup>131</sup> The conclusion is telling though not fair since Waters in 1845 still did most of his trade with the five "regular" customers with whom Fabens himself was to do much of his own trade.<sup>132</sup>

Waters made his fortune during his seven and half years' residence at Zanzibar. Fabens reported at the time of his departure in 1844 that he "imagines himself to be worth" \$100,000.<sup>133</sup> Northway was informed by a relative that he had accumulated \$80,000 with which he settled down as a gentleman farmer, merchant, banker and industrialist.<sup>134</sup> Despite his personal success he nevertheless failed in his, and indeed Salom's, attempt to control the Zanzibar trade, even though the major

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131 Ibid., 350.

132 P.M.: B.F.Fabens, Ledger, 1844-9.

133 NEMA, 251.

catastrophes were to occur after his departure. The strategy was based upon Jairam's cooperation, and yet he attempted to free himself from his utter dependence on Jairam. He temporarily encroached into the local carrying trade with the Rowena, and his consequent withholding of transshipment dues further alienated Jairam, though he did refrain from attacking the most important privilege of the local merchants, trade with the Mrima. Finally by becoming part owner and exclusive agent of one of the two main Salom firms he removed any semblance of a united Salom objective to monopolise the Zanzibar trade. Waters escalated the inter-Salemite competition. The Shepard group bitterly resented Waters's "desertion", and after initially using the new unsatisfactory services of the other commission agents at Zanzibar, they too appointed their own exclusive agent, J.F. Webb,<sup>135</sup> who soon formed a powerful commercial base able to chip into Waters's primacy. With Jairam alienated, there was every reason for Webb to expect full support from the custom master in his efforts to get even with the rival firm.

Perhaps the most crucial consideration in the collapse of Waters's strategy was the basic conflict of interest between Jairam and Waters, or between Zanzibar and Salom. Waters

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135 R. to J. Waters, 1/1/1842, P.M.: Waters Papers VI. Ward to Norworthy & Botsford, 20/1/1841, P.M.: Shephard's Papers 11. Draft contract between Webb, Bertram and Shepard, 6/8/1841, id., 43. Shephard to Webb, 4/1844, id., 2.

sought to regulate the growth of the Zanzibar trade by keeping imports scarce and external demand limited. It was essential to prevent the unscheduled interlopers from making a success of their first voyage. Waters's earlier success had depended on Jairam's great influence over the Indian merchants to procure from them commodities which Waters needed in preference to any other rival. He attempted to achieve his ends by keeping a contract ahead and maintaining the local merchants continually in debt. But in both cases success depended on Waters's ability to take or contract for all the commodities in the market, which was not Waters's idea of regulated growth. Jairam's interest, on the other hand, lay in uninhibited growth. He may have appreciated that external trade was likely to continue to grow at a faster rate than the expansion of Zanzibar's hinterland and source of supply, and that cut-throat competition among foreign traders was precisely what was to Zanzibar's and his advantage since it lowered the price of imports and raised that of exports. It was this consideration which caused the dissolution of the "partnership" and the collapse of Salem's strategy.

c) Increasing Trade's Decreasing Profitability

The attempt to monopolise the trade and thus control its growth immediately activated the natural countervailing forces. The Salomites had taken upon themselves a herculean task not only to control the market at Zanzibar but also the international

market which supplied the imports and consumed the exports. It was the wider trends of the international market which were moving steadily in favour of Zanzibar and against Salem which were responsible for Salem's disappointments and Zanzibar's growth.

Salem's disappointments did not imply an absolute decline of her trade but the decline in its profitability. Several factors contributed to that decline in her export trade. The flooding of the Zanzibar market with imports as a result of intense competition among the Salem merchants was over-stocking the market and as Waters commented in 1843 "we can make as much profit on 400 bales as we can on 800".<sup>136</sup> The Indian merchants were shy of buying large lots of cotton goods as they arrived so freely.<sup>137</sup> The effect was predictable. The price of many of the imports, and especially of cotton goods which constituted about ninety per cent of the total American imports in the mid 1840s,<sup>138</sup> remained steady and even declined throughout this period (see graph 'II'). Both Salem firms attempted to improve the situation by reducing their imports to make them scarce at Zanzibar, but their efforts attained only limited success.<sup>139</sup>

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136 NEMA. 246.

137 R. to J. Waters, 19/8/1843. P.M.: Waters' Papers VI.

138 Loarer 5/23(2), "Pavillon Nord Americain". He gives the value of cotton goods at \$189,000 out of a total \$208,000 in 1846/7 and at \$240,000 out of \$260,000 in 1848.

139 Shepard to Fabens, 14/5/1844, P.M.: Fabens Papers IV; Shepard Papers 43, NEMA. 246.

The situation was made worse by the sudden contraction of the East African market as a result of deteriorating trading conditions and political problems at Majunga. In 1843 duties were raised to 10% on the major items of imports as well as exports, and even muskets and specie paid 5%. These increases must have cut deeply into their profits, and Waters was so incensed that he considered withdrawing from the trade for a time and writing to the queen of Madagascar to order the former duties to be collected again, if only "there was no other concern at Majunga but our own".<sup>140</sup> By 1846, as a result of the British and French attack on Tamatave over the ill-treatment of European residents there, the ports of Madagascar were closed to British and French trade, and later to American trade as well. Though "yankee ingenuity found ways" of evading the embargo, Madagascar remained closed to American trade until 1850, throwing more goods into the Zanzibar market,<sup>141</sup> and further deflating their prices there. Waters made a desperate effort to scatter the imports. He was "obliged to plan out voyages for the Banian Dows, and thus try to induce them to purchase our goods and ship them away to other places",<sup>142</sup>

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140 NEMA. 244-5. Pingree et al to Waters, 13/5/1843. P.M. Waters Papers II.

141 NEMA. 349-50, 352-3, 361-6, 388-9, 391, 416, 431. McFarland's Protest, 25/3/1846, NAW:T 100/2. Osgord, 7. Jelly to West, 26/9/1849, P.M.: West Papers 9.

142 NEMA. 245.



especially as he had already sold the schooner Rowena. He was partly successful since local vessels were exempted from the embargo at Majunga.<sup>143</sup> He attempted to widen the market to the north to include Muscat and Bombay on a larger scale, and even contemplated establishing an agency at Bombay,<sup>144</sup> but apparently without much success. By March 1844 he was declaring that the 294 ton bark Cavalier was "too large for this trade, confined as we are now to Zanzibar".<sup>145</sup>

While prices of imports remained steady or even declined at Zanzibar, intense competition for them at home had created a scarcity. The Salem firms were forced to contract for delivery far into the future which had the effects of keeping the prices up, and even raising them.<sup>146</sup> Salem thus had both ends of her import candle burning at the same time, greatly diminishing the profit from her import cargoes. Learer estimated the profit from this part of the trade was no more than 7 to 8%.<sup>147</sup> Ultimately the shortage in cotton goods was overcome by the building of Naumkeag Steam Cotton Co. in Salem, opened in 1847, with many of the merchants with interests in the Zanzibar trade on its board of directors. Waters significantly was to be its president for many years.<sup>148</sup> The temporary shortage, however,

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143 Ibid., 360.

144 R. to W. Waters, 16/12/1844. P.M.: Waters Papers IX.

145 R. to J. Waters, 19/3/1844, ibid.

146 J. to R. Waters, 5/5/1844; Pingree to Waters, 29/6/1844, ibid., Shepard to Fabens, 29/11/1845, P.M.: Fabens Papers IV.

147 Learer, 5/23(2) "Pavillon Nord Americain".

148 Northway, 130, 373. Bulletin of the Essex Institute, XX, 191.

was not necessarily to Salem's advantage since despite decided preference of American cotton goods at Zanzibar, any increase in their price led to larger importation of British goods via Bombay.<sup>149</sup>

Simultaneously, competition between Salem traders at Zanzibar for ivory and other commodities for the expanding American and European market was having a marked effect on their prices at Zanzibar. Thus in March 1844 Waters was forced to pay more than \$4 per frasila of copal for the first time. Within six months he was paying \$5.<sup>150</sup> Inevitably, the high prices at Zanzibar, as well as a measure of the success Salem had apparently attained in keeping copal prices high in the United States, had the effect of opening the gates to the importation of inferior copal from other parts of the world. The market was soon inundated by copal imports from West Africa and New Zealand.<sup>151</sup> It was certainly far-sighted of Shephard, one of the most prominent Salem merchants, to comment in 1847:

It is evident that the monopoly of copal in this country will prove of great injury to our trade if persisted in... besides the high price causes large quantities of inferior copal to come into our market, thus circulating impure varnish, and in the end may produce a prejudice against all

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149 Webb to Shepard, 25/5/1844, P.M.: Shepard's Papers, 47.

150 R. to J. Waters, 19/3 & 2/9/1844, P.M.: Waters' Papers IX.

151 J. to R. Waters 5/5/1844, ibid. Shepard to Fabens, 16/8/1845, 31/3/1846; Webb to Shepard, 25/5/1844, P.M.: Shepard's Papers, 43. Bertram to Fabens, 29/1/1846, P.M.: Fabens Papers, IV.

varnish, so as to throw it out of use.<sup>152</sup>

Salem was prepared to lower the selling price of copal at home in an attempt to check the rival sources, even at the expense of actual loss in the short run. She attempted to re-export part of the copal to England, and by 1847 Shepard was even prepared to withdraw from the competition for copal at Zanzibar.<sup>153</sup> The rising trend in copal prices in the mid 1840s may have stimulated the expansion of production in East Africa, American inability to keep up with this expansion, therefore, had the effect of checking the increase in the price,<sup>154</sup> but Salem had a more limited effect on the copal market at Zanzibar which, according to the Salem merchants themselves, was controlled by Bombay and ultimately London.<sup>155</sup> Faced with this larger market the Salem merchants could count only on the slow cleaning process at Zanzibar which was preventing copal from being shipped in larger quantities to the north. They, therefore, sought to prevent the introduction of potash to clean it. It was, in fact, introduced, and by no less a

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152 Shepard to Fabens, 7/1/1847, F.M.: Fabens Papers IV.

153 J. to R. Waters, 5/5/1844; R. to J. Waters, 2/9/1844, F.M.: Waters Papers, IX. Shepard to Fabens, 14/1/1847, F.M.: Fabens Papers, IV.

154 Loarer, 5/23(3), "Gomme Copal". He says the price declined from \$9 per frasala in 1844 to \$7 in 1849. His reference is to the scraped copal while Waters' references are to unscraped which appear to have declined from about \$6 in 1845 to \$5 in 1849. See graph.

155 Shepard to Fabens, 29/3/1845, F.M.: Fabens Papers IV. Ward's consular Returns, 31/12/1846, NAW: T100/2.

person than Waters in his single-minded pursuit of his own fortune, who dealt a blow which, coupled with the increase in American duties on unprocessed gums in 1847, eventually killed the copal cleaning industry at Salem.<sup>156</sup>

In the case of ivory the demand was more specialised and the "hard" ivory from West Africa apparently could not substitute for the "soft" from the East Coast. The Americans desperately attempted to avoid buying "hard" ivory at Zanzibar once it began to appear on the market in the 1840s, apparently from the Congo.<sup>157</sup> One of the uses in the United States was the manufacture of combs in Connecticut where two factories were consuming 1,000 lbs. a week each and yet could not meet their orders.<sup>158</sup> The problem the American merchants faced here was to try to keep the prices at Zanzibar low while making the American market impervious to the international market at London, in neither of which they were ultimately successful. At Zanzibar there was a distinction in quality and prices of "soft" ivory for the specialised markets of India on the one hand, and Europe and America on the other. The Bab Kutch, as the name suggests, was destined for the Indian market for the manufacture of ivory bangles and the price in the late

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156 Fabens to Shepard, 29/8/1844, P.M.: Shepard's Papers 43, J. to R. Waters, 5/5/1844, P.M.: Waters Papers IX. NEMA. 500-1.

157 NEMA. 410. R. to J. Waters, 2/9/1843, P.M.: Waters' Papers VI. The latter appears to be the first reference to "hard" ivory at Zanzibar. [Lost] to Jelly & Masury, 6/1849, P.M.: West Papers, IX.

158 J. to R. Waters, 15/8/1844, P.M.: Waters Papers, IX.

1840s ranged between \$38 and \$40 per frasala. The Bab Ulaya was for the North Atlantic market and the comparable prices were between \$33 and \$34.<sup>159</sup> The distinction may have arisen at Bombay in the early 1820s when a part of the imports of ivory was diverted to London, and the Indian market may then have been called upon to pay a higher price for the ivory most suited to its needs. A certain flexibility in the use of the two varieties probably remained and they thus exerted an influence on their respective prices which appeared to have kept pace at Zanzibar.<sup>160</sup> Moreover, as we have seen, Bombay also imported ivory for the London market which introduced a more intense competition for the Americans at Zanzibar, and it was precisely from 1844 that there was the escalation of ivory imports from Bombay to London. It is therefore probably not coincidental that the average price of ivory, which had remained below the \$30 per frasala plateau thus far, rose steeply from 1844 to about \$47 within a decade.<sup>161</sup>

While they thus failed to control the prices of ivory at Zanzibar, the American merchants also failed to monopolise the American market although it was claimed seven eighths of all the ivory imported into the United States came from East

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159 Loarer, 5/23(3), "Dents d'Elephants". Wadya to Waters, 18/3/1842, P.M.: Waters Papers, V. He mentions that the price of ivory for Kutchi bangles was Rs. 103<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> per maund (about \$44.70 per frasala) Jelly to Waters, 20/5/1845, ibid., VI; s. to s., 24/10/1845, ibid., II. They give the price at Zanzibar for the Bombay market of up to \$36 and \$38 respectively in 1845.

160 See p. 210.

161 See graphs II.



Africa.<sup>162</sup> The American merchants had often re-exported part of the ivory to London<sup>163</sup> to benefit from the higher prices there and perhaps to keep it scarce in the United States. However, as demand increased in the home market there was a marked decline in the re-export, which stood at an average of about 1,000 cwt. in 1842 and 1843, to an average of less than 100 cwt. over the following six years.<sup>164</sup> On the contrary ivory from London began to percolate to the manufacturers in the United States,<sup>165</sup> thus checking the rise in ivory prices at Salem and narrowing the profit margin. The gross profit margin which was about \$16 per frasila in 1843/4 decreased to \$13 in 1846/7 and to as little as \$10 in 1852/3.<sup>166</sup> Thus Salem's import trade was also suffering from a decline in profitability.<sup>167</sup>

Salem had been nervous about the trade at Zanzibar being "overdone" as early as 1840 and was therefore determined to make the best of the trade before "the people of Zanzibar... get more general information as to the value of their goods"

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162 NEMA, 385.

163 Maris to Shepard, 3/1 and 10/1/1851. P.M.: Shepard's Papers, 35.

164 See Appendix B

165 Shepard to Fabens, 31/3 & 9/5/1846, Fabens Papers, IV.

166 See graph II. It is more accurate to compare the price at Zanzibar with that at Salem for the following year, allowing an appropriate time-lag to cover the time for transportation etc.

167 Loarer, 5/23(2), "Pavillon Nord Americain." He says the profit was never less than 250/o, but it would appear to have declined from a higher figure.



in the United States.<sup>168</sup> However, the decline in profitability of both the export and the import had begun to bite deep into the total profit which the American merchants derived from the trade. Until 1846 they apparently could still count on a profit of about 30% which they did not consider "flattering", but the trade had begun to suffer great fluctuations from which Shepard counted himself lucky for having sustained "little or no loss thus far" (my italics).<sup>169</sup> It took the more philosophical of Salem's merchants, who was to persevere in the trade almost to his death, to observe:

I fear that the Zanzibar trade has seen its best days... But we must not complain. We have reaped a rich harvest the last ten years.<sup>170</sup>

Apart from these international factors, a shortage of capital appears to have hindered Salem merchants in their effort to engross the trade of Zanzibar. There are references to small loans without interest from Seyyid Said as early as 1845,<sup>171</sup> but these appear to have been for short periods to cover particular contingencies. By 1848 a significant reversal had occurred at Zanzibar with the Americans borrowing sums of money not only from the Sultan but also from Jairam Sewji, though

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168 West to Waters, 23/10/1840, 4/1841, P.M.: Waters Papers VI, NEMA. 229-30.

169 Ward to Fabens, 9/5/1846; Shepard to Fabens, 31/3/1846, 5/4/1848, P.M.: Faben's Papers IV. R. to J. Waters, 16/12/1844, P.M.: Waters' Papers IX.

170 NEMA. 389.

171 Jelly to Waters, 20/5/1845, P.M.: Waters' Papers, VI.

the short-term advance of goods by the Americans probably continued. These sums were initially loaned without interest, no doubt to facilitate trade by which Jairam eventually reaped some indirect benefit. By 1848 one of the Salem firms had accumulated a debt amounting to \$20,000 on which it was conducting its regular trade. This dependence placed the firm at the mercy of the custom master. It was alleged that when Jairam wished a clearer field in the trade to make up his own contracts to an English firm, he asked for a return of the loaned money on short notice which forced the firm to suspend all business operations and borrow from other Indian merchants to pay up. Jairam himself claimed he had asked for repayment to meet his own debts to the English firm and the Sultan, yet he seems to have offered to lend up to \$50,000 but on interest of 5<sup>0</sup>/<sub>o</sub>.<sup>172</sup> The Sultan came to the rescue with apparently short-term loans to carry the firm over its difficulties. However, from 1849 Salem merchants had to bow to the Indians for regular loans on interest of up to 9<sup>0</sup>/<sub>o</sub> which appears to have remained at that level thereafter.<sup>173</sup>

Faced with this multiple threat to the prosperity of Salem's trade the merchants sought cooperation among themselves.

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172 McMullan to Fabens, 24/9/1848, P.M.: Fabens' Papers IV. Ward to Bertram, 3/2/1849; Ward to Shepard 23/2 & 15/4/1849, E.I. Ward's Letter Book, 1848-9, Ward to Bertram, 14/4/1849, P.M.: Shepard's Papers xx, NEMA. 449.

173 Ward's receipt, 6/11/1848, E.I.: Ward's Letter Book, 1848-9. Ward to Webb, 14/5/1849, P.M.: Shepard's Papers 47.

Hopes for accommodation were expressed as early as 1841, and the following year agreement had been reached by which they instructed their agents at Majunga that they should not sell their goods under a price which they might agree on.<sup>174</sup> This cooperation may have been called for at the time by the special conditions of trade in Madagascar and did not extend to Zanzibar. After the withdrawal of Pingree and the Waters brothers from the trade the two firms appear to have combined temporarily in 1846 and 1847 in sending some vessels under joint ownership and consigned to a single agent.<sup>175</sup> It is not clear whether this measure was dictated by any shortage of capital in Salem, especially after Pingree's withdrawal.<sup>176</sup> It may have had the effect of reducing the price of ivory at Zanzibar by a couple of dollars by 1848,<sup>177</sup> but for some reason the experiment appears to have been abandoned, perhaps because it failed to keep other competitors out of the trade. By reverting to the older system of trade the Salem merchants were resigning themselves to more moderate profits from a trading region which was no longer their preserve, and relying on their own greater familiarity with the conditions at Zanzibar

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174 NEM. 232, 243-4.

175 The Eliza was sent in those years under joint ownership of the West brothers and the Bertram-Shepard group, consigned to Fabens. Outward Invoices, 7/9/1846 & 19/10/1847, P.M.; Fabens' Papers II.

176 Bertram to Fabens, 5/10/1846, P.M.; Fabens' Papers, IV.

177 See graph II.

to maintain a strong foothold there for the rest of the century. Despite the difficulties they encountered it was during the 1840s that they laid the foundation of American trade at Zanzibar which by 1859 accounted for over a quarter of the total foreign trade of Zanzibar.<sup>178</sup>

### 3. The Expansion of Zanzibar's Foreign Trade

Despite the deteriorating commercial conditions at Zanzibar for the Salem traders, they were, nevertheless, partially successful in controlling the growth of American trade at Zanzibar. Before the appointment of an exclusive agent there the level of total American trade stood at an average of less than \$200,000. The appointment of Waters as the exclusive agent and part owner of one of the firms was also the occasion for a considerable but controlled expansion of the trade to a level of over \$400,000 between 1841 and 1848. Already by 1845 they showed signs of losing a grip on the trade with a slight upward trend which proved temporary. That grip was finally broken by 1849 when the graph betrays a great degree of fluctuation as well as a steep increase in the total trade to a level of over \$700,000. While Salem increased her volume of

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178 Rigby to Sec. of State for India, 1/5/1860, FO 54/17. This is the earliest complete trade report. American imports amounted to about \$569,000 out of the revised total import of \$1,918,000. See p. 360 note 2. and American exports \$534,000 out of a total of \$2,158,000.

trade simultaneously, that increase accounted for only about half the increase in the total trade, the other half now being contributed by the other American ports. Correspondingly, whereas Salem had almost completely monopolised the American trade with Zanzibar before 1848, her share began to fall to as low as two thirds<sup>179</sup> by the mid 1850s.

New York established a regular trade with Zanzibar only in the late 1840s, but their trading pattern betrayed unfamiliarity with the trade at Zanzibar. For several years they brought few goods which were suitable and proceeded to Bombay to dispose of the bulk of their cargo in order to obtain brasswire and beads which were suitable. They were thus forced to make many voyages in the Indian Ocean to complete their cargoes, and usually called at Zanzibar more than twice which was usual with the Salem vessels. Their complete voyage, therefore, must have taken at least one and a half years whereas the Salem vessels normally completed their voyage within a year or so, and coupled with the competition they met at Zanzibar from the Salem merchants, their trade was small and probably not very lucrative. It was abandoned after 1854.<sup>180</sup>

A more serious competitor appeared to be Boston, and her

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179 See graph V.

180 The Archibald Gracie of New York did visit Zanzibar in 1839, but it did not lead immediately to regular trade. HAW: T100/1-3 for 1839, and 1848 to 1855, for the movements and trade of the New York vessels as compared with a Salem vessel.

entry in the mid 1840s caused the deepest anxiety at Salem. The Boston vessels had hardly sailed before the Salem firms were hurriedly informing their agents, in almost the same terms, that they belonged to "a House in Boston who have ample means if they succeed this time to carry on the business on a large scale... We trust you will do what you can honourably to prevent their contracting in Zanzibar". Waters added: "We must be willing... [to] loose [sic] a few thousand dollars... We must... try to make one voyage sufficient to disgust and sicken them of Zanzibar and its trade".<sup>181</sup> The effect on their arrival must have been catastrophic for all concerned. When the Catalpa arrived, Jelly wrote, cottons were selling at \$2.87<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> per piece of 30 yards. They came crashing down to \$2.12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>. Considering that the price in Salem stood at 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cents per yard, profit could hardly have been made on them.<sup>182</sup> She also raised the prices on exports most roundly, but Jelly suggested the rise was temporary because the newcomers were considered fair game by the local merchants.<sup>183</sup> Significantly, however, the Salem merchants received no sympathy from the Indian customs master in their efforts to defeat the Boston initiative. They complained of his "hard

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181 J. to R. Waters, 31/8/1844, P.M.: Waters' Papers IX.  
Shepard to Fabens, 15/9/1844, P.M.: Fabens' Papers IV;  
Webb to Fabens, 8/1/1846, ~~id.~~, II ~~NEMA~~, 251-2.

182 Jelly to Waters, 3/9/1845, P.M.: Waters' Papers VI.  
Shepard to Fabens, 29/11/1845, P.M.: Fabens' Papers IV.

183 Jelly to Waters, 3/9/1845, P.M.: Waters Papers VI.



grasping character".<sup>184</sup> in encouraging all traders to visit Zanzibar from which both Zanzibar and his own customs revenue benefitted. The Boston vessels appeared to have conducted their business on more rational lines and in many ways resembled the trading pattern of the Salem vessels. Their trade was more substantial and they persisted in the trade until 1847, but the combined opposition not only from the Salem merchants but also from the English firm of Cogan, Henderson & Co. apparently defeated them ultimately.<sup>185</sup>

The port which was most able to contribute to the expansion of American trade at Zanzibar, however, was Providence. The firm of Rufus Greene had sent an exploratory expedition in 1845/6, and from 1849 they steadily expanded their trade both on the Mozambique coast and at Zanzibar.<sup>186</sup> Their success may be related to a definite effort on the part of the customs master to foster their trade, and a consistent policy on the part of the Providence firm to win over Jairam Sewji. In 1851 they bought a new clipper bark which was significantly named

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184 NEMA, 340.

185 Ibid., Guillaum III, 365-6. He says they may have had an agent or correspondent at Zanzibar, but there is no confirmation. NAW;T100/1-3. Consular Returns for 1845-47, for movements and trade of the Boston vessels. Shepard to Fabens, 19/4 & 8/7/1847; Bertram to Fabens, 17/4/1847, P.M.; Fabens' Papers IV.

186 Jelly to Waters, 26/12/1846, P.M.; Waters' Papers VI. NAW;T100/1, Consular Returns for 1845 & 1846, and from 1849 to 1855. See graph V. R.I.: Congdon Papers, IX, Acct. Bk. pp. 1-58, V, log of the Oriental, entries for 7/7/1849, 8/1849, 2/10/1849; of the Sacramento, for 28/6/1850, July-August 1850, 1/7/1851, 4/12/1851.

Jeram. Her unfortunate loss on the maiden voyage did not spell a bad omen for the custom master or the firm which went on to establish a permanent agency at Zanzibar.<sup>187</sup>

The expansion of American trade as a result of Salem's loss of monopoly is a good indication of the expansion of the total trade of Zanzibar as alternate markets were opened up for her. Seyyid Said himself attempted to widen her options by extending his commercial activities to the Atlantic. The first voyage to the United States combined commercial objectives with those of an embassy and a shopping venture for the royal household. The venture was not found to be lucrative perhaps partly because of the confusion of objectives, but also because of the apparent mismanagement of the American agent at New York and the high duties on goods arriving in foreign vessels.<sup>188</sup> The venture was not repeated and Seyyid concentrated all his attention later to trade with England and France. He appointed R.H.Hunt, one of the principals of the firm which had traded at Zanzibar in the 1830s, as his agent at London and consigned several vessels to him during the latter half of the 1840s with cargoes of cloves and copal. These were sometimes so large that they had the effect of

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187 NEMA, 486. Greene to Bertram, 10/6/1852, P.M.: Shepard's Papers, 37. NAM:T100/3, Consular Returns for 1852, 30/6/1852.

188 Eilts, passim. NEMA. 254. 398.

lowering the price in the market and thus reducing the profit expected. Loarer further alleged that Hunt, who had not forgotten his own tremendous loss, attempted to recoup by overcharging on the return cargo of damaged goods.<sup>189</sup> Seyyid Said also sent several vessels to Marseille which excited the commercial interest of that port leading to the establishment of two French firms from that port at Zanzibar. They were to specialise in the export of copra and sesame, especially from the Lamu region.<sup>190</sup>

However, European interest in the East African trade did not wait upon Seyyid Said's advertising ventures. In the early 1840s direct English trade was revived, though on a smaller scale, by the firm of Cogan, Henderson & Co. They adopted the same plan as their predecessor in having three or four vessels touching at Zanzibar annually with as many dhows performing the entrepot function of collecting and distributing the goods.<sup>191</sup>

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189 Hunt to Aberdeen, 25/7/1845, FO 54/8. Said to Hunt, 10/3/1845, FO 54/10. s. to s., 19/3/1847, FO 54/11. Maris to Shepard, 18/5 & 25/5/1849. P.M.: Shepard's Papers 31. Loarer, 5/23(1), "Ile de Zanguebar".

190 Cochet to MAE, 19/1/1857, MAE: CCZ, II, ff 104-6. There was apparently some opposition to the entry of goods from Zanzibar, especially cloves, which disturbed the market for the French colonial produce from Bourbon. Note on the French treaty, MAE: C.C.Z., I ff. 180-196. de Belligny to MAE, 7/10/1850, MAE: C.C.Z., I, f. 479. Rabald (1879), 158. Burton (1872), I, 319-20.

191 Loarer, 5/23(2) "commerce des Anglais" 5/23(i), "Ile de Zanguebar". Guillain, II, 4n.; III, 368-9.

Apart from the usual trade in copal and ivory, however, the firm took a further step of manufacturing coconut and sesame oil and sugar at Zanzibar and exporting the manufactured product. They also considered the possibility of exploiting guano deposits on Latham island to the south of Zanzibar and agricultural resources of the coast north of Lamu, neither of which apparently materialised.<sup>192</sup> The unfortunate death of their local agent in 1848 and of the principals of the firm appears to have put an end to this commercial and industrial effort at Zanzibar.<sup>193</sup>

It is not unlikely that German interest in East African trade was aroused by the demand for ivory and copal in Europe. A French representative of a German firm expressed the desire for commercial relations to Seyyid Said's embassy to London in 1842.<sup>194</sup> The trade from the Hanseatic ports was apparently inaugurated by the Alph in 1834/45 which led to the entry of the Hamburg firm of O'Swald.<sup>195</sup> The captain was described as

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192 Hamerton to Aberdeen, 13/4/1844, FO 84/540. Memorial of Wm. Henderson & Co. to Treasury, 18/12/1844, FO 54/8. Cogan to Said, 1/8/1844, FO 54/6; s. to s., 17/11/1845, Said to Cogan, 11/2/1846, FO 54/10. Cogan to Hamerton, 5/3/1846; Hamerton to Aberdeen, 11/3/1846, FO 84/647. See p. 202-3.

193 Hamerton to Palmerston, 26/7/1849, FO 54/13. NEMA. 390, 412. McMullen to Fabens 24/9/1848, P.M.: Fabens' Papers IV.

194 Mohamed b. Hamecs to Ali b. Nasser, 2/11/1842, FO 54/5, pp. 435-6. Woolf, 235-6, says the Hanseatic firm of Herz was established at Zanzibar in 1840 but there is no confirmation.

195 NEMA. 266. O'Swald, 10. Guillain III, 198.

"a shrewd sort of man... seeking information respecting trade on this coast", but he got "such answers as suits the question"<sup>196</sup>. The Germans were relatively well placed in the import trade for they imported metal wire and beads as well as specie. They found willing allies among the "custom house folks" who exerted themselves to supply them with the needed ivory, copal and cloves.<sup>197</sup> By 1849 they had established their own agency at Zanzibar and in 1850 there were six Hamburg vessels in the trade increasing to thirteen vessels by 1857. This increase was ascribed largely to the very profitable transport of cowries to West Africa which emerged as their great speciality. Between 1850 and 1878 they shipped 27,000 tons of them.<sup>198</sup>

Direct trade from France was initiated by the Atlantic port of Bordeaux, perhaps for the same motive of benefitting from the phenomenal demand for East Africa commodities. It was only fitting that Broquant, who explored the commercial possibilities of the East African trade in the early 1840s, was chosen as the first and only merchant consul to represent France at Zanzibar. The French traders appear to have found it extremely difficult to enter the import trade of Zanzibar which was dominated by American or Indian textiles, and by English

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196 Fabens to Shepard, 22/4/1845, P.M.; Shepard's Papers, 43. E.L. Bates Journal in the Richmond (1845), entry for 29/4/1845.

197 NEMA, 437, 440, 444.

198 Ibid., 452. O'Swald, 10, 22. Burton (1872), I, 207-9.

manufactured hardware. Their spirits and "French Knickknacks" were not suitable for the market and their trade was, therefore, characterised, like the earlier Mascarene trade, by large importations of specie. Their vessels sought copal and ivory but they appear to have met tough competition from American and English traders,<sup>199</sup> and may have been forced to withdraw in favour of their fellow countrymen from Marseille.

Perhaps the most graphic result of the expansion of trade at Zanzibar was the lively harbour scene in 1845 when within a single year apart from nine merchant vessels from Salon, there were three from the other American ports, at least three English and two Mauritius vessels, two Hanseatic ones, a French brig and even a Swedish bark which visited Zanzibar.<sup>200</sup> Even then the Salem merchants were complaining "that the trade is done for.. As things are now it is not worth pursuing",<sup>201</sup> but they were not really serious about abandoning it, though their profit margins were shrinking. Therefore, when Soyid Said's commercial activities began to spill into the Atlantic especially after 1845, their nerves, as well as those of the now well-established English firm, were quite raw. He undoubtedly would have enjoyed influence at Zanzibar in the

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199 Broquant to MAE, 30/12/1841, MAE: C.C.Z., I, ff. 96-7.  
Extract of a report of Cap. Chs. Larue of the George Curier of Bordeaux, 17/7/1845, AOM: O.I.15/65. NEML. 251, 348.

200 NAW: T100/2, Consular returns for 1845; NEML. 266, 344, 348.

201 NEML. 343.



collection of exports and his trade was exempt from duties, not only from the import duty of 5% but also on the heavy local duties on commodities coming from the mainland.<sup>202</sup>

His trade was apparently liable to heavy duties in the United States but he apparently enjoyed preferential treatment in England and France.<sup>203</sup> He, moreover, produced large quantities of cloves and sugar on his own plantations, and his merchant vessels were converted warships which were no longer being called upon to perform warlike duties.<sup>204</sup> His entry into the trade, therefore, constituted a great threat to all foreign traders and, incidentally, to Jairam who suffered a reduction in the customs and perhaps a gradual loss of trade. Whether Jairam helped in defeating Seyyid Said's rapid expansion of his own trade to the Atlantic is not certain.

The English traders who were most immediately affected by this rival drive reacted by petitioning their government. They argued that if Seyyid Said persisted in the trade it would soon be monopolised, and they wished to defeat his purpose by threatening to break up the pre-existing commercial system in which their activities were restricted to the entrepot. By trading on the mainland, especially on the Mrima, they warned,

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203 de Belligny to MLE, 7/5/1849, Cochelet to MLE, 16/7/1849, MLE to de Belligny, 4/8/1849, MLE: C.C.Z., I, ff 335-9, 342, 346-51. Hunt to Aberdeen, 25/7/1845, FO 54/8.

204 C. to I. Ward, 22/11/1847, E.I. Ward's Letter Book, 1848-9. Eilts, 29-30. The Sultana which went to New York in 1840 was one of the converted warships.

they could avoid paying the heavy entrepot duties. However, they were specifically barred by the British commercial treaty from trading in ivory and copal along that portion of the coast, and they vainly complained of the discrimination in favour of the Indians, who they claimed, were British subjects, but who were allowed to trade there under the Arab flag.<sup>205</sup> They, therefore, turned to the Americans to bust the dam by their superior treaty which did not include the relevant article for, under the "most favoured nation" clause, the rest of the foreign traders would automatically enjoy that privilege. The Americans had apparently been using that threat at least as early as 1842 to obtain commercial advantages.<sup>206</sup> Seyyid Said vainly tried to obtain a modification of the American treaty, though the American consul was ordered by his government to use "your best exertion to render their intercourse with that portion of his dominions as unobjectionable as possible."<sup>207</sup> Apparently some understanding was reached by which Seyyid Said refrained from extending his regular trade to the United States in return for which the Americans refrained from carrying out

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205 Pollock & Peters to Palmerston, 24/4/1847; s. to Hamerton, 22/2/1847; Memorial of Peters & Pollock to Said, 20/2/1847; Hamerton to Palmerston, 25/3/1847, FO 54/11; s. to s. 15/12/1848, FO 54/12.

206 Hamerton to Willoughby, 3/3/1842, NAI; 29/6/1842-S.C.-80/82. Fabens to Bertram, 10/4/1846, P.M.: Fabens' Papers IV.

207 Said to U.S. President, 11/3/1847. Ward to Buchanan, 15/6/1848, NAW:T100/2. Said to Ward, 12/3/1847, FO 54/11. Ward to Buchanan, 21/3/1847, E.I.: Ward's Correspondence with the State Dept., no. 18; Buchanan to Ward, 7/10/1847; NAW: RG 84/Z-C.8.2.(i), Instructions, 1834-60. ~~MEMO~~ 353-8, 365, 361-5.

their threat to the whole structure of the commercial empire.<sup>208</sup>  
 His trade with Europe continued for some time but it seems to have suffered from mismanagement and may have been discontinued during the 1850s.<sup>209</sup> By then it had helped in expanding Zanzibar commercial relations with Europe, and Salem's attempt to control the growth of Zanzibar's trade had been defeated.

By the mid-century the structure of Zanzibar's foreign trade had attained a new equilibrium. Indian trade for the home market had been greatly affected by economic changes of the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The instability of Indian cotton production and the inability of Indian cotton to withstand competition from Manchester had led to the penetration of English cottons into East Africa, largely via Bombay. By 1859 about 40% of all the cotton goods from India was of British manufacture, though the larger portion was still Indian.<sup>210</sup> The Indian market was similarly affected by the English demand for ivory which was taking about 55% of the total ivory exports of Bombay compared with about 40% entering the Indian market.<sup>211</sup> It should, however, be remembered that a

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208 Ward to Shepard, 20/12/1847, E.I.: Ward's Letter Book, 1848-9.

209 See p.282-3. de Bulligny to M.A.E., M.A.E.: C.C.Z., I, ff. 422-5.

210 Rigby to Sec. of State for India, 1/5/1860, FC 54/17. English cottons amounted to \$179,000 and Indian cottons to \$255,000.

211 Calculated for the 1840s. See Appendix A.

large part of the ivory for the home market went directly to the ports of Kutch<sup>212</sup> and Gujarat, and it is not unlikely that when this is taken into consideration, the relative importance of the two markets within this northern branch of Zanzibar's trade is reversed. Moreover, as has been shown,<sup>213</sup> by the mid-century Indian re-export of ivory had attained its limit and further expansion was hindered by the opening up of new virgin ivory fields. This allowed the diversion of the still increasing supply of ivory from East Africa back into the home market. Despite the changes, therefore, Zanzibar's trade with India, not only the total but even specifically for the home market, was still substantial and increasing. Moreover, despite the various attempts to short-circuit it, Bombay's re-export of East Africa was still sizeable and showed that it still contained considerable latent strength. By 1859 the total trade with India still constituted nearly two-fifths of the total foreign trade of Zanzibar.<sup>214</sup>

In comparison the southern branch of the trade to the United States and Europe, which had shown such a spectacular growth over the previous quarter century, accounted for over half the

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212 In 1859 about \$150,000 worth of ivory was exported to Kutch and \$160,000 to British India. Rigby to Sec. of State, 1/5/1860, FO. 54/17.

213 See p. 211.

214. The total trade of Kutch and British India was valued at \$1,489,000 out of the revised total of \$4,076,000. See Chapter VII, note 15. The figures for "East Coast of Africa" have been deducted from the totals. Rigby to Sec. of State, 1/5/1860, FO 54/17.

total foreign trade of Zanzibar by 1859. This branch had by then established a firm foothold in the trade at Zanzibar based primarily on the supply of American cottons of about an equal value to the English and Indian cottons put together, and on other industrial goods, in return for ivory, copal and cloves, for which their demand exceeded the total demand of the northern markets.<sup>215</sup> Thus, though the northern trade remained important, the southern trade had established a primacy at Zanzibar. This primacy, however, had been established by its own more rapid growth rather than by any displacement or absolute decline of the northern trade. By the mid-century, therefore, the total trade of Zanzibar had increased tremendously. The steep increase in the customs revenue from about \$80,000 in 1819 to \$190,000 in 1859<sup>216</sup> is probably a fair indication of that growth. Such an expansion of the trade was made possible by an efficient commercial organization in East Africa which facilitated the collection of African commodities and the

215 Ibid. The figures in \$000 are:

	<u>Import</u>	<u>Export</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of total</u>
U.S.	569	534	1,103	27
France	231 (revised)	248	479	12
Germany	256 ( " )	161	417	10
Britain	-	25	25	1
W. Africa (Cowries taken by the Germans & the French)	-	230	230	6
				<u>56</u>

216 See graph VI.

distribution of the imports through a vast economic region. Zanzibar was placed at the centre of this organization, and her role in it deserves a detailed examination.



## CHAPTER VI

The Commercial Empire at its height

By the middle of the nineteenth century Zanzibar had developed as a full-fledged entrepot of a commercial empire which handled the foreign trade of an area that extended far beyond her actual sovereignty. The reasons for her ability to serve that function were largely economic, and for the same reasons, she was able to retain her economic role long after <sup>the</sup> hinterland had been politically partitioned among the colonial powers.<sup>1</sup>

Zanzibar's entrepot function arose from a fairly widespread distribution of the sources of the African commodities in relatively small quantities along the East African coast. The more than seven hundred miles of coastline included termini of numerous trade routes linking the coast with the interior to varying depths. The coastal belt itself offered gum copal in varying quantities and qualities which was gathered at the numerous small ports. Few of these were substantial enough in the volume of trade handled or in harbour facilities, to emerge as fully fledged ports with direct external contacts. The problem which arose was, therefore, the collection of African commodities and the distribution of imported goods from Zanzibar.

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1 As late as 1899, 69% of Tanganyika's exports went through Zanzibar, as compared with 23% to Germany. By 1912, as a result of deliberate German policy, the position had been reversed, with 57% going to Germany and only 5% to Zanzibar. German Annual Reports, quoted in J. Iliffe's "Modern Africa - Social and Economic History: Supplementary Statistics and Documents", Pt. 1, Table 3.

Zanzibar's ability to serve that function was facilitated by the climatic factor. It has been shown above<sup>2</sup> that the East African coast, being at the edge of the monsoonal system, enjoys two long inter-monsoonal periods of variable winds when the two-way lateral communications between the offshore islands and the mainland opposite is possible. The monsoons, besides permitting more longitudinal communication along the coast, also allow lateral communication by tacking. Thus, Zanzibar is linked to the Krima coast as far south as the Rufiji almost throughout the year. The more northerly and southerly parts of the coast can maintain their contacts with Zanzibar during the monsoon,<sup>3</sup> though coastal craft can to some extent "steal" from one port to another during the other seasons, utilising the land and sea breezes.<sup>4</sup> The wind system is therefore admirably suited for the collection of African commodities and the distribution of foreign imports from the entrepot throughout the year. Zanzibar was centrally situated along the coast to serve the entrepot function well.

The entrepot trade was conducted by the numerous local dhow of small dimensions, measuring from eight to twenty five tons, as well

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2 See p. 23.

3 Hamerton to Willoughby, 20.8.1841. F.O. 54/4; Guillain, III, 370-1.

4 Guillain, III, 381. He says that although there was a possibility of communication between Zanzibar and Mombasa during the other seasons through the intermediary of one of the places on the coast opposite Zanzibar, this route was hardly used for commercial traffic.

as some of the large monsoonal ones. Guillain estimated in the 1840s that about a hundred of the former were involved in the coasting traffic.<sup>5</sup> Evidence from Mombasa in the 1820s shows that these included the now extinct sewn Mtope which transported grain all along the coast between the Benadir and Kilwa.<sup>6</sup> In March and April, 1825, a total of thirty two such vessels sailed from Mombasa to Zanzibar, Pemba, the Mrima and the coast to the north, accompanied by dau (small dhow) and dhow of varying tonnage which seem to have carried other types of commodities as well.<sup>7</sup> There were also about fifty beden, constructed at Sur in Oman, of between fifteen and twenty five tons, which Guillain described as the "most active coasters".<sup>8</sup> They were good sailors which gave them an advantage over their rivals. The vessels departed each year from their homeland loaded with salt and fitted for fishing; they stopped at many places en route, exchanging whatever goods

5 Guillain, III, 357-8. Loarer, "Navigation & commerce sous divers pavillons: Pavillon Arabique", AOM:O.I. 5/23 No. 2, Pt. 2, Loarer says more than 1,000 boats annually passed through Zanzibar, and that there were 500 in the harbour at Zanzibar in June, i.e. after the first monsoonal sailing in April/May. He is obviously counting all the smaller coasting vessels, and even with these the figure appears to be an exaggeration. Guillain enumerates 170 deep-sea vessels in the late 1840s as well as 50 Umani fishing vessels which were employed in the coasting trade apart from the local vessels.

6 Burton (1872) I, 73-4.

7 Emery's Journal, entries for 1825, P.R.O.:Adm. 52/3940.

8 Guillain, III, 357, 370.

they may have had three or four times over. Those which did not sail for home at the commencement of the south-west monsoon in April were advantageously employed in the coasting traffic instead of lying idle till mid-August.

1. Differential Exploitation of the Coast

By making a distinction between that part of the coast perennially linked with Zanzibar, and peripheral areas to the north and south which are linked only during the monsoons, the climatic factor provided the basis for an economic policy of differential control and exploitation of the coast by the entrepot. These peripheral areas had a greater potential for independent contacts with overseas markets to the north-east and the south-east respectively. Guillain lists Mombasa, Lamu and the Benadir to the north and Kilwa, Lindi and Tungi to the south as having direct external contacts.<sup>9</sup> In the absence of any compulsion, they used the facilities of the entrepot to the extent that it was advantageous to them, especially when each was trading across Zanzibar into the opposite economic region, such as Kilwa's export of slaves and ivory to Arabia and India. It is perhaps characteristic of the evolving commercial empire that even when compulsion was possible, the administering authority chose economic incentives to induce them to channel at least some of their trade through Zanzibar and to stimulate or maintain the economic activities of the conquered ports. This policy may have arisen not so much out

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9 Guillain, III, 304.

of kind-heartedness, as from a principle of the commercial empire to keep the economic machine going with the minimum of administrative and military expenditure. Thus the evolving administrative and financial system offered substantial duty reductions on commodities from the peripheral areas. The duty that remained was small enough and was probably more than compensated by the greater competitiveness of the prices and the better facilities of the entrepot.<sup>10</sup> The variable tax burden along the coast shown in the map, I feel, confirms the contention about the role of taxation in the commercial empire.

a. The Peripheral Areas

The peripheral areas to the south exercised varying degrees of political and economic independence. As far as the climatic factor is concerned they enjoyed the freedom of direct external contacts to the south-east, to Mozambique, Madagascar, the Comoros and the Mascarenes. Kilwa in the eighteenth century made the best of its ability in establishing a prosperous trade in slaves to the French islands. However, as was pointed out above,<sup>11</sup> the southern peripheral area was at a distinct advantage in its economic relations with the northern Indian Ocean. The trading season between the north-east and the south-west monsoons is too short and necessitated the detention of the northern vessels until the second sailing season in

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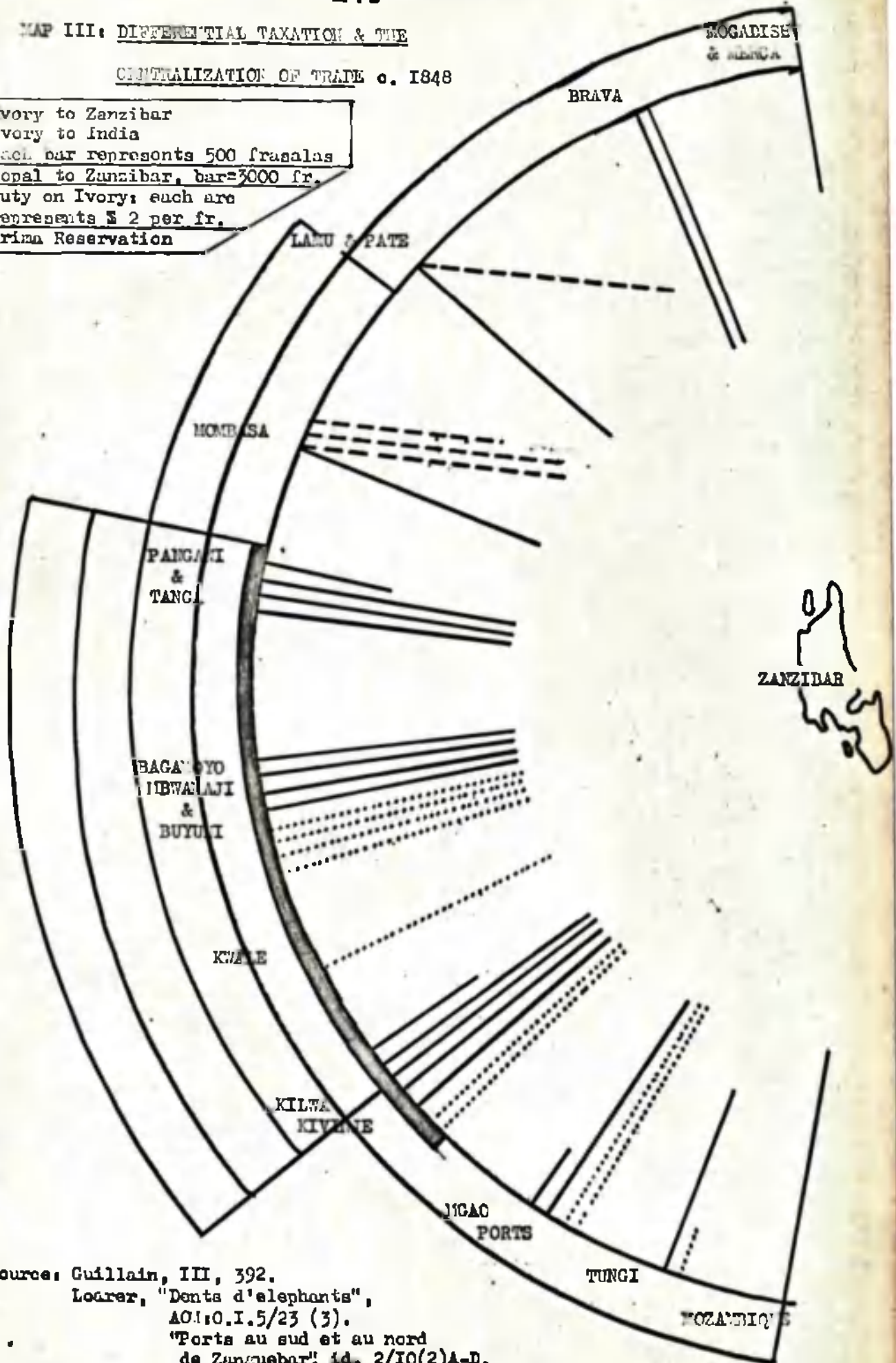
10 Guillain, III, 302-3, Desfosses to M. A. E., 19-23.11.1844, enclosure, CCZ I, 245; Lonzer "Lois & Coutumes de Douane", ACM:O.I.5/23, No. 2.

11 See pp. 24.



MAP III: DIFFERENTIAL TAXATION & THE  
CENTRALIZATION OF TRADE c. 1848

— Ivory to Zanzibar  
 - - - Ivory to India  
 Each bar represents 500 fragalas  
 ..... Copal to Zanzibar, bar=3000 fr.  
 || Duty on Ivory; each arc represents \$ 2 per fr.  
 ■ Mrima Reservation



Source: Guillain, III, 392.  
 Loarer, "Dents d'elephants",  
 AOI.O.I.5/23 (3).  
 "Ports au sud et au nord  
 de Zunguebar"; id. 2/10(2)A-D.



August. Unless induced or forced, the Indian vessels showed little inclination to proceed to the southern peripheral area. Moreover, many of the southern ports offered a very limited market. Yet the northern trade was crucial to Kilwa's south-eastern trade.

Thus the entrepot at Zanzibar offered several advantages for that portion of the trade of the southern coast which was channelled through it. It saved the northern vessels the inconvenience of "wintering" in East Africa. It offered a large enough market to permit the vessels to obtain their full cargoes without having to waste much of their time on a coasting voyage collecting small lots. With a larger number of vessels concentrated at the entrepot, all seeking the same goods, there was a greater likelihood, through competition, of the international market having a direct influence on the prices offered for those goods. The southern coast inevitably had to pay for the services rendered. The price offered on that coast was naturally lower than at Zanzibar, to pay for the middleman, though it was higher than if there had been no competition. The southern coast also had to pay a tax on the commodities exported to Zanzibar which, as I have already stated, was much lower than for the kima coast.

The coast between Kilwa and Cape Delgado, called the Mgao coast in Swahili, experienced a varying degree of political control from Zanzibar. Loarer, who was in search of a French foothold on the coast, called this a "neutral territory, not

belonging to the Portuguese and attached only nominally to the authority of Seyyid Said" to obtain his protection, but retaining a degree of their independence.<sup>12</sup> There were no Omani governors or customs officials at Tungi, Mikindari, Mgao Mwanja or Kisware, and Tungi to the south of Cape Delgado was even claimed by Portugal. It had been settled by people from the north and Zanzibar exercised a more effective authority. The inhabitants, in the words of the same Loarer, "could not cease to be subjects of Seyyid Said", though according to the local chief, "the inhabitants obey only their own chief who, when there is need, will fight Seyyid Said".<sup>13</sup> Political relationship thus appears to be in the nature of an Omani overlordship and local independence which characterised the commercial empire even on Zanzibar where the Shirazi ruler exercised a considerable degree of authority over the indigenous population.<sup>14</sup> As each part of the coast came under Omani rule some form of accommodation was sought with the pre-existing rulers and populations to facilitate commercial exploitation with the minimum of administrative expenditure or organisation. In return for the partial cession of their sovereignty, these ports were granted favoured commercial treatment in their trade with Zanzibar. They had to pay only \$2 per frasala of ivory and the lowest rate of duty

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12 Loarer, "Ports au Sud de Zanguebar" under "Lindy", AOM: O.I. 2/10 (2), Nos. A & B.

13 Loarer, "Ports au Sud de Zanguebar".

14 Gray (1962) 159-64.

on other commodities when exported to Zanzibar.<sup>15</sup>

These ports were, nevertheless, commercially dependent on Zanzibar. The commerce of Tungi was in the hands of the dhow of Zanzibar and Tungi was an important centre of trade whose hinterland extended into the territories claimed by the Portuguese as far as Tete and Sena. The Portuguese bitterly complained of the contraband trade which inundated their possessions with cloth, gunpowder and beads. For a port which supplied a large quantity of ivory, copal and grains, Zanzibar exercised perhaps more than the usual amount of circumspection to keep Tungi contented within the commercial ~~ex~~<sup>pr</sup>pire. The same low rate of duty applied to Tungi as to Lindi. By 1863 the Sultan of Zanzibar could claim a regular custom house whose existence was attested even by the Portuguese.<sup>16</sup>

At Lindi accommodation between the suzerain power and the local ruler proceeded at a more rapid rate as the latter's dependence on the entrepot at Zanzibar grew. Under the Sultan Ibrahim b. Issa b. Salim al-Barwani, Lindi enjoyed almost complete political independence. He had constructed a "very solid fort capable of defence against the arms of Seyyid Said", and

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15 Guillain, III, 392. Loarer, "Lois & coutumes de Douane"; de Belligny to M.A.E., 8.7.1850, CCZ I, 461-9 Burton (1872) II, 411.

16 Playfair to Anderson, 15.11.1863, F.O. 84/1204. Playfair "Report on a tour in the various countries around Zanzibar", T.B.G.S., XVII, pp. 256-8, quoting from Ensaio sobre a Estatistica dos possessoes Portuguezas no ultramar. II Series. Sib IV. Moçambique. Loarer, "Ports au Sud de Zanguebar: Tongui".

he "never regarded himself as a vassal of the Imam". Lindi prospered on the slave trade to the south, and Ibrahim imposed exaction even on dhows which merely sailed within sight of the port. After the Moresby Treaty the slave trade to the south gradually declined to a trickle by 1830, and with it Lindi's independent economic contacts, though not necessarily its prosperity. There remained the demand for slaves to the north. Moreover, the demand in the north for ivory and copal was growing. By the late 1840s a thousand to twelve hundred slaves, seven to eight hundred frasalas of ivory, three thousand frasalas of gum copal, as well as large quantities of millet and sesame, were apparently finding an easy market at Zanzibar.<sup>17</sup>

This northern trade implied increasing economic dependence on Zanzibar. In 1827 an expedition was apparently sent against Lindi which may have been repulsed.<sup>18</sup> However, after the death of Ibrahim in 1833 or 1834, Seyyid Said began to exercise a

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17 Loarer, "Ports au sud de Zanguebar: Lindi". This account is confirmed and supplemented on many points by the "Ancient History of Lindi", in S.D., 228. Tanganyika: Annual Report of the Department of Antiquities, 1958, pp. 28-9. These last two mention Nator b. Issa as the builder of the fort. The more contemporary Loarer mentions Ibrahim b. Issa. The History also provides a more complete and family name of the Sultan of Lindi. It suggests that the Sultan, after building the fort, sought the authority of Seyyid Said to confirm him in his post. He may have declared his independence thereafter.

18 Said to Ahmed b. Seif, Wali of Zanzibar, 24.1.1827. Extract Said to Agha Mahomed Shoostry, n.d., enclosed in Memo from the Persian Secretary, 6.2.1827. Governor of Bombay to Said [28.2.1827], M.A.: 28/1827, pp. 256-9, 269-72. Said to Agha Mahomed Shoostry, n.d., enclosed in consultation dated 25.6.1828, M.A.: 8/1828, pp. 136-7.

greater degree of interference, though by no means dominant influence. He confirmed Muhammad b. Issa as a governor who, however, continued to carry the title of the Sultan of Lindi. This overlordship perhaps accurately represents the balance of power between the two. Loarer says that Seyyid Said did not hesitate sending an expedition against Muhammad b. Issa for any flagrant violation of "the rights of men". He adds, however, that this did not prevent Muhammad from chasing all his business rivals out of Lindi, and from selling two hundred slaves to a Brazilian slaver. On the other hand, Muhammad was apparently unable to resist the imposition of customs officials who received duties on the trade with all the places other than Zanzibar.<sup>19</sup> Probably part of the bargain was the very low duty charged on ivory export to Zanzibar, amounting to less than 10%.<sup>20</sup> It is significant that Zanzibar did not attempt to exploit the economic dependence of this coast for fear of exciting the centrifugal forces which nearly wrecked the nascent commercial

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These documents mention Said's expedition against Nujao, which is obviously a rendition of Mgao, the common prefix to many ports on this coast. He gives as his reason the continued slave trade with the French. Roberts' Notebook contains a few almost incomprehensible notes which mention Lindi and Mongallo, and the expedition sent by the governor of Zanzibar some time in 1827. L.C.: Roberts, VII.

19 Loarer, "Ports au Sud de Zanguebar: Lindy".

20 Ibid. The duty was two piastres per frasala. Good quality ivory was exchanged for sixteen to eighteen piastres worth of merchandise per frasala with the Africans from the interior, or for twenty four to twenty five piastres with the coastal merchants.



empire in the late eighteenth century.<sup>21</sup> On the contrary, she sought to stimulate the expansion of trade on which depended the prosperity of both the coast and the entrepot.

The peripheral areas of the north reproduce the patterns of political dependence, taxation, and exploitation of the southern areas, but in reverse, and with certain modifications. The most important factor was the areas' ability to have direct external commercial contacts with Arabia and India. These branches of trade, unlike the southern area's trade with the Mascarenes, continued to grow in importance all through the nineteenth century. That factor, however, was somewhat counter-balanced by the more constricted hinterlands of many of the ports in the area. Since these were convenient ports en route, much of what trade there was with the north was probably conducted directly. Only those commodities which were in demand at Zanzibar by the American traders used the facilities of the entrepot unless the Americans made their own arrangements to collect them at those ports.

The Benadir were the farthest ports which recognised some sort of suzerainty of Seyyid Said. His political power there may not have been significant, but common economic interests seems to have forced accommodation as regards duties. On the one hand Seyyid Said acquired the power to install a collector

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21 See p. 66.



of customs at Merca<sup>22</sup> and perhaps at other places as well. On the other hand, he imposed on the commodities of this coast imported to Zanzibar the same low duty that was applicable to the southern Tanzanian coast which politically held a similar relationship with Zanzibar. A later French consul commented that it was the economic link with Zanzibar which made them recognise the suzerainty of Zanzibar.<sup>23</sup> Some of the ports along this coast had extensive hinterlands which extended along the Juba, and even as far as the ports on the Gulf of Aden, but very little ivory seems to have come down to the coast from the interior.<sup>24</sup> What was important as far as the entrepot was concerned was perhaps the importation of grain, and the large quantity of hides which originated from this area and which found a ready market at Zanzibar among the Americans. The ports of Mogadishu, Brava and Merca annually sent a thousand to twelve hundred scores of hides to Zanzibar where they received high prices.<sup>25</sup> The Americans were later to develop their own

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22 Loarer, Political and commercial note on Meurka, AOM: O.I. 2/10(2).

23 Jablonski to M.S.E., 11.1.1863 and 7.3.1863, C.C.Z. II, 285-7, 305-7. Guillain III, 385. Rigby to Murraby, 15.4.1862, F.O. 54/19. Christie (1876) map.

24 The Star bought ten pieces of ivory at Brava. Invoice dated 27.11.1845. P.M.: Fabens, II.

25 Guillain, III, 307.

patterns of trade which diminished Zanzibar's role in the trade. They began to make contracts with local merchants for the supply of hides, which were to be delivered either at Zanzibar or at Brava at a specified date. A common feature in many letters of instruction to the American captains was an order to pass through Brava either to buy or to collect contracted hides.<sup>26</sup>

There was a great similarity between the Lamu archipelago and Mombasa in their economic importance to Zanzibar. The events enacted at these places in the early nineteenth century were strongly reminiscent of those at Kilwa in the late eighteenth, though in a more intense form. The similarities lie in the threat each offered to the Omani model of a commercial empire based on Zanzibar. The northern areas, situated within the region of reliable monsoon, had the potential of establishing economic bases completely independent of the entrepot, and threatening even to rival it.<sup>27</sup> Even assuming those threats were nullified, it made little economic sense to channel all the trade of the northern ports to India and Arabia through Zanzibar. Omani policy in relation to them was therefore characterised, firstly by a persistent effort to subjugate them politically, and secondly by assuring them efficient

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26 Fabens to Hamblet, 10.10.1846, P.M.: Fabens P., II.  
Jolly and Masury to West, 26.4.1851, P.M.: West P., 10.

27 It was reported in 1811 that Zanzibar was declining while Mombasa and Lamu were prospering. This may be due to disruption of the French slave trade. Smee (1811a) 512.

economic bases, even though they were independent of Zanzibar.

The economies of both these areas were dual in character, consisting of a strong agricultural base in the coastal belt and trade. The Lamu archipelago was one of the granaries of East Africa. Agriculture created a significant demand for slaves from the southern coast, and it was said in the late 1840s that there were 40,000 slaves, belonging to the people of Lamu, involved in the cultivation of sesame and other grains on the mainland. Emery's journal for the mid-1820s contains a long series of references to dhows and mtepe from the Lamu archipelago which brought grains to Mombasa, especially between October and March.<sup>28</sup> For Mombasa itself, the inhabitants had considerable shambas on the mainland where they were employed in cultivating grains after the departure of the dhows in April. The city at this time appeared almost denuded of its population for several months. However, the production appears to have been small and Mombasa was dependent upon grain imports from the northern coast of Kenya, and especially from Pemba.<sup>29</sup>

The second base of the economies of these northern ports was trade. In the case of Mombasa we need only recapitulate that increased Indian demand for ivory in the early nineteenth

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28 Emery's Journal, entries for 27.10.1824, 12.1, 4.2, 8.3, 10.3, 11.3, 12.3.1825.

29 Ibid., entries for 14.9, 22.9.1824, 28.4.1826. Boteler, II, 26. Owen, I, 427. Gray (1957) III.

century had led to the expansion of Mombasa's hinterland by the Kamba.<sup>30</sup> At the mid-century about 1,000 irasalas of ivory were passing through the port.<sup>31</sup> Lamu was situated at the southern mouth of a network of waterways which, with the help of a very active coastal traffic, drained a large basin of commodities in demand. Lamu developed as the entrepot for the archipelago itself, for Pate, Siu and the small villages on the mainland opposite the archipelago which were markets for the Galla. Moreover, Lamu was situated closer than any other place in the archipelago to "the principle indigenous market" at Kaco, which was near the mouth of river Uzi or Tana. The Tana was not only settled by the agricultural Pokomo and by the Galla, but was also apparently a corridor of trade of great length to the highlands of Kenya. Both the Galla and the Dahalo were said to bring their ivory to points along the river. The famous Kamba trader, Kivoi, was attempting to open a new trade route to the Tana when he was killed in 1848.<sup>32</sup>

Standing on these two legs Lamu and Mombasa were able to entertain direct trade contacts with Arabia and India. Grain export to south Arabia was a regular feature from this part of the coast.<sup>33</sup> Of greater significance was the trade with India.

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30 See pp. 152.

31 See p.384 note 65.

32 Krapf, 245.

33 Emery's Journal, entries for 30.9.1824, 8.10.1825.

A nakhoda (Captain) from Mombasa mentioned in his petition in 1835 that he had been trading in ivory and gum copal with Bombay for the previous twenty two years.<sup>34</sup> In Emery's Journal there are numerous references to the loading of dhows bound for India. At least one of these belonged to an Indian, but the impression is that in the 1820s the Arabs still dominated the trade even with India.<sup>35</sup> When direct trade began to be increasingly difficult because of Seyyid Said's blockade of Mombasa, the Mombasa traders first attempted to charter Indian vessels under English colours, and then transfer the ownership of their vessels to Indian merchants at Bombay in order to maintain contact with India, however tenuous.<sup>36</sup>

Mombasa's commercial vitality was also apparent in her trade contacts with other parts of the East African coast. Thus, a dhow, "Mabruki" which sailed from Mombasa in February 1824 for Zanzibar returned in September from Mozambique with a cargo of grain, six tusks of ivory and eighty six slaves, fifty of whom were landed at Zanzibar.<sup>37</sup> Closer afield, Mombasa maintained an active relationship with the Mrima where

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34 Petition from Nakhoda Mussood b. Tulloh, 8.12.1835.  
NAI: 27.6.1836, P.C.-4.

35 See p.108. Emery's Journal, entries for 15.9, 20.9.1824; 21.3.1825; 6.4.1826.

36 Agha Mahomed Rahim Shirazee to Chief Secretary, 23.1.1836, NAI: 27.6.1836-P.C.-4. Master Attendant to Superintendant, Indian Navy, 16.3.1837, M.A.: 68/1837, pp. 20-3.

37 Emery's Journal, entries for 25.9.1824; 6.4 or 6.6, 29.5.1825; 13.6.26.

she seemed to encroach upon Zanzibar's primary hinterland.<sup>38</sup> It was probably this factor, coupled with Mombasa's interference in the affairs of the Lamu archipelago, that finally provoked Zanzibar's determination to subjugate Mombasa.

Despite Mombasa's commercial vitality, however, her economy was fragile. Firstly, it was dependent for subsistence on grain imports from Pemba whose capture by the Omanis, Boteler believed, "was a great step towards the subjugation of that power [Mombasa] by the Imam".<sup>39</sup> Secondly, Mombasa faced considerable difficulty in rapidly expanding her hinterland. The Nyika wilderness stood as a major obstacle to that expansion, which was probably worsened by the tight middlemen role of the Nyika. Boteler implies that the supply of African commodities from the Nyika and the Kamba could not easily be increased. He considered the Galla as a promising source but trade with them was hampered by continued hostility between them and the coastal people.<sup>40</sup> Her interference in the affairs of the Lamu archipelago were energetically resisted. Her effort toward the Mrima was a direct encroachment into the primary hinterland of Zanzibar. This encroachment the Omanis were determined to prevent. The Mrima was emerging as a rich source for ivory, and the Mombasa merchants were deprived of a share in it.<sup>41</sup> Consequently, the market of Mombasa remained small.

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38 Emery's Journal, entries for 15.9.1824; 14.3, 5.4 & 17.9.1825; 5.5.1826.

39 Boteler, II, 23-6; Owen, I, 426-7.

40 Boteler, II, 206.

41 Emery's Journal, entry for 14.3.1825.



There are frequent references in Emery's Journal to the glutting of the Mombasa market by imported goods,<sup>42</sup> a sure indication that the supply of African commodities was falling short of demand. Boteler's comment that 60,000 worth of goods would overstock the market for six or eight months<sup>43</sup> gives a fair estimate of the size of that market.

In the ensuing struggle Mombasa sought local allies and external support to counter-balance Omani economic and military superiority. Pate, the standard-bearer of Swahili resistance, was a potential, but militarily a weak, ally.<sup>44</sup> In desperation Mombasa even turned to Johanna, and appealed to Ras al-Kyma to divert some of the pressure Seyyid Said had begun to exert on Mombasa.<sup>45</sup> She appealed more successfully to Captain Owen, and the brief British Protectorate provided her with a much needed respite. When the British talked of withdrawing she practised a species of "cold war" by threatening to call in the French, but to no avail.<sup>46</sup>

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42 Emery's Journal, entries for 28.2.1825; 5.5.1826.

43 Boteler, II, 206.

44 Statement by Salim b. Rashid Muzroee, n.d. Received 1.12.1824, M.A.: 23/1824, pp. 23-6.

45 Salim b. Uhmud b. Mahomed Muzroee to the Governor of Bombay, 17.4.1829, M.A.: 42-3/1829-30, pp. 555-6.

46 Christian to Bombay Government, 5.9.1826. Resident, Persian Gulf to Said, 12.12.1826: Said to Governor of Bombay, 1/1827. Colebrook et al to Elphinstone, 7.11.1826. Elphinstone to Colebrook et al, 24.3.1827. M.A.: 28/1827, pp. 352-4.

Seyyid Said on his side desperately tried to avoid a military showdown which, he had come to realise, did not always offer a stable solution. He offered the Mazrui the control of the town of Mombasa with half or all the revenue if Fort Jesus was surrendered to him. If that was not acceptable, he offered, typically of this merchant prince, to buy out the Mazrui altogether, with a pension of 10,000 Rupees. He offered to grant them Pemba and Pate and even a port on the southern Tanzanian coast. Perhaps in desperation, he even offered to give them Lamu,<sup>47</sup> which, though economically important, was less of a threat to Zanzibar. The people of Mombasa, however, stuck to their guns. They replied that they were willing "to pay him obedience and give him half the produce of the island", but were "determined never to give up the possession of the country out of their own hands".<sup>48</sup>

Once Mombasa was subjugated in 1837 Seyyid Said set about the task of accommodation. In his conception of a commercial empire there was no scope for more than a minimal amount of government. He thus chose indirect rule through a triumvirate, consisting of a representative of the Wa-Mvita group of tribes, another from the Wa-Kilindi group, and an Arab. They alone had

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47 Seif b. Zayud to Said, 7.3.1825, M.A.:20/1825, p. 113a. Said to Shaikhs Moobaruk Saleem and Khamees, sons of Ahmed b. Mahomed ool Musroce, n.d. [1827], M.A.: 28/1827, pp. 187-90.

48 Agent at Muscat to Wilson, 13.5.1827, M.A.: 29/1827, pp. 331-2.

direct relations with them, and could transmit their claims either through the Baluchi jamdar or in person. Each group, in turn, maintained its independence in such matters as civil justice. For their services they were granted 800 piastres in lieu of their rights to import goods free of duty, though this amount was successively reduced, on various pretexts, as Seyyid Said felt more secure.<sup>49</sup> Perhaps the strongest inducement he offered was to assure Mombasa an independent economic base and continued prosperity. In the British Treaty of Commerce which was concluded two years later, there was no attempt to restrict Mombasa's foreign contacts nor its trade to the Mrima. Thus Mombasa was not included within the Mrima reserved area. The Omani may initially have felt the need for a close watch on the conquered population. However, they may also have realised that the smooth flow of trade from the interior depended on the intricate network of relationship between the Mombasa and the Nyika tribes. It was perhaps inevitable that this relationship should have suffered from the shock of defeat, and perhaps from the mass migration to Pemba of the Mazrui who were previously enmeshed in it. Krapf's comment that the trade with the interior had been interrupted because the governor of Mombasa failed to distribute cloth to the inland chiefs<sup>50</sup> probably refers to this early period. However, as soon as

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49 Guillain, III, 260-1.

50 Krapf to Waters, 18.5.1844, P.M.: Waters P., IX. Guillain, III, 245.

strife subsided many of the Masrui returned. The governor whom Guillain met was little more than a merchant, and the trade with the interior had been re-opened.<sup>51</sup> By the late 1840s three vessels, two Indian and one belonging to one of Seyyid Said's sons, were transporting about 2,500 *frasalas* of ivory to India.<sup>52</sup>

b. The Core of the Commercial Empire

The *Mrima* formed the direct economic dependence of Zanzibar. It was studded with numerous small ports, most of them open roadsteads, and each with a small market. They could not individually, and at a convenient time, offer a full cargo for foreign ships.<sup>53</sup> This was the area, in the words of Seyyid Said, "from whence Zanzibar receives the greater part of its revenue",<sup>54</sup> and it bore the heaviest tax burden. Nyanwezi ivory, copal and grains from this part of the coast paid the highest rate of duty, amounting to between a fifth and a third of their value at the coast. This duty decreased in both directions to as low as 5%.<sup>55</sup>

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51 Guillain, III, 235-6, 279-97.

52 *Ibid.*, 266-7.

53 Learer, "Lois & Coutumes de Douane". AOM:O.I.5/23, No. 2.

54 Said to Palmerston, 2.6.1839, M.A.: 54/1839/41, p. 149.

55 In 1849/5 Nyanwezi ivory paid eight piastres per frasala which, at the rate of \$20-25 per frasala at the coast, amounted to about a third. Copal paid 20%, grains 15%. Learer, *loc. cit.*, Learer, "Commerce d'Exportation: Dents d'Elephants"; AOM: O.I.5/23, No. 3, Guillain, III, 392; de Belligny to M.A.E., 3.7.1850, CCZ, I, 461-9; Burton (1872) II, 411, reveals the same pattern, though the rate of duty had nearly doubled by 1857.

The geographical and economic factors inhibiting direct external contacts were reinforced by the declaration of the Mrima as an economic reserve for Zanzibar and the native traders. It was not Seyyid Said's personal monopoly, as it is often alleged, though his own trade, as well as that of his family and some of the prominent Arabs, were exempted from the internal duties. The declaration retained for the coastal traders an intermediary role between the Africans from the interior and the foreign traders.<sup>56</sup> The latter were thus to be excluded from this part of the coast. The Zanzibar authorities may well have had in mind the disruptive effects of the French trade at Kilwa in the late eighteenth century and were determined to prevent the diminution of Zanzibar's vital hinterland. Guillain believed that trade with the coast was open to all until 1837 when Said b. Denine was granted the monopoly of the commerce of Mrima in return for a certain fixed sum. He argues that this explains why the Mrima reservation is not specified in the American Treaty, negotiated in 1833, whereas it is stipulated in the English treaty of 1839 and all the subsequent ones.<sup>57</sup> However, as early as 1804 Dallons moaned that the French were excluded from trading on the mainland, not at Kilwa where the French had continued to trade,<sup>58</sup> but obviously from the coast

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56 Loarer, "Quilon Quovindja", ROM:O.I. 2/10(2), Nos. B & C.

57 Guillain, III, 388-9.

58 S.D., 200. Capt. Tomkinson's account also suggests the French were confined to Zanzibar. Entry for 8.6.1809. P.R.O.: Adm. 1/63. Quirin or Quincy to Decaen, 25.2.1809. Information kindly supplied by Dr. B.A. Datoo.

opposite Zanzibar. The Americans themselves admitted that they had never traded on that part of the coast,<sup>59</sup> and as Seyyid Said himself explained:

"In the Treaty it is mentioned that the Americans shall go to the Towns in my dominions, the true meaning of which is places where there are forts and custom houses, but on the Morema no such places exist."<sup>60</sup>

The omission, therefore, appears to have resulted from a misunderstanding and does not date the creation of the reservation which was older than Seyyid Said.

The precise extent of the reservation has been a matter of confusion. *Urima* in the parlance of the islanders is the mainland opposite which is sometimes said to refer to the whole Swahili coast between the Equator and Cape Delgado. More narrowly and accurately, it refers to that part of the coast where

59 Waters Certificate; Ward to Secretary of State, 21.2.1846, NAW:T100/2, NEMA, 353-6. Desfosses to Commandant of the Ducouedic, 30.8.1846, MOM: O.I. 2/10(1). Hamerton to Palmerston, 26.3.1847, F.O. 54/11.

60 Said to President of the U.S., 11.3.1847, T100/2. Said to Palmerston, 11.3.1847; Hamerton to Palmerston, 26.3.1847, F.O. 54/11. As early as 1842 Said had written to Capt. A. Ward to represent his views to the U.S. government, presenting the same argument. A. Ward to State Department, 1/1842, NAW:T100/1. Said to Capt. A. Ward, n.d., enclosed in C. Ward to Luchanan, 4.9.1847, T100/2 and NAW:RG 84/Box III, C.8.3.



the Mrima dialect is spoken. Sacleux placed the boundaries at Vanga and the Rufiji.<sup>61</sup> Lambert and Whiteley shifted them to the north, to Gasi and Sadani.<sup>62</sup> When this term was adopted to refer to an economic region it carried over some of the impreciseness. Seyyid Said in one place described Mrima as the coast between Tangata and Mafia.<sup>63</sup> A clear territorial definition, however, was set down in Article X of the British Treaty of commerce which delimited the reservation between "Tangata to the port of Quiloa".<sup>64</sup> Almost identical articles were included

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61 Sacleux (1939) 591.

62 Whiteley (1969) map. Whiteley (1956) 3. Lambert, 7-9.

63 Said to President of the U.S., 10.10.1857 [25.11.1841] NAW:T100/1. NEMA, 239, quotes a defective translation. The American translator did not know of Mafia and took the word to mean "thereabouts".

64 F.O.C.P.: 409. Hamerton, 250-60. Coupland, 481. Said to Palmerston, 2.6.1839. M.A.: 54/1839/41, p. 149. In this letter Said defines Mrima between "Khyran and Fur-Cezeera", neither of which has been identified. Mtangata and Kilwa, however, remained the standard definition in most of subsequent correspondence. Ward to State Department, 1/1842, NAW:T100/1. Ward to Secretary of State, 21.2.1846, NAW:T100/2. NEMA, 353-8. Desfosses to M.A.E. 19.11.1844; Broquant to M.A.E. 22.11.1844, CCZ I, 197-8, 201-4, Broquant mentions Kilwa and Tanga; Desfosses to M.A.E. 4.2.1845, CCZ I, 211-3, AOM:O.I. 15/65. de Belligny to M.A.E. 9.1.1850, CCZ I, 410-5. He confirms that Kilwa was open to French trade except for ivory and copal. Loarer "Ports au Sud de Zanguebar" AOM:O.I. 2/10(2) No. B., under "Quiloa". He says it referred to the coast between Kiswere and Mombasa which is closer to the broader definition.

in all the subsequent commercial treaties and for our purposes this defines the limits of the economic region.

Within this region the Sultan's fiscal arrangements were of "a very primitive nature ... and his authority there very imperfectly established".<sup>65</sup> As early as 1804 the area seems to have been farmed to an individual whose "rich estates in Muscat guarantee his fidelity to the Prince".<sup>66</sup> This was only one of several areas farmed separately as each fell under more effective control of Zanzibar. It was probably under this system that the Arab merchant, Said b. Denine, farmed the Mrima in 1837, apparently in retaliation against Jairam Sewji with whom he had crossed swords over duties. Jairam was at the time in control of the customs of Zanzibar which derived so much of the revenue from the Mrima. Moreover, he traded on his own account on the Mrima on a large scale. The arrangement was therefore distasteful to him and he soon bought Said out of the concession which earned him about 10,000 piastres.<sup>67</sup> This was a step towards the centralisation of the financial administration of the East African coast under Jairam.

It has already been shown above<sup>68</sup> that it was this region which experienced the most rapid expansion of the hinterland

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65 Hamerton to Palmerston , 26.3.1847, F.O. 54/11.

66 S.D., 198.

67 Guillain, III, 394.

68 See pp. 132-3.

as a result of the demand for ivory in the nineteenth century. It was this development which underpinned Zanzibar's primacy. The hinterland was utterly dependent on Zanzibar. Its range of commercial outlet extended through the length of the *Mrima* reservation. The Nyamwezi do not seem to have succeeded in finding an independent or rival outlet which was economical. Their ivory, therefore, paid the heaviest rate of duty on the coast whether at the usual termini at Bagamoyo or Mbwanaji, or at Pangani and Kilwa at the two extremes of the reservation. It has been suggested that Nyamwezi ivory could bear this heavy duty because it was of the highest quality and commanded the highest prices at Zanzibar.<sup>69</sup> It was even alleged that the duties were becoming prohibitive and restricting the growth of trade by the 1860s.<sup>70</sup> The fact that ivory from other and nearer sources from within the reserved area paid a lower rate of duty perhaps supports this theory.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the Zanzibar authorities could impose such heavy duties secure in the thought that the Nyamwezi could not divert their trade elsewhere.

The region of the Kilwas<sup>72</sup> formed a separate economic

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69 Guillain, III, 394.

70 Playfair to Anderson, 15.6.1863, F.O. 54/20; MA:PD-60/1863, pp. 11-16.

71 Loarer, "Lois & Coutumes de Douane", AOM:O.I. 5/23, No. 2 (1)

72 According to Loarer, Kilwa meant a port. AOM:O.I. 2/10(2) No. P. "Ports au Sud de Zanguebar" under "Quilwa". Sacleux, 378, says it is derived from Zigua word meaning an island, a cognate of the Swahili word "Kisiwa". Since Kilwa appears in Ibn Battuta in the 14th century, its derivation from Zigua may be questioned. Moreover, the name of the ancient "Kilwa on the Island" (Kilwa Kisiwani) would be juxtaposing the cognates too close to be repeated by a Swahili speaker. Many other places around Kilwa Kisiwani bear the prefix Kilwa, followed by a description, such as Kivinje (a diminutive *casuarina*).

region. Apart from the routes from Unyamwezi it was the terminus of a separate set of trade routes from the interior of great depth; it had a longer history of trade contacts with the interior, and it came under Omani rule after the defeat of French schemes to disrupt the evolving commercial empire by attempting to provide Kilwa Kisiwani with an independent economic base. Kilwa was, therefore, an important centre of trade with a large enough market to threaten again the unity of the commercial empire. It was probably for this reason that it was included within the *Mrima* reserved area from which direct European trade in ivory and copal was debarred. Political accommodation and economic exploitation of the area therefore took into consideration its critical importance to the well-being of the entrepot.

It has already been noted above that when Kilwa was conquered by the Omanis in 1785, its Sultan was left with his title and dominion over the mainland portion of his kingdom, and a portion of the revenue.<sup>73</sup> All this shows the same desire to reach an accommodation with the native people<sup>74</sup> but, in the

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73 See p. 74. The proportion varies in different sources. Albrand, p. 83, says one fifth. Blancard says half the revenue from the slave trade. Gray (1964a) p. 224; Prior says Zanzibar appropriated "the better part" of the revenue. *S.D.*, p. 204. Loarer says the Sultan of Kilwa was given  $\frac{2}{3}$  piastre per slave exported to the Muslim countries. "Ports au Sud de Zanguebar: Quiloa", AOM: O.I. 2/10(2) No. B.

74 Loarer, *loc. cit.* records that after the conquest of Kilwa the Omani were forced to reinstate the "*mfalme*" (ruler) of Kilwa to placate the Swahili inhabitants. "The Ancient History of Kilwa Kisiwani", adds that the

case of Kilwa, it was on a basis of a much greater control over the trade passing through it. Kilwa and Mafia were placed under the governorship of Seyyid Ali<sup>75</sup> who farmed the revenue to an Arab merchant who was also the sub-governor of Mafia named Abdullah. Great care seems to have been taken not to impose such a debilitating burden of taxation that would divert the trade or kill it altogether. The Omanis did not try immediately to disrupt the French pattern of trade at Kilwa. Initially the duty on slaves was increased only slightly, though by 1804 it had nearly doubled. There was no concerted attempt to divert the French from Kilwa by imposing a higher duty there. Nevertheless, perhaps as a result of the advantages offered by the entrepot, by 1804, a somewhat larger proportion of the French slave trade was conducted at Zanzibar. Since most of these slaves came from Kilwa anyway, Omani measures gave them control without diminishing the volume of trade.<sup>76</sup>

That diminution, however, did occur as a result of Anglo-French hostilities, and as gradually the noose around the French slave trade tightened, the prosperity of Kilwa Kisiwani

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Sultan of Zanzibar "began the custom of sending every year two rolls of cloth and giving them to the ruler and to the Wamalandi .... to be distributed, so that the coast people should not make disturbances, and so that the caravans should arrive properly". S.D., 224.

75 Prior, in S.D. 204-5. Albrand, 83. Gray (1964) 21-4. Gray assumes that the personage mentioned is the son of the unsuccessful claimant to the Omani throne who sought to usurp the East African territories. It makes little sense that Ali b. Seif should be entrusted with the governorship of this important province. It is more probable that the son of the then Imam of Oman, Seyyid



gradually withered. By 1812 it was "a petty village".<sup>77</sup> When a new pattern of trade emerged, based on the demand for slaves and ivory to the north, it is significant that it was not the island port with its commodious harbour convenient to the French that was resuscitated. Rather it was Kilwa Kivinje which flourished,<sup>78</sup> the terminus on the mainland of the long-distance trade route, which did not have to cross the "very great number of arms of the sea and the rivers."<sup>79</sup> Its harbour was adequate for the seasonal coastal traffic.<sup>80</sup>

The new Kilwa was more totally dependent on the entrepot at Zanzibar; that dependence was sealed by its inclusion within the *Mrima* reserved area some time after 1809 but definitely before the conclusion of the British Treaty of commerce in 1839. The Americans do not seem to have traded there. The price for that dependence was a greater degree of exploi-

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Ali b. Said, should be the personage referred to. Gray (1964b) p. 224, fn. 2.

76 See pp. 76-7.

77 S.D., 203.

78 Kilwa Kivinje dates back at least to 1777 as it appears on a map as "village de Civigny". F.K.I., 202, 206. Loarer says Kilwa Kisiwani flourished until 1830. If so it must have somewhat revived after the end of Anglo-French warfare before finally declining.

79 Loarer. "Ports au Sud de Zanguebar: Quiloa", AOM:O.I. 2/10(2) No. B.

80 Ibid., says that it was "not prudent to remain there during the northern monsoon".



tation through taxation. However, a clear distinction was made between the two sets of trade routes converging on Kilwa. The more dependent Nyamwezi routes paid the heavy duties discussed above. The other trade routes from the west and south-west, those of the Yao, the Makua, the Ngindo and the Bisa, enjoyed the advantage of being able to divert their commodities to ports outside the reserved area, such as the Mgao ports or even Mozambique. The Zanzibar authorities, therefore, had to exercise enough circumspection not to excite such a diversion. They imposed a duty of only two piastres per frasala which amounted to less than 1%. There was a lesser possibility for such a diversion of coastal commodities, such as copal and grains, which thus paid the high rate of duty of 20% and 15% respectively, that was applicable to the Mrima.

## 2. Centralisation of Economic Activities.

The commercial empire which was evolving on the East African coast was built on a foundation of a fragmented structure. Previously each port, with its own hinterland, had constituted an economic unit which had the potential of at least a partially independent economic life, though cooperation and inter-dependence, as well as rivalry, were characteristic of the city states. The Omani, however, following upon the heels of the Portuguese, sought to centralise the commercial life at one or a few easily controlled points, though their methods varied. It is possible to discern a chain of reasoning in the evolution of the economic structure which may be des-

cribed as enlightened within the limitations of the chosen philosophy. The basic principles of that structure seem to be the centralisation and/or control of the commercial life, the stimulation of trade and the increase in revenue with the minimum of administrative or military expenditures. Almost everything else in the commercial empire was negotiable.

a. The Evolution of the Financial Administration

Guillain, in an erudite discussion, has argued that:

"In a state completely deprived of manufacturing industries there is no fear of foreign competition, and consequently, no necessity for imposition on their entry into the country. It appears, moreover, that to burden indigenous export commodities with duties merely has the effect of making their sale difficult, i.e. to diminish the general richness of the country and the well-being of its inhabitants. It is therefore, evident that in the Arab states of Africa the customs are no more than an instrument of revenue for the sovereign."<sup>81</sup>

Guillain and Lœcherer deserve our gratitude for the great mass of information that they gathered during their visit to East Africa, and for a commendable attempt at an analysis of what

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81 Guillain, III, 386.

they saw. It seems, however, that either because of their imperial designs or because of their attitudes to institutions so different from, and to them inferior to, their own, they were led to an interpretation that was at least unsympathetic, and in places misleading. They were sometimes satisfied with assigning the grossest of motives. Although they have supplied a considerable amount of information on the evolution of the customs administration, Guillaumet has not examined that process carefully enough to see if there was a possible alternate interpretation for parts or the whole tax structure.

Along certain parts of the coast the Omanis encountered a tax structure that was not based on precise units of trade. A certain lump sum in money or in kind was paid to the ruler by the prospective trader for the protection of his life and goods, and for permission to trade,<sup>82</sup> although this sum is often mistakenly referred to as a present. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century at least, these payments in the east African city states appeared to have borne a very close relationship with the quantity of goods to be offered by the trader as to be almost analogous to customs duties. In the peripheral areas of the southern Tanzania and

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82 Hardy, in I.O.:M.R. Misc. 586, reply to Para. 2 of Government Instructions. Loarer, "Ports au Sud de Zanguebar: Mgao Mkindany" AOM:O.I. 2/10(2). Gaudefroy-Demombynes, 156-7. He says that Islamic law offered no protection to foreign traders and their goods. They could purchase that security on payment of a tithe (ushr).

the Dandir coast these customs were allowed to persist long after these areas had recognised the suzerainty, often nominal, of the Omani ruler, in return for a certain fixed sum transmitted to the Omani authorities, and as long as the flow of trade was not interrupted.

For those parts of the coast which came under more direct Omani rule, a system of customs duties appears to have been in force. It is likely that the pre-existing regulations were taken over and maintained in an effort not to disrupt commerce. Thus at Kilwa, on its conquest, the duty on slaves exported to the French islands was increased by only half a piastre and the French were not discouraged from trading there. Gradually, as the Omani became more familiar with the potentialities of the trade they were able to increase their revenue without reducing the volume of trade.

In view of the distance from the metropole, and in the absence of a cadre of government officials, it is not surprising that the Omani reverted to the practice of farming the revenue, a practice well-established in the Muslim lands, and even in Europe until the eighteenth century. As each region was conquered, its revenue was farmed to individuals for certain fixed sums. As early as 1804 the customs of Zanzibar and the mainland opposite were farmed separately to "a Banian or an Arab whose rich estates in Muscat guarantee his fidelity to the prince".<sup>83</sup> The governor of Kilwa, who was liable to

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83 In view of Guillain's comments on the reasons for farming, it is interesting to note that the practice

transmit a certain annual sum to Muscat, farmed the revenues of Kilwa and Mafia in turn to the sub-governor of Mafia.<sup>84</sup>

The practice of farming the customs characterised the whole existence of the commercial empire. It was replaced by a government department by Seyyid Barghash in a desperate effort to transform the commercial empire into a political one.<sup>85</sup>

The institution, however, underwent a considerable amount of modification in centralising its administration and regulating its practice to guard against the potential rapacity of the system. The experimental stage before centralisation had revealed the dangers of the system. Early in the nineteenth century it was reported that the governor was the chief merchant who claimed the right of pre-emption.<sup>86</sup> Secondly, although the rate of duty had been fixed at 5%, the unprotected and the yet economically weak Indian traders were subjected to exactions which averaged 15% or more beyond the fixed rate. In 1811 they attempted to resist one such exaction by calling on the support of the British Indian naval force then in the harbour. They must have realised, however, that this temporary

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was common in France until the Revolution. Encyclopaedia Britannica, (11th ed. 1911) Vol. X, p. 180.

84 S.D., 198.

85 Mangat (1969) 18.

86 S.D., 211.

protection would jeopardise the trade of the next season, so their action suggests that the exactions were becoming unbearable and that they were prepared to contemplate the cessation of their trade. The net result of these restrictive practices and rapacious taxation was the diminution of trade, or at least, the prevention of the expansion of trade.<sup>87</sup>

As has been suggested above, the control over the customs of Zanzibar may have fallen into the hands of the Bhatia firm of Sewji Topan soon after 1819. The firm seems to have acquired control over the customs of Kilwa and Lamu at some undetermined time.<sup>88</sup> In 1837 Jairam Sewji bought the Arab merchant, Said b. Denine, out of control over the Mrima. Finally, Kumbasa appears to have fallen into his lap soon after its conquest in 1837. Thus by 1840 the customs of the whole coast had been centralised in the hands of a single firm which retained control over it, with a short interruption, until the Scramble for Africa. The process, though it facilitated Omani administration, may not have been part of a consistent Omani policy, but may have resulted also from the custom master's own effort to monopolise this lever of economic power.

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87 Smee (1811a) 512.

88 Loarer, "Lois & Coutumes de Douane". He says that "After 1822 the Imam united all the customs of the coast of Africa." He seems to be referring more specifically to the Kilwa region. The Mrima fell into Jairam's hands only in 1837.



The Omanis, however, did consciously attempt to introduce checks within the system to curb the rapacity of the farmer of customs and to further their principles of the commercial empire. At each auction of the customs, a table of tariffs was also agreed upon which had to be maintained during the whole period of the farm, though, under certain circumstances, it could be modified with the consent of the Sultan. Obviously the rate of duty was fixed in such a way as to exploit the full revenue potential of the various branches of the trade without killing the golden goose. Thus the revenue could be increased by the farmer not by a debilitating increase in the duties but by the stimulation of trade. Secondly, this table of tariffs was constructed in such a way as to further the Omani policy of centralising at least a large portion of the trade at Zanzibar. Guillain has argued that the variable rate of duty charged along the coast was related to the amount of profit expected at various places on the coast. However, the almost perfectly symmetrical decrease in the duty in both directions from Zanzibar can have no other logical explanation than to induce the peripheral areas to channel their trade through Zanzibar. If the farmer proved successful in stimulating the trade, and if any branch proved capable of sustaining an increase in the rate of duty by an increase in the world prices of African commodities, then both the table of tariffs and the total rent of the farm could be upgraded.

Finally, export duties on foreign trade were suppressed probably with the hope of rapidly expanding the trade at a time when the slave trade to the Mascarenes was being choked to suffocation. In 1826 Roberts obtained a promise from Seyyid Said to exempt American trade from export duties and this was incorporated in the American commercial treaty signed in 1833. Roberts claimed that British vessels, probably Indian vessels, were already enjoying that exemption perhaps as part of their indigenization and their inclusion among the native traders. Vessels from Britain, however, appear to have gained that privilege only as part of the commercial treaty negotiated in 1839. Cogan, its negotiator, commented that the revenue of Zanzibar sustained a loss of \$45,000 as a result.<sup>89</sup> This privilege was naturally granted in all the subsequent "most favoured nation" treaties. It is probable that Seyyid Said did not suffer this loss with equanimity. He may have hoped for an increase in the trade or he may have merely increased internal duties to compensate for the loss.\*

The consequent growth in the trade of Zanzibar seemed to confirm the adequacy of the measures taken. While Seyyid Said's hands were tied by the commercial treaties as far as they related to direct taxation on foreign trade, he was free to adjust to the changes in the market to increase his revenue. As the prices of ivory increased as a result of high international

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89 Cogan's Memo. 5.12.1839, F.O. 54/3.

demand, internal duty on the commodity was almost doubled within a decade.<sup>91</sup> Meanwhile the total revenue, as indicated by the rent of the customs, showed a spectacular increase (see graph VI). There may have been a greater efficiency in the collection of duties, and an increase in the internal duties mentioned above. There was also an expansion in the area from which the revenue was derived as Omani conquest proceeded. On the other hand there was a reduction in the revenue as a result of the treaties to suppress the slave trade in 1822 and 1845, and on the suppression of the export duty on American and European trade. These changes may have cancelled each other out, and the net increase in the rent of the customs so noticeable from the graph therefore suggests a considerable growth in the total trade of Zanzibar throughout the first three quarters of the nineteenth century.

b. Centralisation of the foreign trade at Zanzibar

A second measure of the success of the Omani policy was the growth and centralisation of the foreign trade at Zanzibar. Apart from the determination to exclude foreign traders from the *Mrima*, inherent economic forces and financial measures proved adequate to achieve the desired ends. The

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91 Guillain, III, 392. Burton (1872) II, 411. Playfair to Anderson, 15.6.1863, F.O. 54/20. M.A.: 60/1863, p. 11-16. Says that the duties were becoming prohibitive on the *Nyamwezi*. However, at the mean price of ivory in 1849 at about £37 per *frasala* and the duty at £3, the rate is only slightly lower than in 1857 when the price was £57 and the duty £14 (24.5%). Bennett (1963) 89.

foreign traders therefore evolved their pattern of trade based on Zanzibar, benefitting from the services offered by the entrepot.

It has already been noted that the Omani did not attempt to force the French to shift their trade from Kilwa to Zanzibar. They were content with removing the tax advantages which would have located the slave trade permanently at Kilwa and the consequent threat to the Omani model of an empire. Thus, while the duty on slaves exported from Kilwa was kept at twelve piastres, at Zanzibar it was eleven piastres, and the difference was made up by the one piastre internal duty paid at Kilwa on slaves exported to Zanzibar. No particular tax advantages were offered to trade in Kilwa slaves at Zanzibar, and perhaps for that reason, it took nearly a quarter of a century for the French to shift a part of their trade to Zanzibar. However, it appears likely that Kilwa could no longer play the role of an entrepot for the smaller slave ports in the vicinity. Slaves imported from these ports, either to Kilwa or to Zanzibar, may have been liable to the duty of one piastre. Thus, unless these ports could attract direct French trade, it was more advantageous for them to send their slaves to Zanzibar where they paid eleven piastres on re-export to the French islands, as opposed to twelve piastres at Kilwa. With the emergence of Zanzibar as the entrepot for the smaller ports, and no particular tax advantage to direct French trade to Kilwa, the French gradually shifted their trade to the entrepot.

European slave trade, however, was a spent force. As the slave economies began to betray their inefficiencies, East Africa received a new impetus from the so-called "legitimate" trade which produced the raw material for American and European industry and commerce. The Americans, winding their way round the Cape of Good Hope, initiated this new branch of trade. On their reconnaissance voyages the Americans touched at many places on the coast.<sup>92</sup> The English, who followed close on their heels, set out on a large scale to scour East African waters, undertaking more coasting voyages. Trade at some of these places continued in specific commodities, notably for hides at Lamu and Brava, which could be conveniently touched en route to or from the north. The French were later to establish an agency at Lamu for the collection of sesame. Apart from these direct foreign links, the Americans often contracted for hides in the northern ports or for copal at Tungi which were then transported in their own name to Zanzibar in local dhows.

Despite the possibility of trade at these places, and despite the omission in the treaty excluding American traders from the *Mrima*, foreign traders were concentrated at Zanzibar. The reason was partly the fact that some of the minor ports were not safe; often they were mere open roadsteads. More importantly, the smaller ports handled the trade of limited hinterlands, and many of them could not supply a full cargo

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92 See pp. 242-3.

within a conveniently short time. This was particularly true of copal which was found in small quantities scattered along a great length of the coast, though ivory, perhaps, could be found in larger quantities at the few major termini of long-distance trade routes. Nor is it certain that foreign traders could have entirely avoided paying the internal duties if they had traded directly on the coast. There is a reference to the American demand, long after the conclusion of the treaty, for exemption from the export duty at Brava.<sup>93</sup> At the southern peripheral ports, such as Tungi, which did not have customs officials appointed by Zanzibar, it is doubtful if the Americans could have escaped from paying the customary "presents".

The entrepot on the other hand, offered specific advantages:

"The central position of the Zanzibar island, the direct sovereignty exercised over it by the Sultan of Muscat, certain administrative and fiscal steps taken by this prince, the more extensive production and consumption at this locality than at any other on the coast, which enables it to receive and furnish

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93 In 1839 Waters requested Seyyid Said for orders on the authorities at Merca not to charge duties on his purchases there. This was granted in conformity with the American commercial treaty. Waters to Said 3.2.1839, P.M.: Waters V. VII; Said's order.



an entire cargo; finally the facility of its port and the great security which strangers find there have made it the pivot of commerce."<sup>94</sup>

After the appointment of permanent resident agents at Zanzibar, the Americans even went a step further in reinforcing the role of the entrepot. The group of merchants represented by Waters sent out a schooner which was to enter the entrepot trade itself, trading between Zanzibar and Madagascar, Tungi, Brava, Muscat and Bombay. Though the experiment was not lasting, it emphasised the convenience of trade at the entrepot.

### 3. The Commercial Life of the Entrepot

The absolute growth and centralisation of the trade achieved as a result of the economic forces and Omani measures, coupled with the changes in the nature of the trade, called for a transformation of the commercial organisation. While some of the arteries of trade were being blocked, others were being expanded or even opened up for the first time. There was simultaneously a shift in the relative importance of different African exports, not necessarily total displacements, but more often, an addition of newer commodities. The economic pressure building up along the coast was creating conditions for a rapid expansion of the hinterland to supply the multiple demands of the foreign trade. The pre-existing commercial organisation, however, could not merely be massively expanded

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94 Guillaun, III, 302-3.

to satisfy those demands. Certain characteristics of that organisation imposed limitations on the expansion of trade. The second quarter of the nineteenth century saw the gradual removal of some of these limitations, the creation of the commercial institutions necessary for the exchange of commodities, and the transformation of the commercial organisation from a narrowly "nationalistic" into a more liberal one.

a. The "Nationalistic" phase

So long as the French were the only significant foreign traders, and their importance perhaps more than evenly balanced by the Arab trade in slaves and staples, a "nationalistic" commercial organisation appeared to have been adequate. The French were involved at only one point in the organisation, at the port where the direct exchange of slaves for bullion and some French goods was effected. Their economic influence was, therefore, limited. Dillons, one of the more important French slave traders at Zanzibar, accurately portrays the pathetic helplessness of the French. He complains of the costly presents to the governor and the interpreter, and the impunity with which the Arab authorities more than doubled the duties on slaves. The French were forced to submit to the governor's price-fixing and his demand of the first option. Moreover, they were prevented from trading on the mainland.<sup>95</sup> They had limited manoeuvrability: they could hardly threaten

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95 S.D., 199-200.

to decamp to Mozambique. The Arabs knew of the great demand for slaves which, if need be, they could satisfy directly. Moreover, they were entrenched in most of the other sectors of the economy.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Indians were in a similar position. Their activities were also confined to Zanzibar where they exchanged their cottons for ivory. As foreign traders, at one time, they did not even have the right to reside at Zanzibar for more than one season. They were expressly forbidden to communicate with any other place in the Omani dominions. They could not possess land or immovable property except in the city of Zanzibar.<sup>96</sup> As late as 1819 they had to pay a fee for a license to live at Zanzibar and conduct their trade.<sup>97</sup> They were subjected to commercial irregularities and exactions at Zanzibar which amounted to a debilitating 20% duty. In exasperation they could call on the suicidal British protection,<sup>98</sup> but they could not, as yet, call upon their own economic power to effect changes in the favour.

However, the concurrent growth of the Indian ivory trade from East Africa and the decline in the French slave trade set in motion the gradual reversal in the relative importance of the Indians and the Arabs in the trade of Zanzibar. Loarer

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96 Loarer, "Population commerciale de Zanguebar" AOM:O.I. 5/23(1).

97 Albrand, 73.

98 Smece (1811a) 492, 503, 513.

commented that the Arabs, deprived of easy profits from the slave trade, turned their attention to the trade in African products. "But this commerce was not so simple and lucrative ... it demanded more order, intelligence, activity and capital".<sup>99</sup> Since the Arabs, especially at Zanzibar and in the areas close to the major sources of slaves, remained tied to the French slave trade until the 1820s, they tended to play a smaller part in the development of the new system. The Arabs of Mombasa, farther removed from the slave sources, were able to participate in that development, but they were apparently content with transporting the ivory and copal to the international market at Bombay from where they were mostly re-exported to England by the 1920s. They may not have been able to penetrate what may have been a "closed" system of marketing and distribution of ivory in Kutch and Gujarat which developed as the preserve of the Indian merchants originating from those provinces.

When the Arabs and the Swahili were ultimately forced to turn to the trade in African commodities they had to find a niche for themselves in the commercial organisation which was undergoing considerable expansion and transformation. With expanding trade they had little difficulty in finding several niches. Apart from retaining their old hold on the trade with Arabia, they found a larger role in an expanding entrepot trade and in the primary and secondary exploitation

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99 Learer, "Population commercial de Zanguebar", AOM:O.I. 5/23(1).

of resources for that trade. Some were men of considerable capital who advanced goods to a large number of smaller merchants in the economic region extending as far as Madagascar and Mozambique.<sup>100</sup>

With the entry of the Americans and the English a class of merchant/brokers emerged. As we have seen, Hasan b. Ibrahim was appointed in 1832 as the official agent for foreign trade at Zanzibar.<sup>101</sup> The intention, however, does not appear to have been to centralise all the foreign trade in his hands. Certainly it did not succeed in doing this. The Omanis may already have learnt of the debilitating effect of such a monopoly when the Ethiopian governor exercised it earlier in the century. Besides, the Americans and the English had already begun to establish their own commercial links with local merchants, in some cases to their sorrow. Amer b. Said, the "migratory merchant" who sojourned alternately at Zanzibar, Lamu and Majunga, traded on a large scale with the Americans. By 1837 he owned a large newly built dhow, a small schooner, an estate on Zanzibar with three to four hundred slaves, and was building one of the largest houses in the town. He was

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100 Loarer, "Population commerciale de Zanguebar", AOM:O.I. 5/23(1), especially Abdullah and Isa b. Salim, Said b. Isa and Ali b. Yusuf b. Said.

101 Hart to Gore, 10.2.1834, NAI: 8.5.1834-P.G.-25, pp. 6-7. "A visit to Zanzibar in H.M.S. Imogene" ext. in E.R. XXIV, 274-83. M.A.:ED-1833/4-32/608, pp. 43-94. Ruschenberger, I, 27, 54, 64. Roberts to the State Dept. 23.10.1835, L.C.: Roberts Papers, VI.

entrusted by the English firm of Newman Hunt and Christopher with goods worth £30,000,<sup>102</sup> and was accused of refusing to pay a debt of about £2,250 to the American company of N L Rogers.<sup>103</sup> Khamis b. Uthman, the "sawahili" who spoke fourteen languages and served Captain Owen as an interpreter, contracted in 1833 at Majunga, in partnership with an Indian merchant, to supply an American captain with 3,000 frascals of copal and hides in return for muskets and cash.<sup>104</sup> In 1834 he accompanied Norsworthy to England, apparently on behalf of Seyyid Said, on a mission of commercial reconnaissance. He was described as "a man of pretty extensive business" who knew how "to render himself useful, even indispensable, in all sorts of commerce", to the foreigners. Later on he even opened an hotel where he offered meals to Europeans.<sup>105</sup>

The three personages were essentially brokers and intermediaries between the Europeans and the local traders. Such

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102 Isacs, II, 294-5, mentions "Armane" who seems to fit the description. Ruschenberger, I, 51-2. Petition of R N Hunt, 5.12.1837, M.A.: 68/1837, pp. 51-5. Native Agent at Muscat to the Persian Secretary, 13.5.1838, M.A.: 65/1838/9, pp. 196-8.

103 Amere b. Syed to J Rogers & Bros., 18.4.1835, N L Rogers to Amere b. Syed, 22.8.1835, Waters to Said, 26.10.1837, s. to s. 21.10.1837. Waters' Papers, VII.

104 Cooley (1845) 199, 202-3. Contract between Amesa Wantan /signed in Arabic Khamis b. Uthman/ and Banian Javaroh /signed in Gujarati Javersah Nathu/ and Emerton, 4.3.1833, Harvard: Emerton P., VI.

105 Norsworthy to Hunt, 27.6.1834, Hunt to /Cogan/ 10.10.1838, D.O. 84/425. Hamerton to the Governor of Mauritius, 4.10.1841, F.O. 54/5, p. 407. Ruschenberger, I, 46. Coghlan to Anderson, 1.11.1860, F.O. 84/1120. He mentions



a role gradually declined as the foreign merchants acquired linguistic capability and familiarity with local conditions to conduct their trade directly with the local merchants. Waters, who resided at Zanzibar for seven years, was one of the most successful in seeking them out. The doyen of Arab and Swahili merchants was Muhammed b. Abd al-Kadir, described in the late 1840s as the greatest merchant who had withstood Indian competition for twenty years. His major speciality was the supply of hides from Lamu and Brava to the Americans at Zanzibar, but he later expanded to supply them with cloves, copal and ivory as well, in return for cash, cottons or muskets. He sent his dhow as far as Mozambique and Brava in search of ivory, and sent Muscat cotton goods to Majunga on a joint account with Waters in an American vessel. He presided over a class of native merchants, such as Said b. Denine who had acquired control over the Brima customs in 1837 and acted as Seyyid Said's agent in 1842 for the disposal of his copal.<sup>106</sup> Most of them, however, were men of small capital by the 1840s, and in their numbers and transactions, they were betraying a decline in their activities even in the entrepot trade.

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that Khamees b. Wuttenee acted as the agent at Zanzibar for the government of Mauritius. Loarer, "Population commerciale de Zanguebar".

106 Guillain, III, 388-9. Waters' Notes, entry for 11.11. 1842, Waters' Papers, IV. Bennett, p. 254. Hamerton to Willoughby, 6.9.1841, NAI:FD-5.4.1842-S.C.-8/10.

Those harried from the entrepot role, and the poorer class of Arabs and Swahilis, sought a refuge in the exploitation of copal, ivory and slaves on the mainland. Tippus Tip began his career by going on local trips to trade in copal, though by that time both his father and grandfather had pushed their way far into the interior.<sup>107</sup> Learer has a significant comment that "but few leave with the caravans for the interior other than the fairly poor Arabs who do not have a small piece of land and three or four hundred pounds of cloves".<sup>108</sup> This condition, therefore, led to a serious penetration of Indian capital into this field and converted many of the early pioneers into mere "factors" for the Indians, at least during their poorer days. Learer adds, however, that the new field was lucrative even for the Arabs, and many, after three or four journeys, acquired enough wealth to return to Zanzibar to establish or buy a clove plantation,<sup>109</sup> which emerged as the most coveted niche for the Arabs. However, they were not secure in this sanctuary. The great unpredictability of the clove crop, coupled perhaps with the prodigality of the plantation owners, often forced them to seek accommodation with Indian capital. The economic history of the period is a constant reminder of the interaction between these two classes in East Africa.

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107 Tippus Tip, 9.

108 Learer, "Population commerciale de Zanguebar".

109 Ibid.

b. Indigenisation of the Indians

The preceding discussion illustrates how the Arabs and the Swahili alone could no longer provide the organisation and capital necessary for a rapidly expanding trade. Their dhows often carried goods belonging to Indians, and were sometimes mortgaged to them. Their caravans were often financed by advances of goods from the Indians. Their clove crops may have been marketed by, or tied to a repayment of a loan from the Indians, and their plantations sometimes mortgaged to them. To any Arab or Swahili who may have been inducted into the new commercial organisation, the moral must have appeared obvious: that the economic future lay in the close inter-relationship between them and the Indians. The latter had been building up their economic power to the point when it was no longer possible to exclude them from the most favoured class of native traders. The situation called for a gradual indigenisation of the Indians in the East African setting.

How did they build up that economic power? What enabled them to penetrate the economic system so thoroughly and apparently so smoothly, without obvious political backing? Most of the previous studies have not tired of quoting a contemporary traveller that:

"Sa'eed knew that, whatever might be the energy and enterprise of his own subjects, their commercial transactions would never attain real importance

except by the cooperation and under the lead of Indian merchants ... /who were/ far more skilled in the mysteries of the ledger and the counter than ever Arab was or will be."<sup>110</sup>

Such essentially racialistic statements have thus far been accepted as reasonable historical explanations by those who were themselves mystified by economic events and were prepared to forget the commercial enterprise of the medieval Arab. Such statements suggesting a domination of one group in a form of activity at a particular moment in history, if proved true from experience, themselves need historical explanations. In the previous section we have examined why the Arabs and the Swahili in the first half of the nineteenth century were unable to transform their economic roles and dominate the newer system which was coming into being. We now need to see what permitted the Indians to fill the new roles.

It is worth recalling that many of the Indians in East Africa retain a strong tradition of poverty as the cause of their migration.<sup>111</sup> "Kerkasar" or economy, and a lack of ostentation, remain strong principles in the ethics of at least the older generation, and is the general practice even at the present time. Two major consequences arise out of the resulting

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110 Palgrave, II, 369-70. Coupland (1938) 301.

111 Morris, 9.

low propensity to consume.<sup>112</sup> The first is that they were often content with a lower rate of profit which they knew to be secure. In their trade in East Africa in the early nineteenth century, they thus possessed a distinct advantage over the Arabs and the Swahili. Moreover, the reservation practised in favour of the Arabs and the Swahili at that time had permitted them to cushion themselves from the international market, allowing them a fat margin of profit. Upon their entry into the trade the Indians ignored the "relative value" of the merchandise on the coast. They permitted Indian prices to raise the value of African commodities in East Africa.<sup>113</sup> At the same time they were able to sell imports at a lower rate especially as they received them first-hand from India, or bought in bulk from the Americans. By directly linking the East African economy to the international one they were also connecting East Africa to the dynamo of the expansion of trade in which the value of African commodities relative to the manufactured imports was constantly rising.<sup>115</sup> "The Arabs",

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112 Ghai, 103. Lowrer gives the annual expenditure of one of the major Indian merchants at Zanzibar in the 1840s. It amounted to \$25 only. "Population commerciale de Zanzibar".

113 Lowrer, "Population commerciale ...". He seems to argue that the reservation enabled the Arabs and Swahili to maintain high prices for African products. Since East Africa at this early time was a minor supplier of ivory compared to West Africa and Mozambique, this is unlikely. They were, however, able to maintain a low price in East Africa for African products, and a high one for imports.

114 Guillain, III, 373-.

115 See p. 216-7.

Learer commented, "retreated in face of this competition ... those who wished to rival the Banians were soon ruined."<sup>116</sup>

The second consequence of the Indian's low propensity to consume is related to the question of Indian capital. Those who have attempted to give some form of explanation of the role of the Indians have pointed to the capital they were able to inject into the economy, the assumption being that they brought that capital from their homeland. Many have uncritically accepted Kirk's statement that the Indian firms in East Africa were merely branches of the Bombay firms.<sup>117</sup> Few reliable Indian family histories are available, but those available suggest that few Indians hailed from an origin of big finance. The important Khoja firm of Tharia Topan may have been founded at Zanzibar with a capital of only about £550, of which four fifths were stolen soon thereafter.<sup>118</sup> Secondly, it appears that both this firm and that of the important Bhatia firm of Jairam Sewji, far from being established with capital from Bombay, raised their capital in East Africa to establish their branches at Bombay.<sup>119</sup> The latter may have been established as a branch of the company whose

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116 Learer, "Population commerciale ...".

117 Kirk's *Administrative Report*, 1870, F.O. 84/1344.

118 M T Topan, "Biography of Sir Tharia Topan, Kt." in the possession of his son, II, 54-5. It says Rs. 1,250, of which Rs. 1,000 were stolen. Converted at the rate of Rs. 2.20 = £1.

119 *Ibid.*, V, 179.



head-office was originally at Mandvi in Kutch, but the connection was apparently severed soon after.<sup>120</sup> Many of the Indians probably brought at least a small amount of capital, perhaps in the form of trade goods, but the story of Tharia Tapan suggests that a large part of the capital was raised with a minute initial sum, the six month interest-free American loans,<sup>121</sup> a capacity to work long hours and low consumption during their self-exile in a foreign country. The result was the creation of an economy generating its own capital necessary for the constant expansion of the commercial organisation. By the 1870s one of the firms, which was probably that of Jairam Sewji, had an investment in East Africa alone amounting to over two million dollars. Its distribution accurately portrays the role of Indian capital in the economy:

₹285,000 advanced to the Sultan and his family,  
 ₹665,000 advanced to the Arabs and Swahili on Zanzibar,  
                   as loans, mortgages, etc. of which about  
                   ₹270,000 were lent to the Arabs of Unyanyembe  
                   in the interior,  
 ₹665,000 advanced to Europeans and American merchants,  
 ₹475,000 advanced to Indian merchants in Africa.<sup>122</sup>

120 Hanerton to Willoughby, 22.12.1842. Lumsden to Willoughby, 27.5.1843, M.A.:FD-1343-55/1476, pp. 51-2, 59.

121 See pp. 243-5.

122 Frere, "Memo regarding Banians or natives of India", 31.3.1873, F.O. 84/1391. Mengat, 19. It gives the figures in sterling, and they have been converted at the rate of ₹4.75 = £1.

Such an economically essential and powerful class could not have developed if they had continued to be subjected to the disabilities of the early decades of the nineteenth century. Moreover, if it were to develop as an entirely foreign class, it would undermine the commercial empire itself. Therefore, there seems to have been a mutual desire, between the Indians and the Omani authorities, to integrate the former fully into the commercial life of Zanzibar. Religious toleration and protection were offered both to the Hindus and to the Khojas who were heretics in the eyes of the Ibadhi Omanis. The economic disabilities were gradually lessened. At least by 1828 the Indians were apparently subjected only to the 5% duty on imports.<sup>123</sup> The restriction on Indian trade on the *Mrima* was similarly removed by the convenient and significant mode of their adoption of the Arab flag when going to the coast. This preserved the "national" character of the *Mrima* trade while, at the same time, obtaining a recognition of a partial Omani suzerainty over the Indians.<sup>124</sup> The acquisition by the firm of Jairam Sewji of the control over the customs of Zanzibar perhaps by the end of the second decade, and of the *Mrima* soon after 1837,<sup>125</sup> highlighted the primacy of the Indians in the economic life of Zanzibar. By the 1840s

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123 Roberts to Woodbury, 19.12.1828, L.C.: Roberts P., VI.

124 Khulmann to M.A.E., 27.3.1852, CCZ, II, 27-34. Ward to Abbot, 13.3.1851, NW: T100/3; E.L. Ward's Correspondence with the State Dept. NEMA, 480.

125 Guillaum, III, 388-9.

at least, they had done away with the last major disability by beginning to acquire landed property outside the city limits on which, in the words of Learer, they paid tribute to the raging "mania" by planting cloves.<sup>126</sup>

By the 1840s, therefore, the Indians had assumed their full role in the commercial empire. That role, however, should be viewed as part of the whole commercial empire in which economic interdependence was one of the main characteristics. It sometimes took the form of direct though temporary partnership across the racial lines,<sup>127</sup> but they were rare even among the Indians across communal lines.<sup>128</sup> More common was the performance of certain functions by one group for another for mutual benefit. Much needed cash was often advanced by the Indians to Arab and Swahili who wished to establish or renovate a clove plantation. The latter usually offered an immovable property, the crop or the plantation as security which in some cases passed into the hands of the mortgagee. That may have been one of the ways plantations, together with their slaves, passed into the hands of the Indians.<sup>129</sup>

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126 Learer, "Commerce d'Exportation: girofle", AOM:O. I. 5/23(3).

127 . . . P.M.: Waters' Notes, entry for 19.10.1842.

128 The most notable were the temporary joint contracts between Topan, Dosa Paprpa and Jairam, 14.3.1842. The more common were the partnership within each community, such as that between the Banians, Virji Haridas, Kanu Manji and "Hajue b. Omissa", 19.3.1842. P.M.: Waters P., IV.

129 Rigby emancipated 79 slaves from the plantation of Kanu

Merchandise was also often advanced to the merchants who wished to fit out a caravan and who engaged to pay on their return in African commodities. Learer, whose writings often froth with anti-Indian sentiment, asserted that the goods were advanced at a price which was usually 50% above their real value, and that the predetermined price for African commodities was never less than 40% below the price reigning on the market.<sup>130</sup> If these figures are correct he has, nevertheless, ignored to consider whether they were reasonable under the circumstances. If they were excessive there was nothing to prevent a trade war among the various Indians, and indeed the Americans, in offering more competitive terms. The risks of the caravan trade were great,<sup>131</sup> what with famines, war, desertion of the porters and absconding of the caravan leader himself. In 1861 Speke met Sirboko, "a broken-down ivory merchant" who had lost all his property in a fire, and was afraid to return to the coast lest he should be apprehended for debt.<sup>132</sup> Besides, the returns were great. In 1811 British visitors were prepared to pay a 25% interest

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Manji in 1860. Rigby to Anderson, 11.2.1860; F.O. CP: 2314; M.A.: 159/1860, pp. 219-53. Rigby to Anderson, 1.2.1860, M.A.: 158/1860, pp. 251-77; Rigby to Forbes, 12.7.1861, I.O.:L/P & S/9/38, pp. 195-7.

130 Learer, "Population commerciale ...".

131 In the case Tippoo Tib vs. Tharia Topan's estate, the judge allowed that the profit margin in favour of the latter was great "but so was the risk", Zanzibar, Gazette. 136/1, 187/5-7 (1895).

132 Speke, 101-2.

when there was hardly any risk involved. Learer himself admits that three or four journeys into the interior were sufficient for an Arab to accumulate enough to buy a clove plantation.<sup>133</sup> Obviously, the Indians also benefitted on a scale considerable enough to enable them to accumulate their capital.

Apart from this essentially capitalistic role, the Indians were also the great, though not the only, middlemen between the Arabs, the Swahili and the Africans on the one hand and the international market on the other. Initially this was represented mainly by the Indian market and the Indian traders thus assumed the further role of transporting the African commodities to India in return for Indian cottons in Indian dhows. They were joined in some cases by those of the Arabs and the Sultan's family. Many of the major Indian merchants owned dhows<sup>134</sup> and some Kutch dhows may have carried goods on freight.<sup>135</sup> Jairam Sewji even conceived the idea of chartering

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133 Learer, *loc. cit.* Hardy, I.O.:M.R. Misc. 586, pp. 164-5.

134 Such as Jairam, Benian Trickoni, Isa Abd al-Rahman, Virji and Megji. E.I.: Waters' Thermometrical Observations, entries for 5.3.1840, 22.4.1841, 14.10.1842, 5.1 and 27.1.1844.

135 Resident, Kutch, to Political Secretary, 26.7.1838, M.I.: 106/1838/9, pp. 131-4, mentions a series of dhow-owners few of whom appear to be among the prominent merchants at Zanzibar.

American vessels to transport the goods in larger bulks between India and Zanzibar, but the Bombay government discouraged it.<sup>136</sup>

The Indians persisted in their roles in this sector of the economy throughout the nineteenth century. From the 1820s, however, they began to assume a much larger middleman role with the entry of American and European traders, confined as the latter generally were to the entrepot. There were some, like Ibrahim Hassanili of Majunga, who served as brokers and agents for the Americans.<sup>137</sup> What gave them a larger role, however, was the emergence of the contract system of trade which permitted them to conduct trade on a more considerable scale with short-term American loan of goods than their own initially limited capital would have allowed. The loans were for too short a period to finance more than the entrepot trade and the exploitation of the coastlands for copal, but they facilitated the accumulation of Indian capital which could in turn finance long-distance trade. It is ironical that within a few years the Americans themselves were forced to borrow large sums from the Indians. By the early 1870s the single Indian firm mentioned above had advanced to American and European merchants about

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136 Melville to Willoughby, 19.12.1837. Willoughby to Government of India, 15.1.1838. Government of India to Willoughby, 31.1.1838, M.A.:106/1838-9, pp. 114-21. Bombay argued that it was undesirable on commercial and political grounds, and that if there was an opening, British vessels should be encouraged.

137 Ibrahim b. Hassan Ally to Waters, 25.6.1841. P.M.: Waters P. III, Merwanjee to Waters, 31.1.1846, *ibid.*, V.



£665,000 in loans to conduct their trade.<sup>138</sup>

The removal of economic disabilities had served the function of developing the Indian role in the east African trade. It undoubtedly led also to economic rivalry and resentment between the politically dominant Arabs and former dominant traders, and the Indian trader, money-lender and mortgagee. An expanding economy, however, permitted all classes of the society to play their appropriate role, and the increasing contact between them furthered the second objective, to indigenise this powerful class. At the beginning Arabic may have been used at the entrepot as the language of commerce even by the Indians, and their names appear in an Arabised form in most of the American commercial papers.<sup>139</sup> Indian dress may also have been greatly influenced by the Arab dress.<sup>140</sup> However, Swahili was probably more widely used in day-to-day life, and the Kutch merchants trading with East Africa, or the Sawahil, as it was called, soon began to identify themselves by that title and some, including the family of Jairam Sewji, adopted "Swally" as their surname as well.<sup>141</sup>

138 See pp. 243-5, 347.

139 Indian names invariably appear linked by the Arabi bin, son of, such as Joram b. Seva, or Topan b. Tajan in his contract with Waters, 18.2.1844, P.M.: Waters' Papers, Box 4. Guillain gives the names of major Hindu firms at Zanzibar in the form "Oulad-Bima", etc. Oulad being the Arabic word for "sons of", Guillain, III, 372.

140 A photograph of the wife of Taria Topan shows her wearing an almost entirely Omani female dress. Peabody Museum, neg. 8339.

141 Mangat,

But how indigenous were the Indians in terms of their settlement in East Africa? It is worth emphasising that an immigrant community achieves stability when it is able to create or recreate an organic and self-sustaining community in the new homeland. Indian immigration was a spontaneous movement of individuals who primarily sought economic betterment overseas during what must have been considered a period of self-exile. It was probably this economic necessity which permitted the high-caste Bhatias to cross the ocean, but as late as the 1870s the Hindus had apparently not modified their ethics enough to permit them to bring their wives with them.<sup>142</sup> In east Africa human necessity forced them to acquire African concubines. However, Hindu ethics, unlike Muslim law, apparently made no provision for such unions, and the mother and the children had no status in the parent society except in a servile capacity.<sup>143</sup> On their departure, therefore, they handed them over or sold them to their friends.<sup>144</sup> Moreover, even after the necessary changes in the ethics were made to allow wives to join their husbands in East Africa,<sup>145</sup> and thus

142 Sir Bartle Frere, "Memo regarding Banians or natives of India", 31.3.1873. F.O. 84/1391. Hamerton to Hallet, 15.2.1850. M.A.:153/1850, pp. 182-4. Frere speculates that trading with the East coast of Africa had become habitual "before the extreme restrictions of the present Hindoo system were invented".

143 Resident Kutch to Political Secretary, 26.7.1839. M.A.: 106/1838/9, pp. 131-4.

144 Hamerton to Hallet, 15.2.1850, M.A.:153/1850, pp. 182-4.

145 It is said that Baji Sewji's wife was the first Hindu

constitute an organic caste, the selectivity of economic needs meant that the Hindus were never able to transplant a whole cross-section of their society. Only some castes migrated into an area dominated by non-Hindus, where the economic and legal systems did not permit a division of labour according to the rules of caste. Those who had migrated, therefore, continued to play a role in the parent caste system.<sup>146</sup> Their value systems thus hindered the Hindus' total identification with the new homeland even after wives had been brought over.

In Muslim law, on the other hand, the concubine and her children had a recognised status. The latter enjoyed the same rights of inheritance as the children by legal wives. Hamerton says that Indian Muslims "generally make a nikah with the mother",<sup>147</sup> i.e. legalise the relationship by the recitation of the prescribed formula, which therefore upgrades the union from a concubinage to a regular marriage. Therefore, a more stable Muslim Indian community began to emerge at an earlier date. This may explain the greater degree of integration achieved by the older Muslim communities compared with the comparable Hindu castes, even to the extent of producing some

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lady to come to Zanzibar though there are references to Indian slaves before it. Interview with Rashid K J Aloo, Dar es Salaam, 20.9.1969.

146 Morris, 27, 49.

147 Hamerton to Malet, 15.2.1850, M.A.:153/1850, pp. 182-4.

almost entirely Swahili-speaking communities in the coastal towns. It is not certain whether similar caste restrictions or social control kept the number of Muslim Indian women at Zanzibar small, but the increase in their number probably had the effect of widening the social distance between the classes in East Africa by reinforcing communal exclusiveness and by attaching the sinister connotations of the word "Chotara" or half-caste.<sup>148</sup>

These sociological considerations thus introduced a degree of ambivalence in the character of the Indian community in East Africa. The growth in the Indian trade and its middleman role had given the community an opportunity to establish strong moorings in East Africa, and the general identity in its own prosperity and the prosperity of the East African economy favoured its identification with the fortunes of East Africa as a whole. To ensure a greater commitment the Indians were granted the same privileges of the other local traders in an obvious effort to "nationalise" this powerful economic group. Unfortunately the sociological factors discussed above tended to place some obstacle which, however, were not all insurmountable. They retarded total integration. The British consul, in his effort to acquire a dominant political leverage at Zanzibar, attempted to reverse the process in order to claim the powerful community for Britain. The long legal battle ultimately ended in the subjugation of the Indians and their

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148     Following the conclusions of I D MacCrone, *Race Attitudes in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1937).

dependence on Britain for protection, the gradual enstrangement of the Indians from the rest of the population, and the loss of economic independence by the commercial empire in East Africa.<sup>149</sup>

Geographical factors had defined the natural focus of economic activities along the East African coast, and Omani administrative measures both located the centre on Zanzibar and ensured a greater degree of centralisation of trade than would otherwise have occurred. The rapid expansion of the total trade of Zanzibar throughout the nineteenth century called for an efficient commercial organisation to distribute the rapidly increasing amount of imports and to collect African commodities from a vast hinterland. The importance of Indian trade in initiating this phase of economic development entailed a greater degree of Indian penetration into the commercial system and displacement of the Arabs and the Swahili in certain sectors of the economy. The expanding economy, however, provided them with several alternatives, and their ability to expand their role in the entrepot trade, the caravan trade and the clove plantations greatly facilitated the much needed expansion and transformation of the commercial organisation. At the entrepot the short-term American loans and the "quasi-Protestant ethics" of the Indians enabled the accumulation of local capital to finance long-term economic development of

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<sup>149</sup> See pp. 435-6



East Africa. The development of the city of Zanzibar is a mirror of that development. From a population of about 12,000 in 1834, it successively increased to 25,000 in 1848 and 60,000 by 1859.<sup>150</sup> Within that population the Indian component experienced the most rapid growth, from 214 in 1819 to about 5,000 or 6,000 in 1859.<sup>151</sup> The physical growth of the city naturally kept pace. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century permanent stone buildings had been replacing the more temporary huts, and "entire new quarters" were being built by the mid-century. Already by the mid-1840s urbanisation had jumped across the creek which separates the old town from Ngambo.<sup>152</sup>

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150 Precise population figures of the city are unavailable. Ruschenberger, I, 64. His estimates for the island as a whole (150,000) and the town appear to be quite realistic. The estimate for 1848 is Guillain's, II, 78, and that for 1859 is Rigby's in Russell, 328 and 337. Waters to Pin-gree, 26.3.1846, P.M.: Waters P. VI, gives an estimate of 50,000. Ward to Abbot, 13.3.1851, N.W.:T100/3; E.I.: Ward's correspondence with the State Department, No. 46, gives 60 - 80,000. Rigby to Anderson, 23.3.1858, NAI: 5.11.1858-P.C.-27/8 gives 50 - 60,000.

151 Albrand's figure for 1819 appears to be an accurate head-count. p. 73, Ruschenberger, I, 42, gives 350 for 1834. Huerton to Aberdeen, 2.1.1844 gives 800, F.O. 84/540 /Cogan's/ Memo. 29.1.1846 gives 1,000, F.O. 54/10. Ward to Buchanan 7.3.1847, and Ward to Clayton, 20.7.1850, give an estimate of between 1,800 and 2,000. N.W.:T100/2; E.I.:Ward's correspondence with the State Department; NEMA, 375, 467. Rigby's Report, in Russell, 329, gives an estimate of 5 - 6,000 for the whole of East Africa in 1859.

152 Snee (1811b). The passage is omitted in the printed version in Burton (1873) II, 458-510. Rigby's "Report" in Russell, 338. Broquant's "Memoire sur Seid Seid", 14.2.1845, AOM: O.1.15/65, CC2 I. Guillain's "Album" contains a map of the Zanzibar town which shows a few huts springing up east of the creek.



## RESILIENCE AND FRAGILITY OF THE COMMERCIAL EMPIRE

The remarkable economic development of East Africa traced in the preceding chapters owed its strength primarily to natural or economic, and generally international factors. It continued to respond to these factors with little regard to political developments except when local disturbances temporarily disrupted the trade. By the mid-century the economy of Zanzibar had reached the stage of self-sustained growth based on the momentous diverging price curves in East Africa's favour which generated local capital for economic expansion. Ironically, however, this very factor contributed to its fragility. Its buoyancy was dependent upon its lagging ability to keep up with world demand for ivory which created an uncontrollable urge constantly to expand the hinterland over which the commercial empire could not hope to exercise effective political control. Apart from the exchange of presents with the inland chiefs which continued throughout the period there is no evidence that the occupant of the throne of Zanzibar, whether it was the sagacious Said, the epileptic Majid or the courageous Barghash, could effectively protect the trade routes and his own subjects in the far interior.<sup>1</sup>

The economy, moreover, had developed an inevitable reliance on a few major commodities and their specialised markets, as well as a somewhat limited source of supply for its imports. Textiles constituted nearly forty per cent of the total imports

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1 See pp 216-7. Coupland (1939), 67. He is, therefore, entirely wrong in seeing the Mwa Selo-Arab conflict of the 1860s as a "striking evidence of Majid's weakness".

in 1859, supplied almost entirely by the United States and India in equal proportions. Ivory accounted for nearly a third of the total exports and again went almost entirely to these two countries. The two countries, moreover, accounted for nearly two thirds of the total imports and exports of Zanzibar.<sup>2</sup> Thus any event affecting either cotton imports or ivory exports, or events in the United States or India, were bound to have a direct and often immediate effect on the whole economy. But the economy had achieved considerable resilience, and although the period under review witnessed events which unsettled almost every conceivable variable, they also seemed to activate compensatory forces which left the economy as buoyant as ever. The steep rise in the revenue of Zanzibar from \$190,000 in 1859 to \$310,000 in 1865<sup>3</sup> bulies

2 Rigby to Secretary of State for India, 1/5/1860, FC 54/17. He seems to exaggerate French and German bullion imports which show a considerable imbalance with their exports. Averages for the subsequent two years give \$150,000 and \$100,000 as the value of their bullion imports instead of \$400,000 and \$35,000. The revised total import is thus \$1,953,000. The proportions thus are:

<u>Imports</u>		\$	<u>Exports</u>		\$
Total cotton imports		936,000	Total Ivory exports		697,000
Cotton goods from U.S.		422,000	Ivory Exports to U.S.		325,000
" " "	India	418,000	" " "	India	310,000
Total Imports "	U.S.	569,000	Total Exports "	U.S.	534,000
" " "	India	708,000	" " "	India	781,000
Total Imports		1,953,000	Total Exports		2,158,000

3 Ibid. Playfair to F.O., 28/6/1865, FC 84/1245.

the impression that the economy was arrested in its development or even declined after the death of Seyyid Said.

The elaborate structure of the commercial empire, however, was built in an area thought to be immune to massive political earthquakes. Some of the political weaknesses and the gradual erosion of political and economic independence had appeared quite early in the history of the empire. The commercial treaties had tied the hands of Zanzibar to the maximum of 5<sup>0</sup>/o duty on imports without obtaining reciprocal privileges for Zanzibar except under the "most favoured nation" clause which did not prevent the United States clamping a 40<sup>0</sup>/o duty on Zanzibar cloves.<sup>4</sup> Even the reservation of the *Mrima* in the treaties with the European powers was legally inoperative since it was not included in the treaty with the Americans who were able to blackmail Seyyid Said out of direct trade with the United States. Finally, the treaties granted "extra-territorial rights" not only over their own nationals and over disputes between foreign nationals, but also over Zanzibar subjects in the employ of these nationals.<sup>5</sup> The slave trade treaties went further in providing a convenient path for the penetration of British influence and power into East Africa under a humanitarian guise. They successively shrunk the area in which the slave trade

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4 NEMA, 398.

5 Coupland (1938), 368-9, 385-6, 423-4, 481-2. These rights were liable to be abused as they were most noticeably by Churchill when he took *Majid's wazir* under British protection in 1870. Coupland (1939), 91-2.

could legally be conducted, and the other concessions, not embodied in the treaties, permitted British anti-slavery activities even within the "legal" area.<sup>6</sup> These treaties have thus far been represented as a triumph of Seyyid Said's political shrewdness and humanity rather than as a prelude to British supremacy at Zanzibar.

The influence that the British had succeeded in building up during the lifetime of Seyyid Said was to permit them to interfere massively in the affairs of Zanzibar during the reigns of his successors. Radical changes had taken place during his reign in the relative importance of Oman and his dominions in East Africa, symbolised by the shift of his capital to Zanzibar, and a growing estrangement between the two halves. He appears to have been convinced, as was the British Indian government, of the great difficulty of holding the empire together from a single centre.<sup>7</sup> He therefore wished for an acceleration in the secularization of political power to allow him to divide the kingdom and to appoint his successors to both halves of the empire. There was no precedent for either of his wishes in Umani history in which "might, coupled with election by the tribes" was considered the only

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6 See pp. 423

7 Hamerton to Willoughby, 3/3/1846, 21/3/1846 M.A.: 56/1846. pp. 1-3, 99-101. Blackwood to Admiralty, 14/3/1846, FC 54/10. Hamerton to Willoughby, 14/4/1845, FO 54/9. Bombay Government to Secret Committee, 3/6/1845, FO 54/8.

right to succession.<sup>8</sup> In 1844, therefore, he tried to enlist the support of the British government for his own designs to ensure the exclusion of his eldest son, Hilal, and to guarantee succession of his two sons, Khalid and Thuwain, to his African and Arab possessions respectively.<sup>9</sup> Significantly, however, his intentions were never declared to his Arab subjects; nor did he make any arrangement for the partition to ensure that it would not deprive the poorer Muscat treasury of the regular "subsidy" which was paid from the revenue of Zanzibar during his lifetime.<sup>10</sup> The British government was not inclined to be drawn into a succession dispute, but the Bombay government was certainly influenced by its desire to see a strong enough regime at Muscat to resist Wahhabi encroachment and uphold British supremacy in the Persian Gulf.<sup>11</sup> At Zanzibar it was considered more expedient to buttress, even with British arms, the pliable Majid rather than permit the emergence of the more independent-minded Barghash, though constitutional arguments had to be

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8 Coupland (1939), 27, Coghlan to Anderson, 4/7/1860, Proceedings of the Commission on the Disputes between the Rulers of Muscat and Zanzibar, 11-34. Political Resident, Persian Gulf, to Anderson, 11/4/1859, Queries put to ... Seyyid Soweynee.. by Capt. Felix Jones 14/5/1859, M.A.: 121/1859, pp. 321-2, 375, 93, 407-16.

9 Said to Aberdeen, 23/7/1844; Hamerton to Aberdeen, 31/7/1844, FO 54/6; FO 84/540. Coupland (1939), 26. Hamerton to Foreign Office, 10/11/1856, FO 54/17.

10 The will of Said bin Sultan... as executed on... 26/9/1266 A.H. 14/5/1859 M.A.: 121/1859, pp. 495-401, has no reference to the division of his dominions. Proceedings of the Commission, 59-60.

11 Bombay Government to Government of India, 28/2/1859, M.A.: 121/1859, pp. 75-82.

used to camouflage the outright assertion of British paramountcy.<sup>12</sup>

One of these arguments was the death of an Indian during the disturbances.<sup>13</sup> In this case it was a convenient excuse, but the British consuls at Zanzibar regularly utilized their suzerainty over India to convert the most powerful economic group at Zanzibar into a foundation of British power at Zanzibar and undermine the economic independence of both the Indians and the Sultanate.<sup>14</sup> Seyyid Said had fought strenuously against these British presumptions but with little success and Majid did not fare any better.

The commercial empire was thus being undermined politically through much of Seyyid Said's reign and those of his successors at a time when, despite inherent weaknesses, it remained resilient economically. It is indeed remarkable that while Seyyid Barghash's last minute efforts to transform the commercial empire into a political one and thus maintain the integrity failed, the economic structure survived the scramble by nearly a quarter of a century.

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12 Coupland (1939), 32. Rigby may have underestimated Majid. Rigby to FO, 5/10/1861. FO 84/1146, ff. 311-4. for reinstatement of the governor of Lamu whose dismissal Rigby had demanded.

13 Coupland (1939), 25-6. Rigby to Anderson, 21/10/1859, NAI: 16/12/1859-P.C.-13/4.

14 See pp. 415 seq.



1. The American Civil War

As a result of the declining price of raw cotton from the American South and the continuing technical progress in production, the New England cotton manufacturing industry had been able to lower the price of its final product and capture the East African cotton market.<sup>15</sup> By the late 1850s American cottons had captured a large part of the East African market from the then failing Indian cottons. Speke could thus assert, with some exaggeration, that "American sheeting... constitutes the general wear of all the Africans".<sup>16</sup> The common unbleached cottons assumed the significant name "merckani" which has been retained to the present, and long after America had lost the market.<sup>17</sup> There were several attempts by European manufacturers to substitute their own cloth, sometimes by stamping it with American markings, but with little success.<sup>18</sup> On the eve of the American civil war, "merckani" was undoubtedly considered to be the indispensable staple of the caravan trade.

The civil war had the effect of depriving the New England manufacturing industry of its raw materials, and the subsequent economic changes destroyed its major economic

15 Zevin, 680-2.

16 Speke (1862), 139-40. Commerce.

17 As late as 1871 Stanley believed that he needed to take nearly 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  times as much "Merikani" in value as the next most important type of cotton goods, "Kaniki", though "nerekani" was then probably not entirely of American manufacture, Stanley (1872), 52-4. Lugard described "merikani" as "the very best cloth in the market and almost as strong as canvas", quoted in Bennett (1963), 32.

18 Bennett (1961), 32. Bennett (1963), 32.

advantages, cheap raw cotton and labour.<sup>19</sup> These distant events had an immediate effect on total American exports to Zanzibar. The war caused a steep rise in the price of American cottons which were soon priced out of the East African market. American textile imports declined from about six to seven thousand bales before the war to fifty bales in 1864/5.<sup>20</sup> The American cotton industry had suffered a more permanent blow than the contemporary Americans hoped. By 1873 they were frankly admitting that American cottons were "almost played out here".<sup>21</sup>

With the American source suddenly blocked and the English cottons needing time to get accepted, consumption of the other staples, beads and brass wire, which had an established value in the caravan trade, greatly increased. It is possible that coastal penetration into eastern Congo where beads rather than cloth were in demand may have been stimulated by the shortage of American cottons, or it may at least have helped sustain the economic impetus during this critical period.<sup>23</sup>

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19 Webb to 2nd Asst. Secretary of State, 30/9/1873, NAW:T100/6.

20 Goodhue to Seward, 30/6/1862, Mansfield to Seward, 4/5/1863; Ropes to Seward, 1/7/1865, NAW: T100/4; NEMA, 521-2, 536. Mansfield says that the pre-war imports were 12,000 bales on the average.

21 Webb to Ropes, 19/5/1872, 12/6/1873, P.M.: Ropes Papers.

22 Ropes to Seward, 5/10/1865, NAW:T100/5; NEMA, 538-9.

23 See below.

The civil war also had a more general disruptive effect on the American economy, and thus on American trade with Zanzibar. As a luxury, ivory was probably among the first to be affected. By 1862 the prices of ivory and gum copal in the United States were very low, and American export of ivory from Zanzibar in 1861/2 was reduced to almost nil.<sup>24</sup> The withdrawal of the Americans from the ivory market at Zanzibar had a significant influence on ivory prices at Zanzibar. They declined from about \$55 per frasala in 1857 to as low as \$44 in 1864.<sup>25</sup> There was a partial recovery in American exports in 1863/4, probably mostly for re-export to London.<sup>26</sup> It was not until after the war that the pre-war figures were attained,<sup>27</sup> perhaps helped along by the Bombay depression of 1866. The war, however, had weakened American traders at Zanzibar, and they were apparently unable to take advantage of the wonderful opportunity in capturing Bombay's intermediary role in the supply of ivory to London. Indian re-export of ivory to England diminished from an average of about 3,000 cwt. during the

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24 Goodhue to Seward, 30/6/1862, NAW:T100/4, NEMA. 521.  
See graph v.

25 Mansfield to Marcy, 1/1/1857, NAW:T100/3. Invoice of Ivory on "Col. James Scott". 26/4/1864, P.M.: West Papers 3. Bonnett (1963), 89, shows \$50 for 1864, and \$44 only in 1866.

26 In 1864 the U.S. re-exported 229 cwt. of ivory to the U.K., which probably includes 168 tusks of East African ivory re-shipped from Salem to London. P.R.O.: Customs 5/73. Maris to Goodhue and Ropes, 3/6/1864, P.M.: Ropes Papers.

27 See graph. v.

first half of the 1860s to a mere 80 cwt. in 1868, but the Americans probably lacked the capital to enter that field on a larger scale.<sup>28</sup>

During those difficult times, the Americans did their best to persevere in the trade, and maintain their good name.<sup>29</sup> They overcame the threat to their shipping from Confederate raiders by using the neutral English flag.<sup>30</sup> They attempted to continue their trade by importing English cotton goods themselves.<sup>31</sup> The finest stroke, however, was their success in manipulating local currency problems to their advantage. The French and the Germans had hitherto been the greatest importers of specie. With the interruption in the American supply of cottons, however, the Germans, particularly, realised the advantages of importing English cottons. The Maria Theresa dollars, which were so essential for the coast trade, became scarce and dear. There was thus a shortage of currency developing at Zanzibar which was affecting the traditional cash remittances to India.<sup>32</sup> Towards the end of 1863, therefore, the American

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28 See graph IV. Between 1857 and 1862 American re-export of ivory to the U.K. averaged 445 cwt. The average for 1865 to 1869 is a mere 45 cwt.

29 Hines to Seward, 25/10/1864, NAW: T100/5; NEMA. 523-3.

30 Bennett (1861), 54. Webb to Repes, 1/11/1866, P.M.: Repes Papers. Hines to Seward, 31/3/1864, NAW: T100/5, NEMA. 534.

31 "Extract from the Administration Report of the Political Agent at Zanzibar", TBGS. XVIII (1865), 82.

32 Whereas in 1859 specie export to India exceeded that of ivory, figures available for the 1860s show a considerable reversal. Jablonski to MAE, 26/3/1864, CCZ II, 365-7; s. to s., 31/12/1867, CCZ. III, 69-80.

consul took the step which seemed to offer the solution not only to the local currency problem but also to the problems the Americans then faced. He argued with the Sultan that while the Americans were unable to export cotton goods, the demand for African commodities remained high in the United States. This was forcing them to burden themselves with debts at high rates of interests.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, the recognition of American gold coins at Zanzibar at par with the Maria Theresa would permit the flow of the much needed coins to Zanzibar in sufficient quantities. What he did not mention was that he was asking for the acceptance of the American coins at a premium of about 2%.<sup>34</sup> Added to the fact that specie imports were not subject to the 5% import duty, it was seen to emerge as a convenient import substitute for the Americans. In fact even German merchants and the Sultan himself took the opportunity of importing American gold which soon flooded the market. However, since the Bombay exchange did not recognize the artificial over-valuation of American coins at Zanzibar, their remittances to India suffered a

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33 In 1863/4, when American imports were the lowest yet, the Americans took advantage of a temporary opportunity to export a large quantity of ivory, probably by borrowing from local Indian merchangs. See graph 7.

34 Nines to Majid, 29/12/1863, NAW: RB 342E: C-3 Misc. Rec. Bk. 1860-71. Nines to Seward, 4/1/1864, NAW:T100/4, 1864, 524. Playfair to Anderson, 21/6/1864, NAW:54?1864, p. 93-100.



proportionate loss and that outlet somewhat clogged.<sup>35</sup> The consequent abundance of American coins at Zanzibar soon established them as the principal local currency, and the Maria Theresa, and even French coins, began to be hoarded and grew scarcer.<sup>36</sup>

The Americans' struggle for survival in the Zanzibar trade during the civil war was admirable, but their efforts could not wipe out the deep depression in their total trade. Moreover, such was the significant role of American Trade in the economy of Zanzibar that its collapse during the civil war caused a precipitate decline in the total trade of Zanzibar. The total value of trade of Zanzibar declined from over \$4 million in 1859 to less than \$2.5 million 1861/2.<sup>37</sup> The

35 Thus the reversal referred to in note 32. Playfair to Gonno, 15/3/1865, Fraser & Co. to Seward, 5/11/1866, Seward to Gonno, 8/6/1867, NAI: 10/1868-Pol.A.-497/9. The problem for the local currency, however, remained. Within a year, the Indians were clamouring against Majid's proclamation. Early in 1865 he issued another proclamation revoking the earlier one but the Americans were able to hold him down to the original proclamation. It was not until 1868 that Kirk was able to negotiate a new arrangement by which only the Maria Theresa was recognized as current from a year hence, the rest of the coins were allowed to find their own market value. At the same time Kirk issued a notice calling on British subjects to recognize the value of the other coins according to the value determined by the Bombay mint. Kirk's Notice, 12/11/1868 and Majid's proclamation, Kirk to Gonno, 12/11/1868, FO 84/1292. Capt. Colomb (1873), 388.

36 Majid even requested the Americans that since American gold had now become the principal currency of Zanzibar they should import small denominations to facilitate local trade. Majid to Ropes, 28/9/1865; Ropes to Majid, 29/9/1865, NAW: RG 84/Z: C:3 Misc. Rec. Bk. 1860-71.

37 Revised figures for 1859 (see note 2) for 1861/2 (Playfair to Havelock, 1/5/1864, MA:54/1864, pp.16-33

Import	\$1,953,000	Import	\$1,168,000
Export	<u>\$2,158,000</u>	Export	<u>\$1,277,000</u>
Total	\$4,111,000	Total	\$2,445,000



depression naturally evoked attempts to diversify the economy to reduce its dependence on few commodities and markets. The local Indian traders eagerly seized the opportunity in expanding local trade by extending a branch to the Seychelles Islands. The opportunity, however, was limited to the supply of provisions during the months when communication between the islands and Mauritius was interrupted by the hurricane season, and the amounts involved were small.<sup>38</sup> More significant was the Indians' response to efforts of the British consul, Pelly, to encourage the investment of surplus capital in local plantation agriculture. Pelly reported that a couple of the local merchants "offered to place a lack 100,000 of Rupees each at my disposal to be used in any way that may seem expedient in regard to sugar plantations".<sup>39</sup> No more is reported of this venture, and the stumbling block may have been the ban on the employment of slave labour by the Indians who had just had British citizenship rammed down their throats by Rigby.<sup>40</sup> French and English planters appear to have been more successful in the industry. The English were able to overcome the slavery obstacle by a marvellous formula, sanctioned by the British Consul, whereby they worked in partnership with the

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<sup>38</sup>Pelly to Stewart, 11/6/1862, 1/7/1862, M.A.: 47/1862, 429-31, 435-6. Playfair to Bombay Government, 14/12/1862, M.A.: 60/1863, pp. 95-100.

<sup>39</sup> Pelly to Stewart, 10/7/1862, NAI:10/1862-Pol.A-24.

<sup>40</sup> Pelly to Forbes, 10/1/1862, NAI: 4/1862-Pol.A.185 (ff. 261-2), Pelly to Stewart, 10/7/1862, NAI:10/1862-Pol. A.-185.

Sultan in which the latter undertook to supply labour which was, of course, slave labour.<sup>41</sup>

The immediate relief to the economic depression, however, was not to be provided by any new commodity but rather by the expansion of the existing alternate sources of cotton goods and markets for ivory. India seems to have played the largest role in this relief operation. The graph of cotton imports from India during the Civil War years is an almost exact mirror image of the depression in the relevant American graph. (See graph V) The civil war had created a boom in the Bombay cotton market,<sup>42</sup> and permitted Zanzibar to import the needed cotton goods through India to keep the economy going. By 1864 it is mentioned that "the Mericani is sent from India in great quantities" even though the American product, now almost absent on the market, was preferred. Opportunity was also taken to expand Indian supply of cotton goods of other qualities as well, especially those traditionally coming from Muscat. The partition of Seyyid Said's kingdom and the threats of invasion had probably disrupted communication and trade between Zanzibar and Muscat. The new impetus to Indian cottons also had the effect of killing the cotton industry on the Benadir.<sup>43</sup>

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41 Jablonski to MAE, 31/12/1866, CCZ III, 40-53. Playfair to Bavelock, 1/5/1864, & enclosures, FO 84/1279. Playfair to Anderson, 27/6/1864, M.A.: 54/1864, pp. 229-31.

42 Jame-Jamsed, 9/12/1868, extracted in The Report on Native Newspapers, 1868 (Bombay, 1868), National Archives of India Library.

43 Webb to Ropes, 15/8/1866, 21/9/1866, NAW: Ropes Papers.

India's relief operation was unfortunately interrupted by the financial collapse of 1866 at Bombay following the end of the American Civil War. It was claimed that nearly everybody went bankrupt, including Pramchand Ramchand, "the king" of the cotton market.<sup>44</sup> India's trade with Zanzibar was immediately affected, both the import and the export graphs exhibiting a very significant dip in 1865/6. India's re-export of ivory to England also shows a precipitous decline in 1867 and 1868.<sup>45</sup> By this time, however, the Zanzibar economy had begun to demonstrate its considerable flexibility of sources and markets which maintained its own stability. The Indian discomfiture excited European and American traders into importing considerable quantities of cotton goods directly from Europe in the belief that the Bombay merchants would not be able to compete. Thus, far from showing any over-all decline during the crisis, the graph of cotton imports shows a considerable increase in 1865/6, the year of the decline in Indian cotton imports. By that date the American export trade had also recovered enough to receive the relay rod from the plunging Indian ivory curve to keep total exports at a high over-all level.

By the 1860s the economy had thus emerged as a fairly stable one, insulated to a considerable extent from the changing fortunes of the constituent sectors of its trade. It was able to

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44 Jamo-Jamsed, 11/5/1868, 9/12/1868, in the Report, 48, 404-5. Golomb., 85.

45 See graph. IV.

shift rapidly and smoothly from one source of its cotton or market for its ivory to another. Apart from the initial shock of the American civil war in 1861/2 it was able to ride over subsequent crises. Despite the economic storms of the 1860s the farm of the customs revenue could be increased in 1865 from \$190,000 to \$310,000.<sup>46</sup>

## 2. Zanzibar's Hinterland

It has already been shown that the most important single factor leading to the expansion of the northern and central hinterlands was the increasing world demand for ivory. Rising out of the decline in the supply of ivory from Mozambique during the first decade of the nineteenth century, it received a fresh impetus in the early 1820s from the sudden upsurge of ivory re-exported from Bombay to London, and in the 1830s from the demand created directly at Zanzibar by American and English merchants.<sup>47</sup> Potentially this factor was a powerful push for coastal penetration to satisfy that demand unless it was hindered by major geographical barriers, such as the "Nyika" in Kenya. On the other hand, it was equally possible that once intelligence of the demand at the coast had been transmitted into the interior, the interior could respond to supply that demand. The mechanism for that transmission may have been Kamba

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46 Repes to Soward, 5/10/1865, NAW:T100/5; ~~MEMA~~. 540.

47 See pp. 208-11, 217-8.

famine refugees who maintained links with the homeland, or inter-tribal exchange by which chinaware from the coast reached Buganda in the late eighteenth century.<sup>48</sup> What is important to emphasize is that the interior and coastal initiatives in establishing and expanding long-distance trade links were always in a state of dynamic equilibrium, which permitted the displacement of one by the other when economic factors demanded it.

The single-track long-distance trade routes established as a result of demand at the coast do not however completely or accurately describe the process by which the hinterland expanded. We have examined the hypothesis that before long distance trade routes were established, a series of regional trading networks had developed in the interior for the exchange of commodities essential for a subsistence economy.<sup>49</sup> The implication is that as soon as one point of the network felt the demand for any particular commodity that sensation was transmitted throughout the network though without necessarily implying that it would respond positively to that sensation. This means that the

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48 Ibid., pp. 150-2.

49 Ibid., pp. 130.

process of the hinterland's expansion was not a laborious inching along a single track but rather a rapid "leap-frogging" phenomenon, enveloping a whole network at a time. Moreover, resulting either from the exhaustion of ivory supplies in that region, or the increase in the price of ivory there as its value at the coast became known,<sup>50</sup> there was a constant urge to push beyond to the more lucrative "frontier", the next trading network. This probably explains the remarkable rapidity with which the hinterland of Zanzibar expanded during first three quarters of the nineteenth century.

Constant expansion of the hinterland was bound to raise some very important problems for the economy of Zanzibar. Fortunately, the constantly rising prices of ivory in relation to that of the manufactured imports helped more than pay for the increasing cost of transportation. Throughout the period under consideration there does not appear to have been any case in which transportation costs hindered the expansion of the hinterland for ivory. However, problems did arise from the extended line of communication and the need to arrive at an accommodation with the intervening politics. A trader penetrating from the coast often did not have to create entirely new incentives to trade among the population which may already have acquired a taste for the imported commodities and was willing to supply ivory, though he did sometimes encounter an entirely untouched "frontier" situation where neither of these

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50 A. Smith, in *HBA*, I, 264-5. Spoke (1864), 240-1. Tippu Tip, 39.



statements applied. Moreover, even in areas already familiar with long distance trade, the tribally-based seasonal trading system could not easily be adapted to its rival coastal system. Despite the fact that exchange in commodities occurred within the regional networks of the interior, such exchanges did not necessarily imply a concentration of those commodities at market places which the foreign trader could visit. In many cases he was forced to visit tribal centres where chiefly power permitted the accumulation of the desired commodity through the tribute system, and where other members of the tribe could exchange their goods. In effect, these centres developed as market centres in the coastal system of trade even if they had not played that role previously. Unless these centres were also capitals of large well-organized kingdoms, beyond which the trader was forbidden to trade, the tendency was for him to embark on a hawking journey from one centre to another, or, more probably, as the size of the coastal caravan grew, for a temporary collecting-point to be established at one of these centres with smaller parties dispersing in all directions. However, with the increasing distance from the coast and the consequent decreasing possibility of completing the trade within a single season, need began to be felt for a permanent centre for trade in the neighbouring chiefdoms and in the more distant

frontiers.<sup>51</sup> In 1839 expeditions of up to one and a half years were reported; by 1849 they lasted up to three and a half years.<sup>52</sup>

The second major problem was that of accommodation with the politics along the route. Initially a present to the local chief was the normal prelude to trade, and often it was repaid in provisions needed by the travellers. Common economic interests generally ensured the safety of the foreign trader. However, as areas near the coast were either exhausted of ivory or over-stocked with imports, a critical point was reached in their relations. The local population realised that they were being bypassed as far as trade was concerned, and yet the traders often still had to pass through the same country en route and obtain the necessary water and provisions. Difficulties of adjustment to the new situation sometimes led to

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51 The availability of Nyamwezi porters was strictly regulated by the agricultural calendar. "The favourite seasons for the upward-bound [caravans] are the months in which the... Masika or tropical rains conclude in June and September, for instance, on the coast - when water and provisions are plentiful... The down-caravans set out in all seasons except the rainy; it is difficult to persuade the people of Unyanembe to leave their fields between the months of October and May." Burton (1860), I, 339; Burton (1872), II, 285. This means, in effect, that coastal traders had to spend the rest of the dry season and the whole wet season in the interior, exchanging their goods for ivory collected during the dry season. The earliest they could return to the coast was at the end of the following wet season. Therefore, once Unyanwezi was reached a permanent entrepôt became essential.

52 Bennett (1961a), p.5.

conflict and even to cessation of trade, while coastal traders attempted to divert their route, if possible. More commonly economic advantages of their continued cooperation ensured the working out of a new arrangement in which the customary present was converted into a compulsory tax ["hongo"], as a charge for the security of the caravan, which was proportionate to the apparent wealth of the caravan and not refundable in the form of provisions. On the other hand, the local population undertook to furnish the necessary provisions at a price. African control over the trade routes ensured for them the maximum benefit from their strategic position, but it was limited by the possibilities of diversion of the trade routes if the burden on traders became unbearable.

It is clear from the discussion that, typically of this growing commercial empire, traders generally did not rely on Zanzibar's political power to ensure their safety, but generally depended on establishing a common economic interest with the people of the interior, and, where necessary, on their guns. Zanzibar retained her right, of doubtful value, to impose economic sanctions against a recalcitrant chief by blocking his supply of gunpowder or his trade. A study of the period, however, shows that the gun and the sanctions were sadly ineffective in the hands of a race of traders.<sup>53</sup> Their success in displacing their competitors and in penetrating to the

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<sup>53</sup> See pp 409-11

farthest frontier which, by the end of the period, stood half-way across the continent, depended on the continuing demand for ivory, Indian capital able to finance caravans of long duration, and a favourable tax structure encouraging coastal penetration.<sup>54</sup> For example, the lower duty of ₹9 per irasala on ivory brought from Unyamwezi by the Arabs as compared with ₹15 on that brought by the Nyamwezi was bound to stimulate coastal penetration and perhaps gradual displacement of the interior traders. We shall attempt to examine that displacement in two of the more important ivory regions within the context of the two problems mentioned above.

It has already been shown above that during the first half of the nineteenth century the Kamba, responding to the great demand for ivory at the coast, had developed a large network of trade and hunting extending from the coast to the Tana in the north, to Mount Kenya and the Kikuyu country as far as Lake Baringo.<sup>55</sup> Lamphear argues that, faced with the well-established Kamba commercial system which delivered a large quantity of ivory at the doorstep, there was little incentive for Swahili penetration of the interior from Mombasa. The difficulties of the "Nyika", and the possibility of more lucrative alternate channels of coastal penetration to the south, may have delayed the Swahili push in this direction.

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54 Hines to Seward, 25/10/1864, T100/5; MEMO x 10007  
531.

55 See pp.150-3. Lamphear, 80-1.

However, Swahili penetration into the interior began at least by the second half of the 1840s. Guillain mentions that a caravan of over a hundred people which traded at Vanga, passing along the northern foothills of the Usambara-Pare chain to Taveta, was the first to penetrate to Ukenba and Ukikuyu, and returned with 90 to 95 frasalas of ivory.<sup>56</sup> Lamphear has attempted to make a distinction that these Swahili caravans penetrated from the ports to the south of Mombasa because "no people with a commercial skill approaching that of the Kamba inhabited the hinterland of this portion of the coast".<sup>57</sup> However, since the above-mentioned caravan went to trade in Ukenba anyway, the distinction hardly seems relevant. The Swahili may have preferred to cross the Nyika further south where water and provisions could more easily be obtained along the foothills, , and where the risks of Masai and Galla raids were minimal.<sup>58</sup> By 1856, in any case, a large trading party of about 200 Arabs, Swahilis and slaves, under Muhammad b. Ahmed, was able to penetrate from Mombasa itself as far as Kitui where it dispersed to trade in Ukenba and Ukikuyu.<sup>59</sup> By 1870 Swahili caravans had extended their activities as far as

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56 Guillain, III, 289-97.

57 Lamphear, 92.

58 Krapf, 195.

59 Burton (1872), II, 62-7.

Harsabit and Lake Rudolf area.<sup>60</sup>

What were the factors which led to this gradual Swahili penetration and displacement of the Kamba? Lamphear, following Jacobs, argues that Swahili penetration was made possible, ironically, by the "pacification" of large areas of the interior by the Masai proper. They drove the Boran Galla out of Laikipia plateau by 1842, and severely defeated their own Oloikop cousins who emerge as the villains of commercial communication with the interior.<sup>61</sup> Lamphear, also argues that the Utui system which had facilitated the growth of Kamba trade, also contributed to its downfall. His reasoning, however, is not very clear. The fact that the Utui system "lacked the overriding unity and authority" does not lead us any closer to an explanation since Kimweri's Shambala kingdom with which he contrasts the Kamba was not particularly successful in commerce. The inherent rivalries within the fragmented Kamba society were in existence during the "golden age" of Kamba trade without disrupting the trade. The assertion that "whole areas of

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60 Christie (1876), 184, 191, 197. He quotes Flouden (1868), who says that Enarca in southern Ethiopia was frequented by traders from Zanzibar, though Christie himself asserts that there was no direct trade. Wakefield and Newbold that Samburu was the limit of coastal caravans by 1870. Abir, 136-7, believes that 'Zanzibari' caravans did not reach the northern shores of L. Rudolf until about 1890.

61 Lamphear, 94-6.



Ukamba may have given up trading for the easier, but just as lucrative, occupation of bandits",<sup>62</sup> thus merely begs for an explanation rather than providing one.

These developments, however, point to a change in the environment which exacerbated these rivalries and transformed traders into robbers. The explanation may be the gradual depletion of the ivory resources of their homeland. It was reported that Kamba hunting parties were used to killing every animal in a herd they may come across, and the extinction of elephants in their hunting region was thus very rapid.<sup>63</sup> The Kamba thus faced the alternative of settling down like the Gogo in their homeland, charging a toll on the caravans in transit, and supplying the necessary provisions to them. Raiding was not a permanent solution to the changed economic situation since, if it was effective, it would lead to the total cessation of the trade. The Kamba, on the other hand, could and did expand into fresh hunting grounds in the neighbouring tribal areas. It was vital for the Kamba to maintain their intermediary role between the coast and these tribes by preventing a direct contact between them. As it was, by the late 1840s and 1850s coastal caravans were trading in these areas in which they presumably stood on an equal footing with their Kamba rivals, perhaps a better footing, having cut out Kamba middlemen.

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62 Ibid., 98.

63 Dundas, 505. Lamphear, 80.

Meanwhile, the Mt. Kenya people were increasingly dissatisfied with their share of the profit from the trade. It is significant that the famous Kivui met his death at the hands of a party of Mt. Kenya people. By the 1870s the latter were seeking Swahili aid in driving the Kamba from their territories.<sup>64</sup>

Mombasa, however, may have suffered an overall decline as a result of the changes which affected the Kamba. The chaotic conditions in the "Nyika" may have diverted part of the trade from the same hinterland to the Mrima ports of Vanga and Pangani. Though Guillain's estimate of about 2,300 to 2,600 frasalas as the annual export of Mombasa in the late 1840s appears to be exaggerated<sup>65</sup> there may, nevertheless, have

64 Larphear, 92, 99.

65 Ibid., 87, 97-8. Guillain III, 266-7. His figures of 2,300-2,600 frasalas refer only to direct export to India. Loarer gives an estimate of 2,500-3,000 fr. to India, and 2,000 fr. to Zanzibar from Mombasa, Lamu and Pate, say 1,000 fr. from Mombasa alone. AOM:O 2/10(2). "Mombas"; 5/23(3) "Ivoiro". The two sources are not independent of each other. Guillain used Loarer's reports extensively. However, Loarer's total of about 18,700 fr. of ivory exported from Zanzibar suggests all his figures may be exaggerated. An American Memo of the early 1850s gives more precise figures for exports to the U.S. and Europe which will be adopted, but greatly under-estimates exports to India. An average of Loarer's figures and the Memo will perhaps give a better estimate:

	<u>To the U.S.</u>	<u>Europe</u>	<u>India</u>	<u>Total</u>
1848 (Guillain, Loarer)	6,000	3,700	9,000	18,700
1852/3	3,393	1,102	1,100	5,975
1853/4	3,416	1,260	250	4,926
Approx. Averages	3,400	1,180	3,450	8,030

"Memo of Exports from 14/5/1852", NAW: RG 84, Z:C-3, Misc. Rec. Bc., 1852-60. Assuming Loarer's proportions of the supply from various parts of the coast are reasonable, Mombasa's share would amount to about 425 fr., and assuming her direct export to India was 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> times this figure as suggested by Loarer and Guillain, her total ivory export amounts to about 1,500 fr.

been some decline by 1872 when Pelly gives accurate figures from the custom house records at about 1,250 frasalas.<sup>66</sup>

The sudden upsurge in Bombay's re-export of ivory to London from the beginning of the 1820s appears to have had a significant effect on coastal penetration to Unyamwezi, both along the Ruaha route to the south and through Ugogo, both of which appear to have occurred in about 1825.<sup>67</sup> It has been suggested above that the seasonal Nyanwezi long-distance ivory trade to the coast was a considerable departure from the more specialised iron and salt trade.<sup>68</sup> Iron and salt of good quality were procurable from a limited number of locations, and gave rise to more or less exclusive specialist classes. Elephants were more widespread and mobile resources which did not facilitate specialization in hunting or trade to any considerable extent.<sup>69</sup> It formed an integral part of the annual agricultural cycle: hunting and trading activities had to be fitted in with sowing and harvesting, and it was almost impossible to get porters during those seasons.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, it was based on tribal foundations. Nyanwezi caravans were composed of numerous parties, perhaps from neighbouring chiefdoms, combined for security under

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66 Pelly's memo on the Trade of Mombasa (1872), 28/3/1873, Parliamentary Papers [P.F.] (1873). LXXI, p.857.

67 See pp.136,141.

68 See pp. 137.

69 Roberts (1970), 44-7, 68.

70 Ibid., 65. Burton (1860), I, 339. Cameron, I, 183.

a "Mtongi" or a leader,<sup>71</sup> who often enjoyed a place in the tribal political order. Kafuku, who is credited with pioneering trade with the coast, was the son of a Sumbwa chief, and the famous Fundikira abandoned his trade to return home when he received the news of his father's death.<sup>72</sup>

The significance of this assertion of the novelty and different character of Nyamwezi long-distance trade becomes apparent when we come to examine the relative ease with which coastal penetration occurred. Lacking the advantages of a monopoly over more restricted or immobile resources, and in view of the fragmented political order, the Nyamwezi could not develop any united policy of exclusion of foreign competitors. It is possible, in fact, that the Nyamwezi and coastal systems of trade remained distinct in their early stages of co-existence. There were no common market centres where the two could compete for the same commodities. Roberts believes that they used different routes as well, the Nyamwezi using the more direct Gogo route while coastal traders preferred the southern route through Ukimbu.<sup>73</sup> For a long time the Nyamwezi system retained its own dynamism, and until the late 1850s a greater number of Nyamwezi caravans visited the coast than their coastal counterparts.<sup>74</sup>

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71 Burton (1860), I, 341.

72 *Ibid.*, II, 31-2. Roberts (1970), 49.

73 Roberts (1970), 50, 63.

74 Burton (1860), I, 341; II, 30.

It was logical, in fact, that pioneering coastal traders should have been attracted to chiefdoms which had not hitherto played a significant role in long-distance trade. To the small uncommitted, or as yet, unexploited chiefdoms coastal traders perhaps offered as much or more economic benefits and, at times, military advantage, than Nyanyenzi traders from the dominant chiefdoms; as such, they may well have eagerly sought to attract foreign traders to their particular chiefdoms. In return they offered protection to the foreigners and even perhaps economic concessions. Thus the inhabitants of Msene were very hospitable to the Arabs who, a few years previously, had beaten off a large plundering party of the Watuta.<sup>75</sup> When the chief of Puge failed to offer the traders protection they were invited by Fundikira, chief of Unyanembe, to move to his chiefdom where he did not demand, though he normally received, a present from them, and he may even have agreed not to impose a tax on Arab transit trade. Chiefs' daughters were offered to certain foreign traders to set the seal to this new relationship.<sup>76</sup>

These centres formed important nodes in the development of the coastal system of trade in Unyanwezi. Hawking from village to village with the whole caravan may have proved too cumbersome, and a stable relationship with the chiefs could not be developed

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75 Ibid., I, 396.

76 Ibid., I, 327. Speke (1863), 76-8. Bennett, "The Arab Impact", in Ogot and Kieran (eds.), Zamani, 222. Roberts (1970), 50. Tippu Tip, 39, 65.

enough to ensure its safety. A system, therefore, developed of establishing depots at the centre while their "factors" and slaves dispersed in all directions to exchange their goods for ivory.<sup>77</sup> The need for more permanent centres where caravans could rest and provision themselves was more particularly felt when coastal trade extended beyond Unyamwozi. Tabora thus rapidly developed from a "desert" into the largest settlement of coastal traders in the interior. In 1858 there were about ten "tombes" (houses) with the attached garden plots, store rooms and outhouses for the slaves. The Arabs lived "comfortably, and even splendidly", and the settlement could boast several itinerant artisans, such as gunsmiths, carpenters and masons. It also had a "general agent", Thnay b. Amer, whose health forbade him to travel, and who had built "a village containing his store-houses and his depots of cloth and beads, slaves and ivory". Burton estimated that the number of Arabs at the settlement rarely exceeded twenty five, and during the trading season it fell to as low as three or four.<sup>78</sup> Within three years Speke noted that Arabs appeared "more like great farmers, with huge stalls of cattle attached to their houses".<sup>79</sup> The Arabs generally did plant foodstuffs at Tabora and other camps, where they stopped

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77 Burton (1860), I, 325; II, 370. Livingstone (1874), I, 183.

78 Burton (1862), I, 324-9.

79 Speke (1863), 91.



for more than a season, for their own consumption.<sup>80</sup> However, some now appear to have begun to engage in agriculture full-time. One of them, Salim b. Sayf, abandoned trade for agriculture, employing a large number of slaves in cultivating large plantations of cassava, wheat and other grains.<sup>81</sup> By the early 1870s Tabora had visibly grown westwards containing over fifty "tombes" and "bomas" (residential enclosures) and Livingstone estimated a population of about eighty male Arabs and about 1,500 dependents. The permanence of Arab settlement can perhaps best be depicted by the house of Amren b. Said who spent more than \$3,000 on the "Bahrain" whose door and rafters were "a marvel of carving work".<sup>82</sup>

The transformation that Speke noted was an ominous sign for the health of trade in Unyamwezi itself. "In 1858 Burton noted that "the elephant roams in herds throughout the country... the animal is far from becoming scarce".<sup>83</sup> By 1871 Stanley had to march all the way far to the south-west of Tabora before he saw "a small herd of wild elephants".<sup>84</sup> Even in its heyday Unyamwezi ivory was considered to be of a poor quality,<sup>85</sup> and

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80 Burton (1860), I, 270, 326; *id.* (1872), II, 297. Livingstone (1874), I, 64, 68-9. Speke (1864), 371.

81 Livingstone (1874), II, 222. Roberts (1970), 69.

82 Livingstone (1874), II, 182. Stanley (1872), map opp. p. 259, pp. 271, 264, 549. Cameron, I, 150, 164. He puts the number of coastal traders at an auction at 150.

83 Burton (1860), II, 297-8.

84 Stanley (1872), 358.

85 Burton (1860).

little of that came to the market by 1872.<sup>86</sup> In Burton's time a majority of the caravans travelling to the coast were Nyanwezi; by the early 1870s Cameron appears to have met only two Nyanwezi caravans among the many he encountered on the way.<sup>87</sup> It is not, therefore, surprising that some of the Arabs, perhaps too old for along-distance travel, rather than persist in the now less lucrative local trade in Unyamwezi, had turned to agriculture to supply provisions, especially rice and wheat, to coastal traders in transit. While some Nyanwezi attempted to derive some benefit from the transit trade by cultivating their own acres for the same purposes,<sup>88</sup> a large number sought to participate in the trade largely as porters or by trading beyond their own borders. For many of them porterage was no longer only a part of their total economic life, but the mainstay of their sustenance when they joined full-time "pagazi" gangs of Arab traders in the Congo,<sup>89</sup> though they did not hesitate to embark on their own petty trade with their porterage wages. More prominent Nyanwezi were those who went abroad to carve their empires in Katanga or Usagara to exploit their resources or to tax the caravans in transit.<sup>90</sup> By the early 1870s Stanley pronounced the Nyanwezi in their native country

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86 Livingstone (1874), II, 182.

87 Cameron, I, 57-7607, 80-1, 85, 111, 124, 139, 145.

88 Stanley (1872), 324.

89 Cameron, I, 373-4. An Arab in Maniema employed as many as 600 permanent porters.

90 Burton (1860), II, 258-60. Stanley (1872), 540-2. Roberts (1970), 56-7, 68-9.

to be a dying race,<sup>91</sup> perhaps referring only to their declining commercial role.

The affluence that Tabora betrayed in the 1870s was no longer being derived from the resources of Unyamwezi but from the new "frontiers" beyond. The interlacustrine region was not so new though the frontier continued to move north. In this region coastal traders stood on an equal footing with their Nyamwezi competitors. They were both moving into a region with a highly centralised system of government and a jealous control by the monarchs over foreign trade which was often confined to the capital. Considerable portions of the commodities in demand were acquired by the monarchs through the tribute system or from raids so that the trade was often more directly with the ruler.<sup>92</sup> They were also moving into the region in which the monarchs coveted foreign trade, partly for prestige reasons,<sup>93</sup> but also for economic, and later perhaps, military reasons,<sup>94</sup> They "greatly encouraged, by gifts and attention, the Arab merchants to trade" at their capitals, and stories of individuals who had been showered by "wealth in ivory and a harem containing from 200 to 300 women" were current when Burton visited Tabora in 1858.<sup>95</sup>

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91 Stanley (1872), 542.

92 Burton (1860), II, 183-4, 196. Tosh, 113.

93 Burton (1860), II, 195. Spoke (1863), 242.

94 Tosh, 111.

95 Burton (1850), II, 193. Spoke (1863), 276.

Coastal traders appear to have pioneered into Karagwe in the early 1840s,<sup>96</sup> and the Indian trader, Musa Mzuri, soon had an opportunity to establish very cordial relations with its ruler. In about 1855 when Rumanika, the ruler of Karagwe, was besieged by his rebel brother Rugero, Musa persuaded Suna, the Kabaka of Buganda, "by a large bribe of ivory... to raise the siege by throwing a strong force into the field."<sup>97</sup> Karagwe's importance, however, lay not so much in its own resources as a highway to the kingdoms further north. Rumanika proudly described himself as their gatekeeper to the south and maintained good relations with all of them even when they were fighting among themselves.<sup>98</sup> Perhaps as a result of the dense population and trade, its peaceful foreign relations, and mineral poverty, Karagwe appeared to Grant to offer none of the commodities in demand, neither ivory nor slaves, nor salt, copper or iron. Nevertheless, it was strategically located not only in the exchange of commodities of long-distance trade with the coast, but also of those in the regional trading networks. Thus salt from the south, iron wire from Ruanda, ivory from the north, slaves in both directions, and the goods from the coast passed through Karagwe in what would appear to have been a brisk trade.<sup>99</sup> Regular communication was maintained with

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96 Grant, 186.

97 Burton (1860), II, 183, 224.

98 Grant, 144. Speke (1863), 211, 233.

99 Grant, 158-9. Speke (1863), 262.

Buganda through the Arab depot at Kitangole on the northern Karagwe border with Buganda, and later at Kafuro.<sup>100</sup>

Buganda may have been pioneered by coastal traders around the middle of the nineteenth century,<sup>101</sup> but Burton commented in 1858 that "the distance has hitherto prevented more than half a dozen caravans travelling to Kibuga", the capital of Buganda.<sup>102</sup> Because of the density of population elephants were already rare in Buganda in 1858, except in Buddu. The Kabaka thus obtained ivory and slaves from Busoga and Bunyoro

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100 Burton (1860), II, 177. Speke (1863), 201, 265. Grant, 193.

101 In 1876 Emin Pasha met Ahmed b. Ibrahim in Buganda, who claimed to have been the first Arab in Buganda, and who "lived to see the birth of the present Sultan [Mutesa] (35 yrs.)... He... had come here three times during the reign of Suna... the first time being in 1270 [A.H. = c. 1854]". A few days later Ahmed "came to correct his information, and stated that he first came here to Suna in 1260 [c. 1844]". However, he goes on to say that he had met Burton at Kirira. Burton met Hamid b. Ibrahim al-Amuri whom he describes in 1857 as "a bilious subject 24 or 25 years old". Therefore Ahmed's claim, if granted, would credit him with pioneering the Buganda route at the age of twelve. Emin also mentions that the same Ahmed lived at Werahanje, the Karagwe capital. Stanley met Ahmed at Kafuro in 1876 when he claimed to have been in Africa for only about eighteen years and to have known Suna who died in 1850. Burton's and Stanley's evidence, taken together, throw a considerable amount of doubt on Ahmed's claim, and his original date of 1270/1854 is probably the earliest date of his presence in Buganda. Thmay b. Amer al-Harhi's visit to Buganda in 1852, and possibly the Baluchi Isa b. Hussain and the "Arab half-caste" Saim, may have preceded Ahmed, but there is no firm evidence of any Zanzibari trader in Buganda before 1852. Gray (1947), 80-97; (1961), 8-10; Burton (1960), I, 392-3, II, 193; Stanley (1874), I, 453; R. Stanley (1961), 117; Schweinfurth, 113.

102 Burton (1860), II, 193.

either by plunder, trade, or as return presents for cloth, brass and beads which he sent to Kabarega and other neighbouring chiefs. The Kabaka was thus determined to prevent a direct contact between coastal traders and the territories beyond his which would deprive him of his middleman's share in the trade. He was also determined to prevent the Banyoro from acquiring arms and ammunition.<sup>103</sup> To break this monopolistic hold a new route was developed through "Kisuro" through the agency of Haya traders by which ivory from Bunyoro and the region apparently as far as the northern border of Uganda found its way south. In 1861 this was still a new route, and Grant saw that the Banyoro rarely killed elephants, and then with "the rudest uncertain methods".<sup>104</sup> It was not until about 1877 that coastal traders could outflank Buganda and penetrate to Bunyoro themselves, at last arriving at the watershed that divided Zanzibar's hinterland from that of Khartoum.<sup>105</sup> The poverty of Karagwe and Buganda in ivory, combined with the impediment placed on the free movement of trade into Ruanda, and into Bunyoro by the Kabaka, probably restricted the total volume of trade with the interlacustrine region. Some fortunes were made at Kafuro, but participants in the trade appear to have been few.<sup>106</sup> Early

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103 *Ibid.*, II, 186, 196-8; Schweinfurth, 67, 115, 117.

104 Grant, 281. Spoke (1863), 238, 242, 482-3, 557; (1864), 259.

105 Schweinfurth, 67, 115. These two traders, Said b. Saif and Fundi Hassan, arrived in Bunyoro on 9/10/1877 from Karagwe without touching Buganda.

106 Stanley (1878), I, 455; S. Stanley (1961), 117.



attempts to open trade routes to Busoga across Masailand failed, and the majority were easily induced to divert their attention to the new El Dorado in eastern Congo.<sup>107</sup> Beachey believes that Bunyoro's great ivory reserves were still intact at the end of the century.<sup>108</sup>

Commercial contacts with Lake Tanganyika may be of great antiquity as well. Wilson has attempted to link this trade with the expansion of the Luba Lomami empire towards Lake Tanganyika at the beginning of the nineteenth century but there is no conclusive evidence of this trade across Lake Tanganyika to the east coast before the early 1830s.<sup>109</sup> Lief b. Said's itinerary speaks of "a great trade in ivory... and slaves" across the lake with a people on the west bank called the "Yoah".<sup>110</sup> The itinerary, which seems to end in the neighbourhood of Ujiji, would seem to suggest that the Guha are meant who, as Wilson shows, traded extensively on the lake as far south as Marungu and <sup>at</sup> Ujiji. They also traded with the Maniema and, as subject people of the Luba Lomami empire, they provided an important link with the regional trading system extending over a large part of the eastern Congo. Although this was a

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107 Burton (1860), II, 215-6; Speke (1863), 187-8.

108 Beachey (1967), 283.

109 Wilson, 10. She quotes Roberts (1970), 49-50 for the establishment of commercial links between Lake Tanganyika and the coast "by the 1800s". But Roberts speaks of the Nyamwozi only with no reference to the lake. Roberts, in turn, quoting Tippu Tip, mentions that an Arab expedition crossed the lake in about 1820 to visit the Luba kingdom, but I fail to see any support for the statement on the quoted pages. He also quotes Stuhlmann that the first Arab reached the lake in 1825.

110 Macquoen (1845), 373.

new direction of trade for the empire, it was not the first commercial contact with the east coast. The Bisa had apparently already linked the empire by a more southerly route, perhaps terminating at Kilwa or the Zambezi.<sup>111</sup>

The first references to Ujiji in particular occur in the early 1840s,<sup>112</sup> but Burton asserts that until the late 1850s a permanent coastal settlement had not yet evolved on the Lake, and that it was visited by "flying caravans" of coastal traders from Tabora during the fair season. Burton seems to have in mind here the young Omani Said b. Majid al-Maanri whose porters, half-loaded with a valuable store of ivory, marched "like mad men" back to Tabora where he seems to have had his establishment. Said had a dhow on the lake to trade at the "ivory and slave mart of Uvira" at the northern extremity of the Lake.<sup>113</sup> Ownership of a dhow, however, was already portentous of a more regular link.

It appears that others had already begun to establish permanent bases, especially on Kasenge island, as a base for trade to the west of the lake which, because of its dangers, "the thriving merchants have hitherto abandoned... to debtors and

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111 Wilson, 11-12, 16-8.

112 Cooley (1852), 60. Pickering, 203.

113 Burton (1860), I, 323; II, 84, 97, 116. Speke (1864), 241. Stanley (1872), 269, 410. By 1871, Said was described as one of "the great magnates of Ujiji while his son maintained the establishment at Tabora.

desperate men".<sup>114</sup> The death that Hamid b. Sulayyam and his slaves met trading in Uruwa emphasized the dangers<sup>115</sup> which, however, did not deter people like Tippu Tip who led his first trading venture on his own to Uruwa about this time.<sup>116</sup>

The third "boat" on Lake Tanganyika from Ujiji led to Marungu on the south-western shore. The first mention of the country occurs in the early 1840s as "Malungo".<sup>117</sup> Burton

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114 Burton (1860), II, 147-9.

115 Ibid., II, 86; Burton (1872), II, 300-1. Speke (1864), 205, 229-30, 241. Speke, "Commerce of C. Africa", 140-1. Salim b. Habib, the brother of the famous Said b. Habib, was killed in Uruwa in the 1860s. Livingstone (1874), I, 335; II, 9.

116 Tippu Tip, 39-41. Alison Smith in her introduction to the autobiography (p.9) seems to think that Tippu Tip's trip marked "a revival of Arab enterprise" since she could not believe that Burton's harsh characterization of "Debtors and desperate men" could apply to the famous man. However, Tippu Tip mentions that he heard of Fundikira's death on his return, which would date the trip to about 1859. Coupland (1939), 67. Moreover, Tippu Tip was then still a humble merchant, and led only a few people out of the party of 20 which went to Uruwa. He was apparently unable to compete with his fellow merchants for the larger tusks and he himself attributes to "luck", and not to "business acumen" as Smith does, the fact that the small tusks he had bought fetched a good price at Zanzibar. The smaller scrivellos ivory, which had been trailing behind prime ivory in price, suddenly caught up with it by 1858, suggesting a certain shift in the use from cutlery and piano keys to billiard balls. West to Perkins, 4/12/1856, recommended to buy prime ivory at \$1.80 per lb., and scrivellos at \$1.35. West to Cloutman, 14/8/1858, recommended the price of \$1.65-1.70 for both. West to Webb, 17/4/1860, recommended the price of \$1.75-1.80 for "Prima Ivory", and \$1.70-1.75 for "Billiard ball ivory". P.M.: West Papers, 8.

117 Pickering, 196.

described it as "one of the most important divisions of the lands [west of] the Tanganyika", and although it was considered dangerous, it was often visited by Arab merchants.<sup>118</sup>

Muhammed b. Saleh al-Nabhani claimed that his father was the first to open the trade to Kazembe, perhaps in the 1830s, though it is not certain that he used this route.<sup>119</sup> Gamitto

came across two "moors" at the court of the Kazembe in 1831 who were accustomed to take their goods to the mainland opposite Zanzibar, and added that "the nations of the eastern part of Africa which frequent Kazembe are the Bisa and the Impoanes, the name given to the Arabs of the Zanzibar coast".<sup>120</sup>

However, they began to be most active in the early 1840s.

Cunnison suggests that this resulted from a decline in Bisa trade following the conquest and devastation of their country by the Bemba in the early 1830s.<sup>121</sup> One of these Arabs was Muhammed b. Saleh himself who, in 1841/2 by Burton's reckoning, led a party of two hundred slaves by the Marungu route. On their way back they became embroiled in a clash with Nsama

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118 Burton (1860), II, 149-151.

119 Livingstone (1874), I, 277.

120 Cunnison (1966), 228. Muhammed b. Saleh claimed he was present at Kazembe in 1831 when Montoirc was there. There may have been a misunderstanding on the part of Livingstone though it is possible that he and his father were among the two "Moors" Gamitto mentions. Livingstone (1874), I, 224, 246.

121 Cunnison (1966), 228n. Cooley (1854), 269-70.

Chipioka of Itabwa to the east of Lake Mweru. The plundered remnant of the caravan retreated to Kazembe where, it was claimed, they were well received and given large rice shambas. However, they declared they were unable to leave the country either because, as they alleged, they could not find porters to carry their accumulated store of ivory and copper, or perhaps because the route was blocked by the Nsama. Burton reported that "the more acute Arabs" suspected that they were unable to face their creditors.<sup>122</sup>

What they do appear to have done was to establish their headquarters at Kazembe's court and embark upon extensive trade in central Africa, perhaps finding outlets in both directions.

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122 There are two versions of the incident, obtained probably from the same author, Amer b. Said al-Shaksi, whom Burton met in 1858 at Unyamwebe who was fond of "venturing his travels". Burton does not specifically credit the account to him. Burton (1860), II, 151-2. Tippu Tip met him in Ulungu in about 1863/4, though this account, recorded nearly forty years later, mentions only the conflict with the Nsama. Muhammed b. Saleh figures in both accounts as the leader, Tippu Tip, 47, 55. He was "rescued" in 1867 by Livingstone to whom, at various times, he declared that he had lived with four Kazembes, "more than ten", twenty two and twenty five years at Kazembe's out of thirty five years in the country. This need not indicate his unreliability; he was loath to speak "the whole truth". Livingstone does not record the incident, his description relating mainly to the later incident when he was suspected to be in collusion with the Garaganza. Livingstone (1874), 247-8, 276, 287, 297. He finally departed for Ujiji where he was to become "the practical head" of the coastal community. Cameron stated that he had not been east of Ujiji since 1842. Cameron, I, 241-2.



The Hungarian officer Ladislaus claims to have met some Arabs at Quinhame which appears to be on the Kasai north of Dilolo, in the early 1850s.<sup>123</sup> Then, on 3rd of April, 1852, three "Moors" arrived at Benguela, accompanied by a caravan of forty carriers, bringing ivory and slaves. They stated that "having got into the interior and bartered away in succession all the goods which they had provided ... they then found it difficult to retrace their steps". This appears to be a rather lame argument, and the account is rendered improbable by their claim that they completed their journey in six months. They do, moreover, mention that they left one of their companions at Kazembe to guard their ivory. What is likely is that they were operating from Kazembe, and that they proceeded to Angola on the recommendation of Major Coimbra's man whom they met in Katanga. The party was commissioned to carry a despatch to Mozambique where they arrived on 12th November, 1854.<sup>124</sup> Nor

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123 Macqueen (1856), 128-130.

124 Cooley (1854), 286-71. "Journey from Benguela to Mozambique"... (P.R.G.S.) I (1855), 75-6. Their route via Marungu appears to coincide with that taken by the 1841/2 expedition, which may add weight to their identification with that expedition. Macqueen (1860), 136-53. Livingstone (1857), 217n. It is tempting to identify the "Moors Abdel and Nassolo with Abdel el Al and Nasir b. Salim al-Harisi who were part of the 1841/2 expedition. Burton (1860), II, 151-2. Said b. Habib, who claimed in 1860 to have visited Luanda three times, may well have been part of this expedition. He informed Livingstone that Porto went only as far as Cutongo and gave the despatch to Ben Chombo to deliver to Mozambique. Burton in P.R.G.S., III, 363.



was this an isolated journey. Livingstone met a party of Arabs from Zanzibar among the Makololo in August, 1853, and when he returned from Luanda with glowing prospects of trade in Angola, Sokoletu immediately made arrangements with Said b. Habib al-Zififi, who may well have been part of the 1841/2 expedition, to conduct a fresh party with a load of ivory to Luanda.<sup>125</sup> Back in Zanzibar in 1860, he claimed to have visited Luanda three times. What confirms our supposition about the base of their operation is that soon thereafter Said left Zanzibar to return to Kazembe where he had married a daughter of an African chief, and where his father was residing.<sup>126</sup>

Arab ventures to the west coast certainly mark a significant chapter in Arab enterprise but, had they taken deep root, they would have marked a diversion of the trade of eastern Congo from Zanzibar. The Makololo expedition led by Said b. Habib did not prove profitable,<sup>127</sup> and the Arabs appear to have abandoned it to the Portuguese traders who had penetrated to the Katanga, and to the Garanganza under Msidi who established themselves

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125 Livingstone (1857), 223, 501.

126 "Narrative of Said b. Habib", TBCS, XV, 146-8. M.A.:~~59~~-59/1860, pp. 57-64. Burton has attempted to identify him with Ibn Habib mentioned in the 1841/2 expedition, though he said in 1860 that he had left Zanzibar 16 years earlier. His father left Zanzibar in about 1853 to seek his son. Burton, (1859), 257n., id. (1860), II, 151-2. Rigby to FO, 5/10/1861, FO 84/1146, ff. 338-9.

127 Livingstone (1857), 501. His comment in PRGS., I, 249.

there probably in the late 1850s.<sup>128</sup> They retained their base at Kazembe for penetration into Katanga for ivory, and especially copper which played such an important role in the trade of the interior.<sup>129</sup>

Coastal traders also gradually consolidated their commercial hold over the region of south-eastern Congo and north-eastern Zambia. Said b. Habib had a house at Pweto at the northern end of Lake Mweru, and traded extensively between Katanga, Chikumbi, the big trading centre south-east of Kazembe, and Lake Tanganyika on which he had at least three large canoes. Muhammad b. Saleh was still at Kazembe, and his son, with a number of Nyanwezi was residing at Kabakwa to the north of Lake Mweru. Said b. Umar lived at a village near Kazembe and traded as far as the Chamboshi and Chikumbi. On the Chamboshi Livingstone met a party of Zanzibar traders who had come to trade for ivory with the Bemba and in Marungu.<sup>130</sup>

Most of these traders depended for their trade between Katanga and the coast on the route over which Itabwa occupied a strategic position. It was situated close to Mweru wa. Ntipa, a major source of ivory, and a convenient base to tap the ivory

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128 Cooley (1854), 266-7. Cumison, 229-30.

129 Tippu Tip, II, 87-89. Livingstone (1874), II, 176.  
A. Smith, in HEA, I, 264-5.

130 Livingstone (1874), I, 187, 216, 241, 273, 282-3, 297, 321-2; II, 3, 8. Livingstone to Seward, 1/2/1867, FO 84/1292.  
Churchill to FO 5/10/1867, FO 84/1279.

resources in Bomba country.<sup>131</sup> Itabwa, in the late 1860s was still dominated by the same Chipioka who had dispersed Muhammed b. Saleh's caravan nearly twenty five years earlier. He was determined to exploit his strategic position to the full by refusing to give the customary return present of ivory for cloth, and perhaps by driving a hard bargain. In 1867, however, Tippu Tip arrived at the head of a large, well-armed caravan of over 700 people. His rough treatment of the deserting porters and their kinsmen on the Mrima set the stage for his violent confrontation with Chipioka. The force may well have intimidated the Nsama as the rich caravan aroused his cupidity. In the two existing accounts, both originating from Tippu Tip's party, though independent of each other, the immediate cause of the conflict is alleged to be Chipioka's attempt to ambush the traders but, in view of his interest in trade, and the fact that other traders had been previously allowed to trade, there appears to have been a deeper anxiety for his hostility. With the defeat of this "Napoleon of these countries" at the hands of Arab guns, that anxiety spread rapidly through the region, creating a panic among the tribes which often refused to trade and deserted their villages. Chipioka himself retaliated by cutting up all Swahili traders in the area. One large peaceful caravan under Said b. Ali al-Hinawy and Hamis wad Mtao was badly mauled, and between 25 and 60 Swahili killed. Tippu Tip's

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<sup>131</sup> Tippu Tip, in Roberts (1967), 244.

own harvest was a rich one. He forced Chipioka to agree to his own peace terms and obtained, either as booty or in trade, 1,950 frassalas of ivory and 700 frassalas of copper. Moreover, he established a permanent political as well as a commercial base in the country with a significant role in the political affairs of the region.<sup>132</sup>

It appears that by this time, while some areas rich in ivory still remained, ivory was becoming scarce in Kazembe's country either because the elephants were being killed off or driven off after thirty years of exploitation, or because of the decreasing ability of the Kazembe to deliver ivory as he gradually lost control over parts of his dominions such as Katanga. In seven months Muhammed b. Gharib was able to buy only three tusks. Livingstone's description of the Kazembe's pathetic indebtedness to Muhammed, and his statement that "it is not want of will that prevents ivory being produced",<sup>133</sup> were clear hints for coastal traders to raise their eyes to newer frontiers to the north. Saïd b. Habbib had already extended his operations to Uruwa and had collected over two hundred tusks.<sup>134</sup> Muhammed b. Gharib began to buy copper and slaves to exchange for ivory further north.<sup>135</sup> In the early 1870s

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132 Livingstone (1874), I, 210, 218-20, 231, 260, 330. Tippu Tip, ;49-55. Roberts (1867), 249-53.

133 Livingstone (1874), I, 265, 296, 299.

134 Ibid. I, 335-8.

135 Ibid. I, 298; II, 35.

Tippu Tip led his large caravan to Uruwa, Utotela, and finally, Maniema which was to become the centre of his "empire-building" activities in the era of the Scramble.<sup>136</sup>

In thus pushing north they were to meet an almost contemporaneous drive from Ujiji to Uruwa to the south west and Maniema to the northwest. According to Stanley the first Arabs returned from Maniema only in about 1867. It was a genuine "frontier" region where ivory tusks were allegedly used as door posts,<sup>137</sup> but that was not necessarily an advantage. The merchants were used to trading in areas where incentives for peaceful commerce had preceded them, and they generally recognized the critical importance of peace to their trade. In this frontier region they were forced to build up their own infra-structure for the exploitation of the ivory resources. They had to rely on their own slaves or a permanent gang of Nyanwezi porters for their transportation;<sup>138</sup> they often had to indulge in hunting for ivory themselves. The commodities in demand differed, and sometimes, incentives for trade were lacking. They found the people suspecting their desire for ivory as a mere subterfuge to plunder them, and a proliferation of small, weak chiefdoms which sucked them into deep involvement in local politics was not

136 ~~Tippu Tip, 12-3.~~

137. Stanley (1872) 460. This impression from contemporary sources seems to contradict Wilson's contention that long-distance trade had penetrated to this region in the early nineteenth century.

138 <sup>see p. 305.</sup> Burton (1860), II, 148-9. Cameron, I, 299, 373-4. Some Maniema, however, did consent to act as porters, but they were exceptional. Livingstone (1874), II, 144.

conducive to peaceful trade.<sup>139</sup> And yet, this was, at this time, the place of richest untapped ivory resources, and prices were ridiculously low.<sup>140</sup> The hinterland rapidly expanded to the north into Kivu and down the Lualaba as far as a "Kisingito", a cataract, which may well be Stanley Falls.<sup>141</sup> The traders expanded southwards to link up with their fellow Zanzibaris from Kazembe. Most exciting of all, by 1873, they had stretched the canvas of Zanzibar's hinterland to its farthest; the watershed between the west-flowing and east-flowing channels of trade then stood half-way across the continent.<sup>142</sup> It was yielding such a rich harvest of ivory that, as Stanley reported in 1871, "the old beaten tracks of Karagwah, ~~U~~Uganda, Ufipa and Marungu, have been comparatively deserted."<sup>143</sup>

The commercial map of Zanzibar's hinterland by the 1870s thus revealed a grotesquely disproportionate figure resembling a buxom woman with match-stick legs. The valuable ivory fields then formed a broad arc extending from Bunyoro, passing into

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139 Livingstone (1874), II, 25, 118. Cameron, I, 364-5.

140 Stanley (1872), 461.

141 Livingstone (1874), II, 66-7, 72, 188. He mentions their expansion to the north to Lindi R. which appears to be the Ulindi, and that they found the country becoming mountainous, probably the highlands of Kivu. The Balogga are mentioned, apparently the Warega of that province. As for Stanley Falls, Livingstone heard from Dugumba's men that the Lomami joined the Lualaba near the "Kisingito", a threshold, Cameron, II, 9.

142 Cameron, II, 25-6, 51-4, 56-8.

143 Stanley (1872), 460.



eastern Congo, as far as north-east Zambia, at least five to seven hundred miles from the coast as the crow flies. The favourable terms that ivory enjoyed at the coast and the cheapness of ivory in the "frontier" regions enabled the commodity to withstand the increasing cost of transportation.<sup>144</sup> However, it had to be transported through a wide belt of country which was once the central ivory region itself. By the 1870s this area had, for the most part, been hunted out of cheap ivory, and its occupants thus deprived of a lucrative share in the trade. The once famous Nyamwezi traders were under immense pressure either to embark upon a life of trade and empire-building beyond their frontiers, or to adjust to the life of a nation of porters and "hongo"-takers. Common economic interests which formerly bound the Nyamwezi and the coastal traders together in the interest of trade were therefore greatly weakened. Coastal traders, on the other hand, were utterly dependent upon a couple of slender life-lines passing through this commercially exhausted region in which they had to find provisions for their large rambling caravans. In this commercial empire the flag had not followed trade in consolidating its hold on the country and ensuring the safety of the trade routes.

One of these was the main trunk road through Unyamwezi to Tabora, with branches to Uganda, to Ujiji and eastern Congo, and to north-western Zambia and Katanga via Ufipa. Tabora was therefore a crucial node in the network of trade routes of

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144 See p. 214

almost the entire interior. The community of coastal traders which grew up there was a typical product of the commercial empire. It consisted of adventurers who had left the coast individually to seek or repair their fortunes in the interior, and they carried with them a strong sense of individual freedom, amounting almost to republicanism, which characterised Arabs of the time.<sup>145</sup> They neither sought nor wished for, the protection of the authority at Zanzibar in the initial stages of their establishment: the Harthi, who had been accused of complicity in Barghash's rebellion in 1859, were, in fact, political refugees from Zanzibar.<sup>147</sup> The community, moreover, was seasonal. While there was a core of permanent settlers, often those too old for distant travelling, there was a larger group who seasonally departed, or sent their agents, to distant frontiers. In 1858, as we have seen, the community used to shrink from twenty five to as few as three.<sup>148</sup> Secondly, the community which grew up in the age of peaceful trade was strongly impressed by the cult of non-violence as essential for the continuation of their trade. In 1869 Seyyid Majid had strongly disapproved of Tippu Tip's ride, rough-shod, over Itabwa, and "all caravans leaving for the interior were thenceforth strictly enjoined to

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145 Heanley, 108. Rowley, 216.

146 Burton (1860), I, 329.

147 Bennett (1961a), 13.

148 See p. 388

avoid all warfare with the native tribes",<sup>149</sup> a succinct expression of one of the principles of the commercial empire. In 1870 the Tabora Arabs deprecated Tippu Tip's high-handed action in Ugalla, refusing him hospitality, a grave matter for an Arab, until he had agreed to release the prisoners for whom they were prepared to pay ransom in ivory.<sup>150</sup> Stanley's exasperation at their "timidity", and Alison Smith's description of them as "contemptible", betray, therefore, a gross misunderstanding of the historical context.<sup>151</sup>

However, Arab refusal to bow down to new exactions imposed by Mnwa Sele,<sup>152</sup> or to Mirambo's demand that they shift their allegiance and centre of trade from Unyanyembe to his chiefdom,<sup>153</sup> inevitably led to violent conflicts, the disruption of the trade and a measurable increase in the price of ivory at Zanzibar and

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149 Roberts (1967), 253.

150 Tippu Tip, 71-75.

151 Stanley (1872), 180. Tippu Tip, 17.

152 Speke (1863), 76-8, Speke to Rumanika [3/3/1862] in P.R.G.S., VII, 232. Tippu Tip, 41.

153 Bennett (1963), 3, 86. Cameron, I, 150-1, gives the more immediate cause. A. Smith's argument [in Tippu Tip, 17] that "Mirambo claimed and with justice, that his rule was designed not to thwart but to encourage trade", and charge "only very moderate tolls, or none, [and] was ready to assure to caravans security and freedom from other exactions", is hardly convincing in view of his admitted "implacable hatred against the Arabs of Tabora". At moments of weakness Mirambo offered several economic concessions and promises of compensation to the Arabs. Livingstone (1874), II, 166.

even London.<sup>154</sup> They rightly feared the absolute control Mirambo wished to exercise over the whole of Unyamwezi and the trade passing through it. But they failed to realise that the ever-deeper penetration of the hinterland had begun to place intolerable strains on the economic structure of the empire, and resistance to a desperate Nyamwezi effort demanded the degree of political cohesion and military power that the community of individual traders was ill-equipped to provide. They attempted to keep the trade flowing by a combination of half-hearted militant demonstration and conciliatory moves. They appear to have made a major effort to reopen the ancient route through Usangu and along the Ruaha, but the attempt misfired and probably blocked up the route altogether, at least temporarily.<sup>155</sup> But they

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154 Bennett (1963), p.89. Livingstone (1874), II, 90. Stanley (1872), I, 492. He refers, with some exaggeration, to Mirambo's "doubling of the price of ivory".

155 In January 1871 Merero of Usangu was reported by Livingstone to have turned against the Arabs and apparently blocked the trade route. In June 1871 Amran Masud was reported to be "making a war on the king of Ururi". In June 1872 he was said to have the upper hand. By October, 1873, there was an auction of the effects of "some Arabs who had been killed while fighting with Warori". Livingstone (1874), II, 88, 97, 194. Stanley (1872), 266. Cameron, I, 164. A. Shorter has collected oral information among the Kimbu which states that Amran was killed and that "From that time onwards no other Arab tried to rule the mainland and set up his own government, until the coming of the Europeans". It is questionable if Amran's real motive would emerge from the traditions of his adversaries, and it is not unlikely that those traditions may have been contaminated by recent events, such as the revolution in Zanzibar. A. Shorter, "The Grand Design of Amran Masudi", p.5.

failed to understand the impoverishment of the Nyanwezi and their desperate straits. The situation demanded a new arrangement, perhaps similar to that worked out with the Gogo, which would allow the Nyanwezi an equitable share of the trade in the form of "hongo" and a good price for their provisions. Alternatively, the situation demanded a transformation of the commercial empire into a political or a colonial empire to protect their economic interests. If they failed to foresee that need, or to provide for it, they were not alone in 1873.<sup>156</sup>

The continued and increasing demand at the coast for ivory and the progressive exhaustion of areas closer to the coast necessitated a constant expansion of the hinterland. By the early 1870s it extended half way across the continent. Though several of the trade routes serving this hinterland had been pioneered by the peoples of the interior, the exhaustion of their own areas placed these people in the same position as coastal traders when penetrating other tribal areas. Placed thus on an equal footing the relative advantage enjoyed by the coastal traders, such as the lower duty they were liable to and the backing of Indian capital for long-term investment in caravans of several years' duration, permitted them to compete and gradually displace some of the people of the interior in the trade. The resulting economic rivalry placed great strain

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<sup>156</sup> Tippu Tip's assertion of "the unequivocal superiority of his own power" can be considered as a personal trait which prepared him for his role in the era of the scramble not yet dawned. Tippu Tip, 10.

on the commercial structure since the coastal traders still had to pass through and be provisioned by their opponents while the pre-existing provisions had made very little allowance for their protection by military strength and political power. The commercial empire was already betraying its inadequacies but the hour was late and the resources limited to reinforce it with soldiers and an administrative structure. On the eve of the Scramble the empire lay naked and unable to resist the European onslaught.

### 3. Alienation of the Indians and the Loss of Economic Independence.

The indigenization of the Indians, who had emerged as a powerful economic group, was one of the primary foundations of the commercial empire ensuring their loyalty and common interest with Zanzibar's economic fortunes.<sup>157</sup> It was for this purpose that they were granted the same privileged status as the other native traders. They had migrated from the "Protected States" of India with little or no hope or desire for British protection.<sup>158</sup> They were able to build up their economic power and obtain the removal of the economic disabilities without British support and before the arrival of the first British

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157 See pp. 348-9

158 Ibid.. In 1811 the seasonal Indian merchants from British ports of Surat, and Bhownagar sought the protection of British Indian naval vessels at Zanzibar against Umani exactions, those from Kutch did not.



Consul in 1841. The seven hundred Indians already settled on the island and the mainland thus owed little of their entrenched position in the Zanzibar economy to British "protection" which could only impose restrictions on their trade. They shared with the rest of the population their economic fortunes and sentiments, including a "violent feeling against us", as the British consul put it,<sup>159</sup> fearing British interference in the Zanzibar trade.

Hamerton had been appointed in the dual capacity of a British consul and a political agent of the Bombay government. The interest of the Foreign Office was largely confined to its anti-slavery crusade. The Bombay government had appointed him to keep an eye on the Persian Gulf which was a sensitive spot in its policies. It attempted to dissuade Seyyid Said from diverting all his attention to his African dominions, but with little effect.<sup>160</sup> When, therefore, Hamerton was ordered to follow Seyyid Said to Zanzibar in 1841 he found himself in an unfamiliar milieu. The Sultan had shifted to East Africa for economic reasons and Hamerton, an ex-army and political officer, found that he had little leverage of political power. The influential people with the merchant prince were merchants: the Indian custom master, the American consul, even Cogan, the

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<sup>159</sup> Hamerton to Willoughby, 13/7/1841, FO 54/5.

<sup>160</sup> Coupland (1938), 471.

British negotiator of the commercial treaty, who was himself also a merchant and sugar manufacturer. Bombay was not interested in any political power in that corner, but only a dominant influence over the Sultan in his dealings with the Persian Gulf.<sup>161</sup> Direct British trade with Zanzibar was erratic and generally small, and whatever leverage it provided was monopolized by Cogan. It is symbolic that at his first interview with the Sultan, Hamerton noticed "two pictures hung up on either side of Imam's chair ~~of~~ naval engagements between American and English ships" in both of which the English were the losers. British influence at Zanzibar was indeed "at the lowest possible ebb".<sup>162</sup>

Hamerton thus set out to build up that influence, but his motives are not easily discernible. Coupland has argued for a consistent British policy to maintain the status quo in East Africa, thus denying the French a base there.<sup>163</sup> That motive was certainly there, almost as an obsession with almost all British consuls at Zanzibar. But there was a lack of any positive policy. Coupland has shown how Hamerton lacked sympathy for British merchants, let alone for British Indian subjects.. He

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161 In 1842 the Indian Government asked to be "relieved from all care for British interests at Zanzibar". Board of Directors to Governor General of India, 29/3/1842, NAI: Indian despatches from the Secret Committee.

162 Hamerton to Bombay Govt., 20/8/1841; s. to Palmerston, 21/5/1842; FO 54/4. s. to King, 17/8/1841, NAI: 29/11/1841-S.C.-24

163 Coupland (1938), 471, 492.

failed to support or encourage British mercantile interests either out of spite for Cogan, or from his desire to maintain the hard-won cordial relations with the Sultan.<sup>164</sup> Even in the case of the anti-slave trade measures, his advocacy was hardly consistent. A distinct impression remains that Hamerton's major policy was to build up a powerful base for himself which would put him in the position of an "arbiter" in the affairs of Zanzibar, however unwanted and unneeded he was. This saccharine analysis, I feel, is amply borne out by an examination of his relations with the Indians. What is more relevant to this thesis is the damage done to the economy of Zanzibar by his actions.

The economically powerful Indian merchant class provided the only viable leverage. It was, however, a fragile class, being more differentiated than earlier and therefore vulnerable to Hamerton's pressures. Since the 1820s the ivory trade to Bombay had grown rapidly to supply the English demand. The decline in Indian cotton manufacture had led to a weakening of the dominance of the Kutchis on the East African trade and may have led to a certain amount of penetration of English goods through Bombay. It is conceivable, therefore, that the component of Indians hailing from British territories may have begun to grow sizeably. The Bohra who hailed from Gujarat and who were the principal handicraft men at Zanzibar, are mentioned by the 1840s as claiming British protection when it suited them

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164 Ibid., 488-92.

While taking advantage of the privileges reserved for nationals at Zanzibar. The Hindus particularly, who were forced by their caste rules to leave their families in British territories, also left sizeable portions of their properties there. Their identification with the fortunes of Zanzibar thus suffered both socially and economically. Finally even those from Kutch who had made enough capital to enter the Bombay market, opened branches in British territories which detracted from their total commitment to Zanzibar. It is ironic that Jairam Sewji who led the movement in the 1840s against Hamerton's pretensions, was nevertheless claiming British citizenship in 1853 because he had a "house at Bombay".<sup>165</sup>

Upon his arrival, Hamerton found the commercial class was indigenised to the extent that business disputes and bankruptcy cases were handled by the Omani governor of Zanzibar, Seyyid Sulaiman b. Hamed.<sup>166</sup> The class was presided over by the Kutchi custom master, Jairam Sewji, who naturally wielded considerable power over the smaller Indian merchants. In view of the importance of American trade during the preceding decade, a relationship had developed between Jairam and the American consul which tended to give the latter an influence at Zanzibar suggested by the naval scenes described above. Hamerton thus

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<sup>165</sup> Jeyram Shivjee to Malet, 5/11/1853, M.A.: ■-91/1853, pp.163-8.

<sup>166</sup> Hamerton to Malet, 25/10/1849, M.A:94/1850, pp. 41-4.

embarked upon a scheme to break up the alliance between the Arab authorities, the Americans and the Indians, and to convert the Indians into a solid base for British influence within the state, undermining both their independence and the commercial empire. He claimed to have succeeded in asserting his authority over Indian bankruptcies, but as late as 1847 the bankruptcy of a prominent Indian merchant was settled without the least reference to him.<sup>167</sup> He also set out to break what he called "a monopoly of the trade here... between the American consul and the custom master", and he claimed success, "by repeated remonstrance" to the Sultan, within six months of his arrival.<sup>168</sup>

Waters's private commercial correspondence gives no indication of the existence of such a "monopoly" or of the consequences of its break-up. As has been shown above, Waters had agreed to conduct most of his trade through Jairam who, in return, undertook to supply his wants as expeditiously as possible. This commercial agreement gradually disintegrated as Waters, with long experience at Zanzibar, attempted to bypass Jairam in dealing with smaller merchants and clove plantations owners, and as Jairam began to realise that Waters's policy of controlled growth of

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167 Ward to Buchanan, 7/3/1847, T 100/2. NEA  
376-8.

168 Hamerton to Smyth, 5/12/1861, M.A.43/1842, pp. 396-403.  
s. to Secret Committee, 9/2/1842, FO 54/5, s. to Willoughby,  
3/2/1842, NAI: 39/ /1842-S.C.80/2. s. tos. 21/5/1842,  
FD 13/7/1842-S.C.-15/6. s. to Aberdeen 21/5/1842, FO 84/425,  
FO 54/4.

the Zanzibar trade was opposed to his own interests.<sup>169</sup> Hamerton's claims in both the above-mentioned cases thus appears to be empty boasting, calculated to impress his superiors at a time when Seyyid Said was clamouring for his recall.<sup>170</sup>

Despite this lack of immediate success, Hamerton, by his interference, did present a threat that the population sensed almost from the very outset. It is significant that the reaction to Hamerton's pretensions was not confined to the Indians alone. Consonant with their indigenised status at Zanzibar, their reaction was closely coordinated with that of Seyyid Said. They denied they were British subjects, since the majority were of Kutch origin, as they were still to be even in the 1870s. According to Hamerton, Seyyid Said called the principal merchants and asked them to sign a declaration drawn up by Jairam Sewji that they were Zanzibar subjects. Hamerton asserts that many of the Banians refused to sign the declaration because they had their families and property in British India.<sup>171</sup> The latter argument could hardly have been applicable to the majority of the Kutchis. There is little indication in the official or private correspondence of the Americans at the time of such a total success claimed by Hamerton.

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169 See pp. 265-6

170 Saeed Ali b. Nasser to Aberdeen, 23/11/1842, FO 84/425. Said to Aberdeen, 8/4/1844, FO 84/540.

171 Hamerton to Willoughby, 28/9/1841, FO 54/4. s. to Secret Committee, 9/2/1842, FO 54/5. Kirk's Administrative Report for Zanzibar, 1870, FO 84/1344; P.F. Class B. 1872, pp. 18-34.



On the contrary, as late as 1856, Hamerton's rival movement to get Indians, not naturally British, to place themselves under his jurisdiction had won only twelve adherents according to the British agent at Muscat.<sup>172</sup>

Seyyid Said also sought to deny Hamerton's claims by appealing to his superiors. He wrote to Aberdeen asking whether Indians who were born in Zanzibar or had resided there for a long time, who had local wives and children, and possessed estates and slaves, were British subjects. His concept of citizenship differed from that of the British. It implied a voluntary rather than an inalienable allegiance which permitted Arabs to decamp from the territory of one chief to another. It implied residence in a territory where they enjoyed all the privileges, obeyed local laws and owed allegiance to the reigning chief. But to the British the crucial argument was the origin of the Indians. Aberdeen categorically stated that "no natives of India, excepting the natives of those portions of India which form part of the dominion of the British Crown are entitled... to British Consular protection",<sup>173</sup> and therefore subject to Hamerton's arbitration. The Treaty of Alliance between the East India Company and the Rao of Kutch by no means placed Kutch under the English crown since the Company specifically engaged to "exercise no authority over the domestic concerns

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172 Heskeal to Persian Secretary, 22/2/1856, M.A.: 93/1856, pp. 43-4.

173 Said to Cogan, 26/9/1845; s. to Aberdeen, 27/9/1261 A.H. [c. 1845], FO 54/7.

of the Rao".<sup>174</sup> Seyyid Said had been assured by the negotiator of the commercial Treaty that its provisions were not applicable to the Kutchis,<sup>175</sup> and Hamerton himself had admitted in 1841 that not all the Indians at Zanzibar were British subjects.<sup>176</sup> Thus, in the case of the natives of the "Protected States" Hamerton had no jurisdiction.

Recognition of that distinction, however, would have deprived Hamerton of control over the wealthiest and the most influential section of the Indians, including the custom master. He therefore chose to ignore the distinction, and was not averse to misinforming deliberately his government about the composition of the Indian community in order to receive its full backing. In two despatches he deliberately omitted any reference to citizens of the Protected States from where both Jairam Sewji and Topan Tajiani, the two foremost Indian merchants, as well as many others, originated. Thus he spoke of Indians as British subjects, inhabitants of Bombay, Surat and other places in India.<sup>177</sup> By this time he had realised the lack of interest, and thus of support, for his activities in East Africa from

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174 "Treaty of Alliance", 4/12/1819, FOCP.2314.

175 Said to Cogan, 28/9/1845, FO 54/7.

176 Hamerton to Willoughby, 13/7/1841, MA: 78/1841-2, pp. 218-23. He says that many of the Indians were British subjects, implying that not all of them were.

177 Hamerton to Willoughby, 28/9/1841, FO 54/4 s. to Secret Committee, 9/2/1842, 54/5.

from the Bombay government. As early as 1842 the Indian government asked to be relieved from all care for British interests at Zanzibar.<sup>178</sup> He therefore turned to the only weapon that remained to put teeth into his threats against Indian interests.

He could count on the rabidly anti-slavery sentiments of the Foreign Office and on the British naval officers who were only too eager to earn bounty money for themselves and their crew. Soon after his arrival he had reported that all the 700 Indians settled in East Africa were slave dealers, and that the custom master received a duty on each slave landed at Zanzibar.<sup>179</sup>

Without a force under his command, Hamerton was obliged to apply to Seyyid Said to issue a proclamation forbidding his subjects to buy or sell slaves to the Indians. It seems, however, that the proclamation did not apply to the Kutchis for Hamerton admits that the main beneficiary of his action was the Kutchi custom master, contrary to his own wishes. 175 slaves were found in the possession of the Kutchi merchant who went bankrupt in 1847, but Hamerton could do nothing.<sup>180</sup> He had thus taken a step without considering its consequences to his actual proteges, the

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178 Asst. Secretary to Government of India to Willoughby, 10/1/1842, MA: 43/1842, pp. 140/3. Board of Directors to Gov. Gen. of India, 29/3/1842, NAI: Indian despatches from the Secret Committee.

179 Hamerton to Willoughby, 13/7/1841, FO 54/5; s. to s. 13/7/1841. MA: 78/1841-2, pp. 218-23.

180 Ward to Buchanan, 7/3/1847, T100/2. NEMA, 376-8.

protection of whose commercial interests was one of his consular duties. It was with an element of regret that he reported to the Bombay government that the measure would cause ruin to British Indian subjects and drive them out of the trade to the benefit of the Kutchis. Moreover, many of the Arab plantations had been mortgaged to British subjects. The measure placed them at the mercy of the plantation owners now that they could not use slave labour to recover their value.<sup>181</sup> Though the Advocate General in India suggested that the Indians were entitled to compensation "after the example of our West Indian and other slave colonies"<sup>182</sup> the Indians were ignorant of their rights, and, as in other similar cases, no compensation was paid. Hamerton asserts that the misfortune of the British Indians delighted the Americans and the Arabs. However, the episode could not but greatly unsettle the economy, making capital scarce and preventing the arrangement of further mortgages by British Indians. An American merchant reported in 1846 that there was now more fear of bankruptcies than formerly.<sup>183</sup> Hamerton had won his first battle against the wrong enemy and at a great cost to the economy of Zanzibar. The Kutchis had escaped his ill-aimed blow.

The visit of British warships "Castor" and "Dee" in 1850 provided Hamerton with the chance he had been seeking to strike

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181 Hamerton to Willoughby, 9/12/1847, NAI: 8/6/1844-S.C.-24/7.

182 Report from the Advocate General, 2/4/1844, ibid.

183 Fabens to Shepard, 28/1/1846, P.M.: Shepard's Papers 43. NEMA, 350.

agsint the Kutchis, especially Ebji Sewji, the custom master's  
 brother. The consul had collected information on Indian com-  
 ercial establishments near the southern border of Zanzibar  
 dominions, and applied pressure on Seyyid Said to grant the  
 British warships permission "to enter Bays, Ports, creeks, Rivers".  
 Armed with these powers he unleashed the anti-slavery crusaders  
 on the Indians and whoever else crossed their path. In May  
 1850 the commander of the "Castor" discovered as Massani, five  
 miles north of Cape Delgado, what he called "a complete establish-  
 ment for slaves consisting of two large Barracoons... capable  
 of containing upwards of 1,000 negroes, surrounded by houses  
 inhabited by the people connected with the same". No slaves  
 were found. He explained that he met no resistance because of "the  
 early hour of landing and the quickness with which we were upon  
 them", which would also imply that the so-called "barracoons"  
 could not have been emptied if there had been any slaves there.  
 The whole place was put to the torch, including the houses around,  
 and the local headman was taken prisoner. A few days later, with  
 the help of a Banian prisoner, under the threat of death, an-  
 other "slave establishment" was discovered at Kionga on Tungi Bay,  
 south of Cape Delgado, as well as a large dhow. The "barracoons"  
 here were said to be capable of containing 4,000 slaves, but no  
 slaves were found in them, nor in the dhow which merely had  
 "that peculiar odour that always attaches to vessels of that  
 description". Again the place was put to the torch <sup>and</sup> fire destroyed  
 the village as well. The Sultan of Tungi was arrested, but he was



released when three Indians were surrendered.<sup>184</sup> Since May and June were among the most active months for local distribution<sup>185</sup> it was perhaps not an accident that the "barracoons" were found full of goods but not of slaves.

Four Indians were arrested in all and taken to Zanzibar. The most prominent was Lakmidas Kalianji, said to be a cousin of Ebji Sewji, who alone was said to have suffered a loss of at least \$50,000. About the same value of muskets, powder, brass wire and piece goods belonging to many native merchants was also destroyed.<sup>186</sup> The Indians were said to be agents merely, but Hamerton admitted that he "totally failed in being able to procure anything like satisfactory proof such as would be required in an English court of justice as to who were the real participants", proprietors of the so-called barracoons. They were nevertheless imprisoned at Zanzibar for over a month without a trial, and deported by Hamerton,<sup>187</sup> who did not stop to consider whether they were legally under his jurisdiction.<sup>188</sup> The condemnation proceedings, as was usual in such cases, were to be held at Cape Town, where the accused obviously could not be present. The consul had at last succeeded in shaking the independence of the Indians to its very roots. Some of the wealthiest

184 Hamerton to Wyvill, 8/5/1850; Bunce to Wyvill, 27/5/1850; Wyvill to Hamerton, 8/6/1850; Commander of the "Castor" to Hamerton, 8/6/1850; Description of the Slave Dow for condemnation, 8/6/1850; Bunce to Hamerton, 11/6/1850, FO 84/815; NAI: 20/12/1850-P.C.-31.

185 Tables<sup>in</sup> included / Seward to FO, no. 69/5 13/1867 FO 84/12479.

186 Hamerton to Wyvill, 14/6/1850, Hamerton to Malet, 5/9/1850, FO 84/815. NAI: 20/12/1850 P.C.-31.

187 Hamerton to Malet, 29/8/1851, M.A.: 65/1851, pp. 128-134.

188 Advocate General to Secretary to the Government, 13/10/1851,



and most influential Banians decided to close up their business and go away, because they no longer enjoyed security for their trade and property at Zanzibar.<sup>189</sup> Nearly \$150,000 worth of American goods was on the market but there was little demand, except at greatly reduced rates. Nine months later the great depression of trade was still in evidence and it was predicted that it would not recover for some time.<sup>190</sup> This is not to argue that Indians did not continue to participate in the slave trade. The slave trade was so integral a part of the whole commercial organization that even Sir Bartle Frere, sent to negotiate the ending of the slave trade, was led to admit that it was "nearly impossible.. for any one so employed [ in East African trade ] to feel sure that no part of his commercial transactions is connected directly or indirectly with the slave trade".<sup>191</sup> By 1861 it was claimed that three-fourths of the immovable property on the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba was either already in the possession of the Indians or mortgaged

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MA:65/1851, p.143. His opinion was that British protection if it had been extended to the Indians, could only be withdrawn if they continued to trade in slaves. The governments of Kutch or of Muscat could forbid them from participating in the slave trade. In the case of the former, "the British paramount authority may be exercised with a view to bringing them to punishment". There was thus no legal basis for Hamerton's actions on his own.

- 189 Ward to Clayton, 20/7/1850, NAM: T100/2, NEMA, pp. 465-6.
- 190 Ward to Abbot, 13/3/1851, NAM: T100/3 McMullan to Shepard, 28/1/1851, P.M.: Shepard's Papers 44(iv), NEMA, pp. 481, 474-5.
- 191 Frere, "Memo regarding Banians...", 31/3/1873, FO 84/1391, P.P. LXI (1873).

to them.<sup>192</sup> As the value of landed property was estimated by the amount of slave labour,<sup>193</sup> any move towards the emancipation of slaves in the possession of the Indians could not but greatly effect the whole economy of Zanzibar. The close inter-relationship between the slave and the ivory trade, especially in the southern hinterland,<sup>194</sup> and the fact that the Indians played such a crucial role in the financing of the caravan trade as a whole would imply the inevitable involvement in the slave trade not only of the Indians but also of American and European merchants who supplied the imports and took ivory, copal, and cloves, sugar and sesame from slave-worked plantations. Their sudden withdrawal from any activity that was directly or indirectly linked with the slave trade would have caused nothing less than the total collapse of the whole economy.

Some of the British consuls at Zanzibar, however, were not guided by any consideration of the well-being of the local economy. Rigby's "invariable" reply to the local apprehensions about the effects of the abolition of the slave trade was "Rather should this island, with all that it contains, sink beneath the sea, than that cruel, detestable traffic in human beings should continue".<sup>195</sup> The appointment of Rigby therefore inaugurated another period of violence against the persons

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192 Rigby to Forbes, 12/7/1861, I.O.L/P & S/9/38, pp. 195-7.

193 Pelly to Forbes, 1/2/1862, MA: 47/1862, pp. 391-404.

194 Ward to Clayton, 20/7/1850, NAW: T100/2, NIEMA, 466.

195 Russell, 95.

and property of the Indians without the least consideration of the legality of his actions. Early in 1859 he commenced emancipating domestic slaves in the possession of the Indians, without regard to the latter's precise origin.<sup>196</sup> Instead of any talk of compensation as the British West Indians slave owners had received, the Indians were fined \$10 for each slave emancipated, and forced to give a plot of land for their sustenance. The owners were imprisoned in irons for a few days in the Fort, publicly flogged in cases of allegations of cruelty, and deported. Mohammed Wazir, a man of considerable property, who claimed that he was born at Zanzibar as was his father, and that his grandfather had come to Zanzibar from Johanna, had his 20 slaves emancipated by force in 1860 and he was himself deported.<sup>197</sup> Perhaps the most prominent Indian merchant caught in Rigby's net was Kamu Maji, who was trading in ivory and cotton cloth with the Americans on a large scale in the 1840s and who, by 1860, had several plantations. If the brief life-histories of the 79 slaves on his plantations were accurate, they reveal his commercial activities extending over 16 years, and in the majority of the cases, the slaves were with him for several years before they were emancipated. The long business career of Kamu Manji was brought to an abrupt end by

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196 Rigby to Anderson, 1/4/1859, NAI: 27/5/1859-F.C.-20  
Russell, p.80.

197 Rigby to Anderson, 1/2/1860, MA: 158/1860, pp. 251-77.  
Churchill to Gonne, 7/8/1867. MA: 125/1867, pp. 2-33.

his deportation.<sup>198</sup> By September 1860, 5,606 slaves belonging to "natives of India, whether British subjects, or nationals of the protected states", had been emancipated. In his old age Rigby claimed to have emancipated "upwards of 8,000 African slaves" but there is no contemporary evidence to confirm it.<sup>199</sup>

The anti-slavery crusaders applauded the proceedings of Rigby whose illness deprived him of the chance to survey the grave economic consequences of his actions. We can do no better than quote his successor, a senior officer in the Indian diplomatic service, who could hardly have been accused of being "soft" on slavery.<sup>200</sup> Pelly attempted to view Indian slave-holding as one aspect of the economy which could not be disturbed without grave repercussions to the whole. The emancipation of the slaves held by the Indians largely on the mortgaged plantations had the effect of greatly reducing the value of landed property. One estate which was worth \$30,000 a few years previously could not fetch \$8,000 in 1862. The Indians thus sustained heavy losses, and there was no compensation. These emancipations were taken by the population as a prelude to a general abolition throughout the State, and hence no one could advance money on the

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198 Contracts of various dates in P.M.: Waters Papers, IV, Waters Notes, entries for 11/3 and 25/3/1843. Fabon's Ledger, 1844-9, pp. 13; 20, 21. P.M.: Fabon's Papers. Rigby to Anderson, 11/2/1860, MA: 159/1860; pp. 219-53. NAI: 5/1860-Pol. Pt. A.-291. FO CP, 2314. Russell, p.86.

199 Rigby to Anderson, 14/9/1860, MA: 159/1860, pp. 267-73. Russell, p.95.

200 Russell, pp. 202, 204, describes him as "complaisant" but she was writing a biography of her father.

security of any landed property. Credit was shaken and the circulation of money was checked.<sup>201</sup> This was precisely at the time when the Zanzibar economy was experiencing a serious recession as a result of the American civil war and the spoilation of country shipping by British cruisers. It was not surprising, therefore, that the departure of Rigby was celebrated as a day of thanksgiving by the whole population, and even Seyyid Majid, who owed his throne to Rigby, was not sorry to see him go.<sup>202</sup> Rigby's three successors adopted a more cautious line based on clearly defined rights and regulations.

The first step was therefore to define precisely the jurisdiction of the British Consul over the Indians. It was soon discovered that legally he had no jurisdiction over even British subjects at Zanzibar who should normally obey local laws, unless that jurisdiction was formerly conveyed to the Consul. However, a tradition had grown up whereby foreign nationals exercised self-government in all matters civil and criminal, through their consuls.<sup>203</sup> Secondly, a clear distinction had to be made between natives of India under British control and those from the "protected States". Over the latter, under existing treaties, the British Consul could have no jurisdiction. It was admitted even by Churchill, who was much

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201 Pelly to Forbes, 1/2/1862 MA: 47/1862, pp. 391-404.

202 Jablonski to Thuvencel, 7/9/1861, MAE: P.Z., II, 6.368.

203 Playfair to Gombe, 21/7/1865, MA: 52/1865 pp. 173-4.



closer to Rigby in his approach to the question, that Rigby had no right to deprive the Kutchis of their slaves.<sup>204</sup> The only legal approach could therefore be to ask "the natives of the "Protected States" upon their arrival whether they desired to place themselves under British protection or under the jurisdiction of the Sultan.<sup>205</sup> Thus the "Rules and Regulations" framed in 1867 called upon all <sup>the</sup> Indians to register themselves at the British Consulate, failing which they "shall not be entitled to be recognized or protected as a British subject". Only in the case of a natural-born British subject was it added that "such neglect shall not be held to exonerate him from the consequences of any act contrary to the law which, as a British subject, he is bound to obey".<sup>206</sup>

The return to legality immediately revealed how much British influence at Zanzibar had been built on the illegal exercise of authority by Hamerton and Rigby. Kirk was to comment that "while the natives of Kutch established in Zanzibar were under our sole protection and jurisdiction we hold the most wealthy and enterprising among the mercantile community and our influence was in all matters paramount". However, as soon as the Kutchis were allowed to exercise their right to choose their protectors, every new arrival from Kutch chose the protection of Seyyid Majid. During the four years previous to 1869 only nine Kutchis registered

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204 Churchill to Gonne, 14/8/1868, FO 84/1292. FO CP, 2314.

205 Memo by Playfair, 18/11/1865 FO 54/22.

206 "Rules and Regulations framed under H.M. Order in Council", 28/2/1867, paragraphs 20 and 21. FO 84/1279.



themselves at the British Consulate. Seyyid Majid "confidently looked forward to the time when British influence would be reduced to an equality with that of France and other foreign powers".<sup>207</sup>

It was this diminution of British influence that pinched the new British Consul, Churchill, into a new wave of activity seeking to reverse the whole trend. He realised that his legal weakness was based on the recognition of the distinction between British subjects and the Kutchis.<sup>208</sup> His argument that domestic slavery had been abolished in Kutch provided little legal foothold on the question of the holding of slaves by Kutchis at Zanzibar.<sup>209</sup> In 1867 he attempted to establish a precedent by arresting a native of Kutch, the head of a gang of thieves, who had not inscribed his name at the consulate. When Majid surrendered him to Churchill, the latter took it as a proof of the confirmed British jurisdiction over all the Kutchis.<sup>210</sup> Churchill then went on to argue that though, the Kutchis had forfeited British protection in Zanzibar by failing to inscribe their names in the register at the British Consulate, they were nevertheless under the jurisdiction of the British Consul as all other British subjects. He added, "if I have not hitherto acted

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207 Kirk to Gonne, 29/4/1869, MA: 154/1869, pp. 20-6, s. to s. 16/8/1869, MA: 152/1869, pp. 65-73.

208 Russell, p.204.

209 Churchill to Gonne, 22/12/1867 FO 84/1279.

210 Churchill to Majid, 10/12/1867, FO CP, 2314. MA: 135/1868, pp. 38-9.

up to this principle it is out of deference to your Highness." <sup>211</sup> The ridiculous nature of the argument was apparent not only to Sayyid Majid but also to the Bombay Government. <sup>212</sup>

Fortunately for Churchill the wind in Indian policy had changed. The Indian Government was now determined to interfere "with a high hand, and authoritatively, to put down slave dealing when carried on by the subjects of a Native State...(guided by) the very first principle of public morality and justice."<sup>213</sup> Palmerstonian flame was burning bright indeed, but the approach was to be legal. It was argued that since Kutchis were not British subjects, they could be put on the footing of quasi British subjects in matters in which the British government was concerned, such as slave dealing. <sup>214</sup> The Bombay Government therefore suggested that "if it is expedient" to interfere in the question, it could only be done by an understanding with the Rao of Kutch "in virtue of which his subjects will be legally, as well as morally liable to our jurisdiction, and in turn, entitled to our protection as well as compensation." <sup>215</sup> The Rao was induced in April 1868 to issue a proclamation that "the claims and disputes of... (Kutchis) who permanently reside

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211 Churchill to Majid, 18/12/1867, ibid.

212 Majid to Churchill, 21/12/1867; Gonne to the Foreign Secretary of India, 31/3/1868, FOCP 2314; M.A.: 135/1868 pp. 42-5, 52-3.

213 Seton-Karr to Gonne, 6/11/1868, FOCP, 2314.

214 Temple to Secretary to the Bombay Government, 22/4/1868, FOCP, 2314.

215 Gonne to the Foreign Secretary of India, 31/3/1868, FOCP, 2314.

in, or frequent for the purpose of trade, the ports of Muscat and all other places in Africa, Arabia and the Persian Gulf... should be settled by the British Government in the same way as if it were its own subjects."<sup>216</sup> British legal effort to acquire undisputed control over the Indians in East Africa had at last succeeded, and when Seyyid Majid questioned the Rao's authority over Kutchis in East Africa, especially those born and bred there, Kirk threatened "to bring matters to a crisis by asserting at once the full powers given me under the Rao's proclamation... that besides he would stand in open antagonism to the will of H.E. the Governor of Bombay".<sup>217</sup> Majid's climb-down marked the final surrender by the Zanzibar authorities of control over an important portion of the local population.

What is the economic significance of this legal battle which lasted over a period of thirty years? It has been argued earlier<sup>218</sup> that very significant economic privileges were granted to the Indians which were denied to other foreign traders, the most important of which was the freedom of trade to the Mrima coast. These privileges had permitted them to emerge as the most powerful economic group in East Africa with a crucial role in all branches of the economy. A large percentage

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216 Proclamation of the Rao of Kutch, 24/4/1869, FOCP, 2314.

217 Kirk to Gomme, 16/8/1869, FO 84/1307.

218 See pp.

of the plantations on the islands were mortgaged to them; a considerable amount of capital was advanced by them to caravan traders in the interior, or to Arab, American and European traders at Zanzibar; finally, the Sultan himself was indebted to the Indian Custom Master to the extent of \$327,000 in 1860 and by 1871 his debt stood at \$540,000.<sup>219</sup> This group had now been re-converted into a class of foreign traders, but with a very significant difference. The very exercise of the newly acquired British authority over them entailed the protection of their extremely privileged position in the economy. There was never any discussion as to the surrender of the privilege to trade to the Mrima, while they retained the right to call on the British Consul to relieve them of a tax which other foreign merchants had refused to pay.<sup>220</sup> On the other hand, the British Consul was enabled to exercise a powerful influence on the financial administration of the State by his control over the Customs master and other Indians. In 1862, at Pelly's "dictation" and with his support, the Custom master could refuse to advance a loan to the Sultan, and made sure that no other Indian would advance the money. He also dictated the rate of payment of

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219 Rigby to Anderson, 18/9/1860, M.A.: 33/1861, pp. 261-71. Kirk to Bombay Government, 28/8/1871, FO 84/1344. Rigby to Forbes, 12/7/1861, India Office: L/P & S/9/38 pp. 195-7. He says that three-quarters of the immovable property was either already in the possession of "British subjects" or mortgaged to them.

220 Kirk to Gomme, 7/6/1869, 20/8/1869, I.L.: L/P & S/9/48, pp. 573-8.

the customs rent to the Sultan.<sup>221</sup> In 1871 Kirk decisively intervened to frustrate Burghash's attempt to displace the firm of Jairam Sewji from the post of the farmer of customs. As he admitted, "it was immaterial to me who held the customs so long as they remained in the hands of a British subject", a clear expression of his determination to exercise power in the State. His intervention was occasioned by the rumour that Burghash wished to repudiate the debt to the firm which, Kirk himself confessed, had been deliberately built up by the firm to secure them the lucrative post at the next auction of the farm. Although the farm was then worth \$450,000 to \$500,000, Kirk forced a compromise by which \$340,000 of the debt was waived while the rent of the customs was allowed to remain at the same level of \$300,000. Burghash was thus the net loser of at least \$410,00 over the five year period. Even Bombay was led to protest at this uncalled for interference which harmed <sup>the</sup> Zanzibar treasury<sup>222</sup>

This incident was only one instance of the deterioration in relations between the Arabs and the Indians at Zanzibar. It exacerbated the natural strains between different economic groups in the society, especially between the debtor and the money lender. The transformation of the Indians from an indigenous to a foreign economic group, through which an irresistible

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221 Pelly to Seward, 10/3/1862, MA: 23/1862, pp. 277-86.

222 Kirk to By. Govt., 24/8/1871, 28/8/1871, 10/4/1872, FO 84/1344.



foreign power could exercise effective control within the state, could not but alienate that group. The Indians, in turn, were made entirely dependent on the protection of the British. Such was the degree of alienation that the Arabs showed complete indifference to the emancipation of slaves held by Kutchis in 1869; in 1870 Burghash went so far as to issue a proclamation confining Indian traders to the city which, of course, was protested against by the British consul as contrary to treaty; and in 1871 Burghash hesitated in allowing the custom master to fit out a military expedition to Unyamwezi in case that opened up a way to Indian encroachment into the interior.<sup>223</sup> One of the pillars of the commercial empire, free Indo-Arab cooperation, had thus disintegrated altogether.

#### 4. The Slave Trade and the Economy of the Commercial Empire

The slave trade always formed an integral part of the economy of the commercial empire, but its role was not static. It had responded to the blocking of the south-eastern branch to the Mascarenes by diverting the slaves to the clove plantations of Zanzibar and Pemba.<sup>224</sup> The restriction imposed on the export of slaves to the north by the 1845 treaty gave a further stimulus to the agricultural development of the islands and the coastlands,<sup>225</sup>

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223 Churchill to Gonne, 25/2/1869, FO 84/1307; FO CP 2314. s. to Wedderburn, 17/11/1870, FO CP 1936, pp. 3-4. s. to s. 25/3/1871, FO 84/1344. The proclamation was never enforced, de Vienne to MAE, 20/10/1871, CCZ, III, ff. 282-3.

224 See pp.

225 Loarer, "Esclaves", AOM: O.I.5/23(5)



though illicit export of slaves continued in view of the fact that no effective measures were taken to enforce the treaty until the 1860s. This sector of the economy was thus being gradually transformed from an export of labour to one that sought to retain labour at the coast to produce plantation commodities for export. This transformation involved changes in the economy which made it more complex so that, though the value of slave trade itself and the revenue derived from it may be small, any attempt to meddle with it involved wide-ranging repercussions throughout the economy.

This transformation and the resulting complexity of the economy went largely unnoticed by British anti-slavery crusaders, as did many other characteristics of the East African slave trade which was, in so many ways, different from the more familiar West African trade. Born of the economic consideration that slave labour was no longer profitable to the British imperial economy,<sup>226</sup> the anti-slavery movement was converted into a national crusade to convince or coerce the world that what was economically right for England was morally binding on the rest. It adopted its own global viewpoint, refusing to be confused with complicated local variations despite the repeated assertion of the more knowledgeable that "we have not now to deal with anything which at all resembles the old West Indian

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276 Williams, passim. Burton (1872), 456.

or the more recent U.S. slavery".<sup>227</sup>

Perhaps it is not accidental that the anti-slavery propagandists - for the most part, naval officers - deliberately exaggerated the size of the East African slave trade as a justification of their own action. Sullivan, who had an experience of the slave trade on the East African coast extending over twenty years, could say that:

the population is thus being reduced at the rate of upwards of 180,000 a year, not more than a third of which, however, reach the chief markets on the coast.<sup>228</sup>

In other words, he suggests a figure of about 60,000 slaves reaching the coast. Moreover, he attempts to show that the trade had more than doubled between 1860 and 1870 by entirely misquoting Kirk's information to support his case.<sup>229</sup> Fortunately some

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227 Steere (1871), 5, 15.

228 Sullivan (1873), 19.

229 Dr. Kirk had apparently reported that the tax on slaves for the years 1867 and 1868 amounted to £270,000 or £56,000. The Foreign Office had previously calculated the income at £20,000, based on a figure of 20,000 slaves. Sullivan assumed that the former figure represented the revenue for a single year, 1867-8. He then arbitrarily places the £20,000 figure as the revenue for 1860, and the £56,000 for 1870. Sullivan, 19-20, 262, 348. I have not been able to see Kirk's original report and there appears to be some mistake. He gives the revenue from the slave trade for 1871, when the legal traffic amounted to 17,392 slaves imported to Zanzibar, at only £44,512. For 1868 the total legal slave trade of East Africa shows only 14,944 slaves. Kirk to FO, 25/1/1872, FO 84/1357.

very precise figures are available for the 1860s. The following table sets out all the available figures for the whole trade with carefully calculated averages which give a figure of less than 20,000 as the total number of slaves reaching the coast to which may be added a small percentage of contraband which passed outside the knowledge of the efficient and self-interested network of the Indian farmer of customs. The table clearly demonstrates that there was no such increase as claimed by Sullivan. It is indeed hard to understand the reliance placed by some of the modern historians in the exaggerated figures of such anti-slavery propagandists.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> Alpers (1967) 11. Alpers, in Zamani, 245.

TABLE TWO: THE EAST AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE - 1860/1-1870/1<sup>231</sup>

Year	1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
	Exported from Kilwa		Imported into Zanzibar		Total		Total		Total		Total		Total	
	Zanzibar	Elsewhere	Zanzibar	Elsewhere	Zanzibar	Elsewhere	Zanzibar	Elsewhere	Zanzibar	Elsewhere	Zanzibar	Elsewhere	Zanzibar	Elsewhere
1859/														19,000
1860/1														19,000
1861/2														14,000
1862/3	13,000	5,500			18,500									12,000
1863/4	14,000	3,500			17,500									14,000
1864/5	13,821	3,000			16,821									15,000
1865/6	18,344	4,000			22,344									
1866/7	17,538	4,500			22,038	19,558	1,108			20,576				25,076
1867/8		3,000												
1868/9		3,000								11,944				14,944
1869/70		3,000												
1870/1		3,000												
1871/2						14,392	3,000			17,392				23,392 ?
Average to the nearest '00	15,300	3,600			19,200	15,100	800			15,900				19,500

DISTRIBUTION

Year	Retained in Zanzibar	Re-exported from Zanzibar			Total
		Pemba	Lamu	Elsewhere	
1866/7	11,753	2,389	5,038	1,396	8,823
1867/8					7,810
1868/9	4,089				7,855
1869/70					5,009
1870/1		1,060	2,637	775	4,472
1871/2	8,930				8,462
Average to the nearest '00	8,800	1,800	4,100	1,200	7,100

231 The table is based on a combination of the following sources:

1859 - Rigby to Secretary of State for India, 1/5/1860, FO 54/17.

1860/1-1862/3 - Playfair to Bombay Government, 1/5/1864,

I.O. : L/P & S/9/41, p. 305.

1863/4 - Playfair to By. Govt., 1/1/1865, FO 54/22, p. 6.

1864/5 - Seward to By. Govt., n.d., H.A. : 73/1866,

pp. 7-25.

He gives the value, but assuming the average

The table obviously cannot show what proportion of the slaves were illegally transported north of Lamu which was the limit set by the treaty of 1845. It was precisely this traffic which the British navy was charged to stop and its size was a matter of speculation among all the contemporary observers. This lack of precise information permitted the crusaders to so exaggerate its size as to provide a viable argument for total suppression of the trade as a whole. Devercux, for example, estimated that from twelve to fifteen thousand slaves

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of \$10 used by Playfair for 1864/5, the number can be worked out.

- 1862/3-1866/7 - Churchill to Gonnc, 4/4/1868, FO 84/1292; quoted in Burton (1872), 347, and in Sullivan, 437. These are Kilwa's export figures only.
- 1866 Seward to FO, n.d. [3/1867] FO 84/1279.
- 1866-1870 Kirk to FO, 27/6/1871, FO 84/1344. It gives the re-export of slaves from Zanzibar to Pemba and the Kenya coast. Kirk to FO, 1/2/1870 FO 84/1325, and quoted in Colomb, 34, gives the total import of slaves to Zanzibar for 1868, and the average direct import of slaves from Kilwa which he had adopted for the five years.
- 1871 Kirk to FO, 25/1/1872, FO 84/1357. He allows 3,000 slaves coming from the Mrima coast as a result of the civil war in Usambara at the death of Kimweri. His total is unacceptably high. See note 236.

Average has been worked out wherever feasible (columns 1, 2, 6 & 12). For columns 4 & 5 proportions have been worked out using the 1866 figures. The total export from Kilwa calculated by adding the averages in columns 1 & 2. The number of slaves retained at Zanzibar deduced by subtracting re-export from total import (columns 12 & 6); Total slave trade of East Africa calculated by adding the average import into Zanzibar and the average of Kilwa's direct export to places other than Zanzibar (Columns 2 & 6). The only parts of the trade left out of this total is the small export of slaves from the Mrima ports to the north without touching Zanzibar, and the contraband trade both to the north and Madagascar which appears to have been small and irregular.

were taken to the north.<sup>232</sup> The Select Committee recommended forcible suppression of the trade on the basis of their calculation that 37,000 slaves were smuggled to the north between 1867 and 1869.<sup>233</sup> That august body, however, failed to determine the basis of that calculation, and to inquire if there was a sufficient amount of shipping to carry that many slaves. Assuming that every dhow trading between East Africa and Arabia was a slaver, and that each of these carried the average of 28 slaves who were, in fact, liberated in the 127 dhows captured between 1867 and 1870, this trade alone would require 476 dhows. And yet the proportion of slave dhows in the total shipping was only about 3 per cent. In 1870 Commodore Heath laid a wide-spun web to search every dhow that passed by stationing warships all along the south Arabian coast, near Socotra and down the African coast. He believed that "very few dhows could have passed the squadron" undetected. More than 400 dhows were searched and only 11 were found to contain a total of 958 slaves.<sup>234</sup> It is, in fact, noticeable that for three consecutive years of active suppression the number of slaves liberated remained steady at about 1,000;

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232 Devereaux (1869+, 111.

233 Quoted in Sullivan, 444-5.

234 *Ibid.*, 307-8. Colomb, 47. Doughty to Cockburn, 11/6/1871 FO 84/1346. Doughty boarded 120 dhows of which only 3 were captured. British Parliamentary Papers [B.P.P.] vol. 7, Session No. 420, p.52.



but the number of dhows captured decreased, and the average number of slaves per dhow progressively rose:

Year	Dhows captured	Slaves liberated	Average no. of slaves
1868	66	1,097	16 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
1869	32	1,117	35
1870	11	958	87 <sup>235</sup>

The message is clear, With increasing risk of capture by British warships the slave trade to the north was becoming a more specialised activity, while other dhow owners were unwilling to compromise their dhows for a small number of slaves. The remarkable stability of the number of slaves captured would seem to suggest, in view of Heath's confidence in the effectiveness of his blockade, that the export of slaves to the north of Lamu was closer to 1,000 than to the wild estimate of the Select Committee.

The Committee, in fact, had erred by such a wide margin by placing reliance on an extremely low demand for slaves to maintain the supply of slave labour within East Africa. They apparently adopted the figure of between 1,700 and

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235 Lloyd, 278. B.P.P., loc.cit.

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4,000,. whereas the discussion above should lead us to expect a much larger number of slaves retained on the coast and on the islands for agricultural development. Berg believes that the major sector in the economy of the Kenya coast was the development of grain and coconut plantations which relied on slave labour, and large quantities of grain were exported to the South Arabian coast.<sup>237</sup> During the 1850s a considerable impetus was given by an intense competition between the French and the Germans for sesame from ~~the Lamu archipelago~~.<sup>238</sup> In 1853 Sunley reported that there was a great demand for slaves at Lamu "where cultivation is on the increase".<sup>239</sup> It is in

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236 Sullivan, 440. Kirk worked out what he called the normal local demand for slaves and the exceptional demand to replace those who had died during the 1869/70 cholera epidemic.

	<u>Normal demand</u>	<u>Exceptional</u>	<u>Total</u>
Zanzibar	2,000	4,000	6,000
Pemba	1,000	2,000	3,000
Mombasa/Malindi	600	1,000	1,600
Lamu	500	500	1,000
Benadir			3,000
Transferred to Arabia, Persia			6,792
Mortality in dhows & immediately on landing			2,000
	<hr/> 4,100	7,500	23,392

I do not know how Kirk could determine the illegal traffic to the north so accurately. But then Kirk himself admitted that he placed little reliance on these figures.

237 In Samani, 138. Learer, "Lamoo", AOM: O.I.2/10(2) D.

238 Berche to MAE, 2/5/1860, CCZ, II, 199-213.

239 Sunley to Clarendon, 23/8/1853, FO 84/919.

this context that the re-export from Zanzibar of about 4,000 slaves to Lamu, and more than 1,000 to the rest of the Kenya coast, as well as part of about three and a half thousand directly from Kilwa, assumes its proper significance. A small percentage of these probably were smuggled to Arabia, and perhaps a larger proportion to the Benadir either by sea, or land when the British warships were causing a havoc.<sup>240</sup> There is little doubt, however, that a substantial proportion of the slaves who went north of Zanzibar and Pemba was retained on the coast for the production of oleaginous grains and cowries on which much of French trade with Zanzibar depended.<sup>241</sup>

The table also suggests that a more substantial proportion of the slaves was retained on the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba which stimulates a more detailed examination to determine the kind of activities they were involved in, their condition and the probable rate of demand. It will be recalled that the seasonality of the clove crop, and the need to bring in the harvest quickly at a time when no additional labour could be procured on hire, demanded the maintenance of a very large number of slaves on the plantations.<sup>242</sup> There are unfortunately, no precise figures of the population of the islands and of the proportion of

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240 Colomb, 455. Kirk to FO, 20/6/1871. FO 84/1344.

241 Pere Leon des Avancheres to Cochet, 16/3/1858. CCZ, II, 135.

242 See p.

of slaves in it. Ruschenberger had estimated in 1834 that the population of Zanzibar was 150,000, of whom two-thirds were slaves.<sup>243</sup> Putnam (1847) gives the same figure for the total population, but says that 60,000 of them were slaves.<sup>254</sup> Both assume a very high figure for the total population which is closer to the modern population of the island. The population of the island has shown a sizeable growth over the past century, especially since the introduction of modern medicine, and they now carry a very high average density of 250 per square mile.<sup>245</sup> Their assumption may thus be faulty. In 1839, Burgess estimated that there were about 17,000 free indigenous Africans on Zanzibar island, and about as many slaves,<sup>246</sup> which would suggest a total population closer to 40,000 for the island. As we have seen, however, the cultivation of cloves was expanding precisely at this time, and we shall probably not be too far out if we estimate the slave population in the 1860s at about 40,000 in Zanzibar.

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243 Ruschenberger, I, 64.

244 NEMA, 400-1.

245 Report on the Census of the Population of Zanzibar Protectorate (1960), 20.

246 Missionary Herald, XXXVI (1840), 118-21. Hart (1843), found the estimate of the population varied from fifty to two hundred thousand, NAI: 8/5/1834-P.C.-25. Hamerton thought the population of the two islands was 550,000, nearly twice the modern figure; and that only a fifth were considered free. Hamerton, to Aberdeen, 2/1/1844, FO 84/540. Cogan thought three-quarters of the population were slaves, FO Memo, 29/1/1846, FO 54/10. Rigby estimated the population of Zanzibar island at about 250,000. Rigby to Anderson, 10/5/1859; MA: 188/1859, pp. 31-60.

It has been asserted that only 5% of the slaves bore children and that deaths, export and desertion amongst the agricultural slaves was from 22 to 30% per annum so that the whole work force had to be renewed every four years.<sup>247</sup> These assertions cannot easily be reconciled with contemporary descriptions about slavery in East Africa.<sup>248</sup> The British Consular doctor with considerable personal experience of the conditions at Zanzibar and author of the only substantial treatise on slavery there,<sup>249</sup> describes how the slaves were encouraged to contract marriages and live in families. Each agricultural slave had his hut and a "kondo" where he cultivated his own food during the two consecutive days of the week which he enjoyed as his own by right.<sup>250</sup> Both he and Burton describe an apparently sizeable class of "wazalia", born in slavery who occupied a much higher position among the slave population. He was often entrusted with a responsible job, such as the "factor" or agent of the caravans going into the interior, and was sometimes

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247 Rigby to Anderson, 21/3/1860, NAI: 5/1860-Pol.A.-289. Hamerton to Aberdeen, 2/1/1844, FO 84/540. Burton (1860), II, 377; (1872), I, 463-4.

248 See for example, Churchill's and Waller's admission in Sullivan, 298, 358. Shepard's account of Zanzibar and Putnam's Journal, in NEMA, 282, 427-8.

249 Christie (1871), 31-64. Most of this paragraph is based on him, with supporting evidence from other sources. It is summarised in Colomb., 369-77.

250 Devereaux, 107. Putnam says 3 days. NEMA, 427-8. Playfair, to Anderson, 15/11/1863, FO 84/1204. Kirk to FO, 22/9/1871, FO 84/1344.

manumitted.<sup>251</sup> If a slave woman bore a child of her master the child was free and legitimate and had equal rights with children by regularly wedded wives. The mother could not again be enslaved by Sunni law, and by practice among the Ibadhi Umanis. Christie believed that in 1870 there were as many free or freed Africans as the Hadimu or indigenous Africans, including at least part of the four or five thousand slaves liberated from Indian ownership by Rigby. Moreover, the slaves had a right to personal property, including the ownership of other slaves, and some in the city hired out gangs of their slaves to the foreign merchants. Some of the slaves emancipated by Rigby used up their indemnification money in buying slaves.<sup>252</sup> It is possible that with increasing prosperity, a larger number of the population was able to afford slaves. Even the indigenous Hadimu owned slaves who helped them in their cultivation.

It appears, therefore, that there was an open end to the slave bag of Zanzibar. Some of the slaves passed through stages out of agricultural work to supervisory, trading or domestic roles in the city, and even freedom. With prosperity, a larger number of slaves could be absorbed on the small agricultural plots of the Hadimu; or into the force of nearly a thousand domestic servants of the Indians and Europeans in the city; or into coastal navigation in which slave crews were the general rule;

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251 Burton (1860), II, 369-70 (1872), I, 463.

252 Pelly to Forbes, 1/2/1862, MA: 47/1862, pp. 391-404.



or into the ten to fifteen thousand strong class of day labourers, porters and artisans in the city employed in picking orchilla weed, cleaning gum copal, preparing copra and transporting goods for American, European and Indian merchants, and sharing their pay with their masters.<sup>253</sup> In this context, it is, therefore, not surprising to see that there was an annual demand of fresh slaves into Zanzibar of about 9,000 of whom some were undoubtedly stolen or smuggled by the northern Arabs.

It is, indeed, amazing that the fateful committee, sitting in judgement in London over the East African slave trade, did not show any awareness of the complexity of the issue they were handling. The opening paragraph of their report states:

That the slave-trade in negroes on the East coast of Africa is now almost entirely confined to a trade between the dominions of Zanzibar on the one hand, and the coast of Arabia and Persia and the island of Madagascar on the other hand, the principal and by far the largest portion of the traffic being in the former direction.

They go on to argue that,

the transport of slaves between the island and the coastal dominions of the Sultan of Zanzibar has afforded a cover for the foreign slave-trade... that during the years 1867, 1868 and 1869, there were captured by the squadron 116 dhows, containing 2,645 slaves; while... dhows carrying 37,000 slaves must have evaded capture, making the captures about 6.6 per cent only.

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253 Christie (1871), passim. Devoreux, 369.

This is the linch-pin of their whole argument. They were looking for a monster and failed to notice a mouse. They proceeded to recommend that:

It be notified to the Sultan of Zanzibar, that... Her Majesty's Government, unless further securities can be obtained for the entire prohibition of the foreign slave trade, will feel itself compelled to abrogate the treaty, and to take such further legitimate measures as it may find necessary to put an end to all slave-trade whatever, whether foreign or coasting.

The Committee piously concluded that they did not believe:

the Sultan of Zanzibar would be ultimately a loser by the abolition of the trade.<sup>254</sup>

The Committee did not attempt to explain the economic basis of their doctrine that the abolition of the slave trade would lead to a rapid development of trade and how the changeover from slave labour to free was to be effected. Coupland attempted to make up at least part of the latter deficiency, but the attempt was as valiant as the result ridiculous. He brandished the results of the emancipation of Indian-held slaves by Rigby and concludes that there was "no evidence of a 'slump' in Indian business".<sup>256</sup> We have, in fact, already surveyed the grave economic consequences of Rigby's actions,<sup>256</sup> Christie

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254 Sullivan, 431, 440, 444-5, 447-8, 449-50.

255 Coupland (1939), 174.

256 See p.427-9 above.

added that Indian-held estates had to be disposed of to Arabs, undoubtedly at a heavy loss to the Indians since they were without labour.<sup>257</sup> Undaunted, Coupland goes on to cite even more embarrassing examples of British sugar planters on Johanna and Zanzibar. Sunley hired slaves from Johanna owners to work his plantations, and the Foreign Office felt compelled to give him the choice between giving up "the employment of slaves in your service or be prepared to resign your commission" as British Consul. He chose the latter.<sup>258</sup> The case of Fraser is, as Coupland says, "the most remarkable of them all" - remarkable, indeed, in the ingenuity with which he sought to use slave labour. In 1864 he concluded an agreement with the Sultan to set up a sugar plantation for which Fraser would supply machinery and supervisory staff, and Seyyid Majid the land and 500 slaves. The partnership soon broke down. He therefore contracted with four Arab slave-owners for the employ of 400 slaves who were to be "at the sole disposal" of Fraser & Co. for five years, and thereafter to be freed. The Arabs received on delivery their wages for one year which amounted to \$24, a fair average price of slaves in the market. The slaves were thereafter to receive their "wages" at the rate of \$6 per year for the remaining four years. The Law Officers without hesitation pronounced the

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257 Christie, 50.

258 Coupland (1939), 174-6. Playfair to Anderson, 15/11/1863, NAI: 5/1864-Pol." 170. FO 84/1204; TBGS. XVII, 256-68.

contracts were illegal. The British Consul induced Seyyid Majid to emancipate the 711 slaves by paying for them, and recommended that a portrait of the Queen be sent to him in appreciation. I am not sure if the irony of Coupland's remark escaped its author. He concluded, "The Arab slave owners had got their money. And Fraser had got his slaves" [*by italics*] <sup>259</sup> In view of its history, it is hard to understand Frere's reasoning that Fraser's example showed how the economy could survive the abolition of the slave trade and slavery. <sup>260</sup>

By the time the Committee issued its report the threat that it implied to the economy had already become a reality on the East Coast of Africa. Until 1873 the British were officially committed to the "policy of restriction" based on the Moresby Treaty of 1822 which forbade the export of slaves to the south of the latitude of Cape Delgado; on the Hamerton Treaty of 1845 which made illegal the export of slaves to the north of Lamu and its dependencies; on the informal "permission" granted by Seyyid Said in 1850 to British warships to enter "bays, creeks, and rivers south of Keelwa" to destroy "barracoons" and slavers; and on Majid's proclamation of 1864, forbidding all slave trade

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259 Coupland (1939), 178-9. Seward to FO, 20/2/1867 & enclosures, FO 84/1279. Playfair to FO, 3/5/1865, & enclosures, FO 84/1261. Seward to Gonnc, 14/7/1866, 25/10/1866, FO 64/1261. The cruellest cut of all, Stanley reported "H.M. will not sit for the Sultan".

260 Frere's Memo. regarding Capt. Fraser's Estate, 10/2/1873, PP. LXI (1873), 805-6.

from 1st January to 1st May when the Northern Arabs were most active.<sup>261</sup> Though some of the subjects and the Sultan's revenue were pecuniarily affected by these measures, it is remarkable that all concessions relating to the export of slaves outside East Africa were granted with little resistance on the part of the Sultan. The implication is that the Zanzibar authorities were decreasingly interested in the foreign slave trade which was not considered worth defying the British about.

Rigby's tenure, however, inaugurated the era of violence and illegality in British relations with Zanzibar on a broad front. His influence is apparent in the series of illegal captures by British warships whose actions he applauded rather than reprimanded.<sup>262</sup> There was, however, a lot in the mental make-up of the Navy, its West African experience, and the procedure adopted for the suppression of the slave trade which contributed to that violence. Devereaux was quite unabashed about his attitude:

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261 Coupland (1939), 153. Wyvill to Hamerton, 1/5/1850, Hamerton to Wyvill, 8/5/1850, FO 84/815; s. to Malot, 5/8/1850, NAI: 20/12/1850-P.C.-31. Bedingfield to Seward, 20/12/1867, M.A. 127/1867, p.62. He sheepishly admitted in 1867 that he thought the concession applied to the whole coast. Pelly to Stewart, 8/3/1862, FO 84/1179, f. 383-4. This document suggests that Majid had unilaterally undertook to suppress himself the trade between January and April from 1862, but the proclamation was not made until 1864. Playfair to Anderson, 15/6/1863, FO 84/1204; Majid's Proclamation 1/1/1864, FO 84/1224.

262 Devereaux, 339.

We are not to be over-particular in the reading of antiquated slave treaties, but are to pass with the mythical coach-and-fours through their many provisos... to carry out our little piratical intentions, and do the John Bull to our heart's content at the expense of "Jack Arab".<sup>263</sup>

Moreover, under the British system of granting bounty money, the captors were pecuniarily interested in each capture.

As Devereux puts it:

Fortunately within the last few years captains have been appointed to this little squadron whose private fortunes have needed a little repair; at all events, not deterred them from making a little more prize money.<sup>264</sup>

A bounty of £5 for each slave, or £4 per ton was granted for vessels with only a few or no slaves. There was no mixed commission, or a Vice Admiralty Court closer than Aden, Bombay, Mauritius and Cape Town<sup>265</sup> where the accused, if they knew their rights, could expect to defend themselves. Even if these distant courts were to pronounce against the captors, dhow owners were often satisfied with a compensation that amounted to only a third of the tonnage money the ship received for such a dhow.<sup>266</sup> Thus, "every detained vessel [that] appears to be unfit to proceed' [to the port of adjudication], is formally surveyed, formally reported unfit, and very informally scuttled or burnt... The captain of the ship is judge, jury and executor."

263 Ibid., 57, also 339.

264 Ibid., 114, Playfair to F.O. 1/6/1864, FO 84/1224.

265 Pelly to Bombay, 30/10/1861, M.A. 47/1862, pp. 36-40, Devereux, 71.

266 Colomb. 194, fn. 1. For a 135 ton dhow, if condemned empty, they would receive £540 or \$2565. He felt the Arabs would be satisfied with a compensation of \$900.



Without defence witnesses, adjudication proceedings were equally simple and informal.<sup>267</sup>

Finally, when they came into the Indian Ocean, they "expected to find 'fittings', tanks, planks, shackles, rice, if not fettered negroes". As Sullivan admitted, he had "never seen a fettered negro in any of the dhows", and there were no such fittings in those dhows.<sup>268</sup> Secondly, they were expected to make a clear distinction between the slave trade and domestic slaves, many of whom were employed as sailors, and whose transport was not illegal.<sup>269</sup> The problem was made worse by the unavailability of reliable interpreters, and by the temptation placed before them of getting part of the "prize bag" and bounty by making captures.<sup>270</sup>

The resulting abuses during the decade would hardly justify a conclusion that British anti-slavery movement was "among the three or four perfectly virtuous pages comprised in the history of nations".<sup>271</sup> In 1861/2 and 1862/3 out of the 43 dhows captured, 38 had no slaves. Even some of those that had been slaves were captured within the legal area between ~~India~~

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267 Ibid., 74, 262-3.

268 Sullivan, 55, 155, Kirk to FO, 2/5/1870, FO 84/1325; s. to s. 17/7/1871. FO 84/1344.

269 Colomb, 59.

270 Kirk to Bombay, 28/3/1871, FO 84/1344. Churchill to F.O., 17/11/1870, FO 84/1325.

271 Lloyd, xiii, quoting Lecky.

Lamu and Kilwa.<sup>272</sup> The "Sidon" captured the "Bashair" with a valuable cargo of spices and grain, and with only four Africans who spoke Arabic. She was under the Turkish flag but Capt. Crawford lied that she was under the Zanzibar flag. Fortunately Turkish authorities were able to extract a compensation of £5771 at Mauritius.<sup>273</sup> The "Gorgon" captured two alleged slave dhows at Lamu and when the governor protested, her captain wrote a letter of apology which, however, was not to be given to the governor "until he had promised to give one in return, accepting the apology, and admitting the legality of capture of the two dhows". Devereaux imagined that they had "played the parts of diplomatists in true Arab fashion with the success of which I did not feel proud". He added, "I believe some of the captains used a great deal of blue cloth and other presents to legalise their captures".<sup>274</sup> The British Consul Pelly believed that of a dozen captures by the "Gorgon" in 1861, only one was engaged in illegal traffic.<sup>275</sup> In 1868 and 1869, 98 dhows were destroyed, but how many were legal

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272 Lloyd, 248-9. Rigby to Forbes, 4/10/1861; I.O.: L/P & S/9/38. Derche to MAE, 23/4/1861, P.Z.II, 290-302. Webb to Seward, 10/9/1861, NAW: T100/4; NEMA, 518-9. Pelly to Oldfield, 22/11/1861; Krapf to Pelly, 10/4/1862, in Pelly to Stewart, 22/4/1862, MA: 47/1862, pp.48-61, 102-9. Devereaux, 80-2, 137.

273 Rigby to F.O. 10/3/1862, FO 54/19. Playfair to Anderson, 23/5/1863, FO 84/1204.

274 Devereaux, 392-3. Playfair to Anderson, 23/5/1863, FO 84/1204

275 Pelly to Oldfield, 22/11/1861, M.A. 47/1862, pp. 48-61.

captures? The "Star" in 1868 destroyed 14 at Brava and 10 at Merka at a time when it was impossible for any dhow to reach Arabia. Very few slaves were taken from them, of whom many were domestic slaves, and 36 free men were later returned to Zanzibar from Bombay. All of the dhows were duly condemned at Aden, even in the case of one dhow in which the Judge admitted that all the slaves were domestic, but the dhow did not have papers and she was entering a slave port where slaves were being then run".<sup>276</sup> The "Daphne" had visited the dhows at Merka only a short time previously and had found all free of suspicion, except one which was destroyed. And yet the "Star" destroyed 10 soon thereafter. For two of them, the owners, a sister of the Sultan and a British Indian subject, were able to obtain compensation because of their position. For the rest the Foreign Office refused to order a review of their cases.<sup>277</sup> In 1869 the "Nymphe" captured 16 dhows to the south of Zanzibar which were duly destroyed as unfit to be brought to Zanzibar where a Vice Admiralty Court had finally been established at the end of 1867.<sup>278</sup> Kirk gave decisions in favour of the

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276 Russel to Gonne, 29/1/1869, NAI: FD-11/1869-Pol.A.-217.

277 Kirk to FO, 3/5/1869 & enclosures; s. to s., 4/5/1869, I.O.; L/P & S/9/48, FO 84/1307. s. to s. 2/5/1870, 6/5/1870; F.O. to Churchill, 18/11/1870, FO 84/1325. Kirk to FO, 25/3/1871, 17/7/1871; FO to Kirk, 23/8/1871, FO 84/1344.

278 Seward to FO, 30/5/1867, Churchill to FO, 30/11/1867, FO 84/1279. Seward had raised the objection whether a fixed commission was not more appropriate but it was summarily dismissed. F.O. to H.M. Consul, Z., 10/10/1867, N.I.: 5/1868-Pol.A.-31.

ship for the capture of 10 dhows, and against her for two. He ordered a compensation of \$5,539, which was enough to unnerve Capt. Meara. On the pretext that he must proceed to Seychelles while the cases for the remaining were still pending, he obtained their papers and went to Aden to get their condemned. In the case of ~~at~~ least three of them Kirk could see no proof that they were engaged in the slave trade. The Foreign Office admitted the bounties could not be awarded for those 3 dhows; but there was no talk of their compensation.<sup>279</sup>

The British were, moreover, accused of indiscriminate looting, and in the words of no less a person than Devereaux:

by the vast heap collected I should think that hundreds of Arabs have been divested of their finery... This irregular manner of looting is disgraceful...<sup>280</sup>

The destruction of Arab lives and property naturally enraged the local population, and threatened the C.M.S. mission near Mombasa and the very life of the British consul at Zanzibar.<sup>281</sup> The threat to Zanzibar's coasting trade was even more grave. Several hundred dhows were destroyed during the decade of

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279 Kirk to FO, 16/4/1869, 8/8/1869, L/P & S/9/48. s. to s. 18/7/1869, MA: 152/1869, pp. 113-4. s. to s. 22/5/1869, FO 84/1307. s. to s. 16/12/1870, 2/5/1870, 3/5/1870, 8/6/1870, 28/12/1870, FO 84/1325. s. to s. 28/3/1871; F.O. to Kirm, 7/10/1871, FO 84/1344.

280 Devereux, 128-9, 80-2, 391-2. Skinner to Gonne, 7/5/1869, NAI: 9/1869-Pol.A-27/8.

281 Playfair to FO., 1/6/1864, FO 84/1224. Pelly to Bombay, 10/1/1862, M.A. 47/1862, 203-10, 387-97.

which only a portion could have been shown to have been justified. Even Devereux found it hard to defend "the system of indiscriminate and careless destruction of dhows", and added that "from my experience on the coast, I am sure that many a legal trader is unjustly captured".<sup>282</sup> Wylde at the Foreign Office put his finger at the exact sore spot when he commented that "the system on which our naval officers are now acting... would not be tolerated for a month by any European power".<sup>283</sup> But the commercial empire in East Africa was placed on a different footing, and was itself unable to protect its interests. That protection had to be sought from the tricolor from as early as 1863, and the French looked to the day when their flag would fly over the whole coasting trade of East Africa.<sup>284</sup> The commercial empire had both ends of the candle

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282 Devereux, 41-2, 343. He added "I should be sorry to put on paper what I know. The name of the British sailor is sadly compromised by acts which can come under no other name than piracy. I believe many a man has been hanged for doing far less".

283 Wylde's minute, 1/7/1869, FO 84/1307; Bennett (1963), 34.

284 Playfair to Russell, 20/9/1863, FO 84/1204. Playfair to Jablonski 9/1863, MA 60/1863, pp. 159-62. Jablonski to MAE, 27/9/1863, CCZ II, 311-5, 11/5/1867, CCZ III, 279-82. Kirk to FO, 23/4/1867, FO 84/1307. Foreign traders at Zanzibar created a great demand for dhows under the French flag to ensure the security of their dhows. Kirk to Bombay, 8/4/1870, FO 84/1325. An additional reason was the lower 5% import duty the French Consul demanded and obtained for vessels under the French flag, whereas formerly coastal dhows paid a variable duty of a higher rate. Thus  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the vessels under the British flag opted for the French. The British demanded the same privilege, and there was a loss to the revenue of £20,000.



burning, with British destruction on the one hand and French encroachment on the other. The process, however, was not to continue for long - the hurricane of 1872 destroyed most of the remaining dhows under the red flag.<sup>285</sup>

##### 5. The Commercial Empire Undermined

By the early 1870s the commercial empire had shown that, though not immune to serious economic problems and natural disasters, it was economically a thriving concern. In view of the unabated demand for African commodities and the unrestricted supply of manufactured goods, the economy was able to shift from one market, or one source of her import to another with relative ease. However, as the hinterland expanded half way across the continent, problems of control over the lifelines became more crucial. The problems of organizing efficient and large caravans, ensuring their security, and working out a modus vivendi with the intervening peoples became more complex. The problems of the early 1870s suggested that there was perhaps an increasing need for a transformation of the commercial empire, which might perhaps involve a more permanent and coordinated political administration in place of the merchant "republics" of the interior.

The Empire's inability to provide that administration and to consolidate its hold on that hinterland, was perhaps

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285 Kirk to Bombay, 22/4/1872; Kirk to F.O., 26/12/1872, FO 84/1357.



an instance of its more general failure to safeguard its interests even at the coast. The structure that had endowed economic prosperity was proving less able to ensure the independence of the empire in an era of determined expansion of European influence on the eve of the Scramble. Since 1862 nominal independence had been ensured by the so-called "treaty of mutual self-denial" by which the British and the French had agreed to recognize the independence of Zanzibar.<sup>286</sup> The treaty had lulled the French into insensitivity, while the British continued to extend their influence by the back door. By the end of the 1860s the Indians had been subjugated and the slave trade strangled. Rumours of imminent cession of Zanzibar to the British were prevalent, based not so much on fact as on the undoubted British dominance at Zanzibar.<sup>287</sup> The threat this posed to Zanzibar, which was already a reality, appears to have been recognized by everybody except the British. The much-maligned Majid thus embarked on the project to build Dar es Salaam. Coupland has described this measure as "impulsive", and Kirk failed to understand why the Arabs should feel insecure on the island, "for no Power is desirous to possess it as things are". Steere thought that Dar es Salaam offered better security against a naval invasion from Muscat. The French thought Majid wished to create a

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286 Coupland (1939), 33-6.

287 Spear to Seward, 16/10/1862, NAH: RG 84:Z:C.3; Misc. Rec. Bk. 1860-71. Ropes to Seward, 1/7/1865; NEMA, 536/7. Chambre du commerce, 3/1/1869, & enclosures, ANF: F 12/6190. Min. agric. et commerce to MAE, 16/1/1869, MAE to Min. of agric. et commerce, 18/1/1869, P.Z., III, 218.

major terminus for the long-distance trade routes and a centre from which to extend his dominion on the continent. He may thus have begun to think about the transformation of the commercial empire into one more political. There is little doubt that Majid wished to establish a centre where the Arabs, and the headquarters of the commercial empire, could retire when their position on the off-shore island "became untenable, especially if the supply of labour was to be cutoff".<sup>288</sup>

As it happened, Burghash abandoned the project immediately on his accession, and thus committed a substantial portion of the economy and the fate of the empire to the continued transport of slaves across the narrow channel, and to the independence of the small island fortress. To this extent it can be argued that Majid was more far-sighted in the recognition that in the dawning age of the Scramble, the mainland port rather than the off-shore island was, in the long run, the natural centre of the empire. When the hurricane of 1872 wiped out much of the Arab shipping and more than four-fifths of the clove trees,<sup>289</sup> Burghash energetically set off on a

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288 Coupland (1939), 36-7, Sullivan, 343. Report by Conte Amiral Penhoat, 21/1/69, AOM: O.I.5/65. Sutton, "Dar es Salaam": (1970), 3-4. Also Seward's letter of 10/11/1866, reprinted in *ibid.*: 201-2. Webb to Sec. of State, 20/8/1868, T100/5. s. to s., 21/8/68 P.M.: Ropes Papers. Colomb, 450-1.

289 Bertram to MAE, 16/4/1872; Guillios to MAE, 10/12/1873, CCZ III, 304-7, 344-9. Kirk to Bombay, 22/4/1872, FO 84/1357, Webb to 2nd Asst. Sec. of State, 30/9/1873, NAW: T100/6.

massive programme of re-planting, rather than make it an occasion of the crucial transfer.

For the sands of the commercial empire were running out. The distant rumbles tht Majid had heard had, by 1870, found an ominous expression of an argument for the occupation of Zanzibar. Admiral Heath advocated that Zanzibar be made "a centre from which British civilization can radiate into that part of Africa"<sup>290</sup> If, as Coupland strenuously argues, British opinion at this time regarded the British empire as already big enough and eschewed all projects of further territorial expansion,<sup>291</sup> the proposals of the 1871 Committee entailed, in their execution, the erosion of the last vestiges of political independence and integrity of the commercial empire. When Barghash tried to discuss the terms of the treaty, he was curtly told by the British representative: "I have not come to discuss, but to dictate". When he refused to bow to the British demand to sign the treaty abolishing the slave trade altogether, the British showed their iron fist: they threatened a total blockade of Zanzibar.<sup>292</sup> Even if his navy had survived the hurricane, Barghash was in no position to resist. The fate of the commercial empire had been sealed.

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290 Sullivan 315-6, 323. Lloyd, 262.

291 Coupland (1939), 167-9.

292 Ibid., 209, 199-200.

APPENDIX A. BOMBAY TRADE FIGURES 1801/2 - 1869/70 (in RS.'000)TRADE WITH EAST AFRICA

Year	I M P O R T S				E X P O R T S		Total	Ivory	Ivory:	Total
	Ivory	Copal	Cloves	Total	Cot.Gds.	Total	Ivory	Export	Home	Ivory
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1801/2				300				67		
1802/3	227	1		282	158	184	334		235	
1803/4	264	10	4	320	88	114	464	8	437	
1804/5	201	1	3	300	134	179	346	10	285	
1805/6	256	10	3	326	269	301	376	45	290	
1806/7				439			267			
1807/8	228	41		375	190	295	354	4	318	
1808/9	310	18	3	488	188	297	451	11	445	
1809/10	327	2	6	433	162	277	429	10	364	
1810/11	234	9		382	140	213	380		334	
1811/12	231	12		307	99	164	303	6	216	
1812/13	154	12		227	68	120	334		222	
1813/14	82	3		332	112	150	191		169	
1814/15	137	11		219	169	260	244	15	142	
1815/16	264	28		445	174	275	408	4	340	
1816/17	291	33		459	201	295	422	34	354	
1817/18	104	31		462	91	136	193		127	
1818/19	115	35		317	82	97	334		282	
1819/20	205	20		445	144	223	368	66	223	
1820/21	310	27		668	210	358	491	96	310	485
1821/22	157	27		428	171	323	237	47	95	148
1822/23	153	34		397	140	345	262	77	216	351
1823/24	190	30	11	264	162	231	407	273	164	444
1824/25	303	47	1	466	201	337	511	428	151	596
1825/26	245	54		378	208	360	374	306	151	549
1826/27	318	31		441	325	460	499	177	314	610
1827/28	207	26	15	314	227	364	457	109	230	470
1828/29	199	5	8	407	212	354	306	201	136	420
1829/30	160	10		386	222	381	226	233	183	423
1830/31	228	70		390	121	305	396	406	154	633
1831/32	201	54	2	313	110	252	376	143	192	423
1832/33	204	78	1	352	157	256	357	212	203	455
1833/34	175	97		323	209	283	483	453	163	641
1834/35	255	104	13	482	182	318	493	464	226	718
1835/36	258	234	23	559	193	375	483	424	300	894
1836/37	270	50	10	350	390	618	566	361	238	684
1837/38	438	72	63	635	347	645	672	590	301	981
1838/39	273	63	48	471	168	327	567	317	303	709
1839/40	183	32	5	255	202	402	457	371	303	752
1840/41	259	51	56	429	398	653	607	611	475	1,119
1841/42	342	1	77	577	268	490	620	450	522	948
1842/43	320	69	77	541	153	335	518	424	410	888
1843/44	546	3	204	1,002	386	769	728	435	288	890
1844/45	505	34	183	1,022	515	887	700	572	247	854
1845/46	599	119	131	1,021	391	819	769	380	302	732
1846/47	578	88	291	992	468	830	969	670	338	1,021
1847/48	610	100	223	1,180	243	749	1,004	332	345	764
1848/49	679	27	448	1,529	467	999	940	647	365	1,103
1849/50	576	69	317	1,413	537	1,176	914			789
1850/51	683	70	248	1,459	270	742	916	417	427	817
1851/52	801	41	409	1,768	395	823	1,119	866	372	1,299

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1852/53	740	68	739	2,012	196	930	955	510	257	831
1853/54	783	78	604	1,938	752	1,403	991	768		799
1854/55	744	111	828	2,305	506	926	1,048	641		664
1855/56	627	113	667	2,047	580	995	901	782		807
1856/57	1165	79	499	2,018	855	1,520	1,489	1,228		1,260
1857/58	938	97	751	2,669	665	1,331	1,446	1,144		?
1858/59	1098	106	777	3,025	565	1,359	1,497			950
1859/60	705	67	305	2,084	799	1,289	1,281	846		949
1860/61	861	104	147	1,798	416	722	1,267			?
1861/62	856	167	704	2,099	583	868	1,472	1,073		1,186
1862/63	825	305	456	2,275	1,028	1,437	1,354	487		576
1863/64	575	192	780	2,090	1,075	1,471	1,004	609		768
1864/65	901	121	472	1,773	1,222	1,753	1,451	490		741
1865/66	848	26	690	2,174	2,391	2,759	1,211	653		894
1866/67	705	60	323	1,826	1,286	1,544	1,045	521		722
1867/68	769	13	624	1,946	1,255	1,573	1,167			
1868/69	654	37	318	1,702	1,461	1,967	1,243	1,110		1,222
1869/70	854	21	543	1,727	1,324	1,660	1,149			

<sup>1</sup> Home Market: including re-export from Bombay and Surat to Gujarat and Kutch, and the difference between import and export at Surat.



## APPENDIX B

IVORY IMPORTS INTO THE UNITED KINGDOM, 1792 - 1875(IN HUNDREDS OF CWT.)

YEAR	INDIA [E.I.CO.]	W.AFRICA	E.AFRICA	S.AFRICA	EGYPT & MALTA	U.S.	TOTAL
1792		24					26
1800	4	19		1			24
1806	4	19					23
1807	1	18					22
1810		27		1			
1811		20					
1812	1	18					26
1813							
1814		21					27
1815	4	25					37
1816	2	18		2			28
1817	3	13					21
1818		19					24
1819	2	21					26
1820	6	22		1			31
1821	7	27					38
1822	4	15		1			20
1823	9	20		3			33
1824	22	27		2		4	54
1825	26	25		9			60
1826	16	23		3			45
1827	12	16		4			34
1828	9	17		2		6	36
1829	12	22		3		4	43
1830	15	31		2		4	55
1831	21	26		2			53
1832	10	17		1			30
1833	10	22		1		12	50
1834	23	26		3		10	67
1835	23	21	1	2		3	52
1836	17	24	5	1		9	65
1837	22	22	5	1		5	58
1838	21	21	2	2			49
1839	26	16	2	1		4	51
1840	23	19	1	1		6	54
1841	24	21	2	3		3	57
1842	26	15		3		13	[63]
1843	21	18	2	2		7	53
1844	30	17	1	2		1	52
1845	40	15		4	2	1	63
1846	27	14		3	7	1	53
1847	39	14		5	2	1	63
1848	17	10		4	11		46
1849	41	13	3	6	9		73
1850	34	14		11	15	3	92
1851	26	13		10	6		60
1852	44	15		9	17		91
1853	31	21		11	24	1	100
1854	32	14		7	23	1	88
1855	26	16	1	8	22	1	82



## APPENDIX B cont.

YEAR	[E.I.CO.]	W.AFRICA	E.AFRICA	S.AFRICA	EGYPT & MALTA	U.S.	TOTAL
1856	48	12		6	17		93
1857	32	16		12	22	5	96
1858	51	18		13	28	3	120
1859	23	15		11	33	2	101
1860	28	15		12	32	4	105
1861	43	14		13	19	9	109
1862	34	13		12	35	2	111
1863	25	14		22	19		91
1864	26	18	8	11	33	2	111
1865	21	21	16	9	16		100
1866	15	25	13	5	43		119
1867	5	20	8	6	46	1	102
1868	1	16		6	42	1	98
1869	1	22	12	8	73	1	139
1870	2	19	1	12	55	2	120
1871	4	29	8	11	61	3	128
1872	2	27	5	10	59		112
1873	12	31	1	11	57	2	134
1874	39	25	3	15	27	2	134
1875	36	30	7	14	29	4	163.

<sup>1</sup> Includes from S. Africa to Bab Al-Mandab, inc. Madagascar, Mauritius, Arabia and Persia.

Source: P.R.O. Customs 5, Vols. 1-14,  
Customs 4, Vols. 5-7, 9, 10, 11, 37.

## APPENDIX C

EARLY AMERICAN TRADE WITH EAST AFRICA, 1823-1833

DATE	PLACES	VESSEL	TON.	COTTONS	SPECIES	TOTAL IMPORT	IVORY	COPAL	TOTAL EXPORT
1823	Z	Fawn	(168)						
1825	Maj.	Reaper	(229)				£14,700	7,200	27,300
1825	M	Laurel	(256)			£ 500		£ 3,200	£47,900
1825/6	Z	Virginia	(137)			£ 5,900		£ 1,100	£10,600
1825	By Mus.	Ann	(204)			£ 2,600		500	£14,100
		Mocha							
1826		Nereus	(181)				£ 1,700	£ 3,500	£ 8,300
	Z	Spy	(91)				292 Teeth	700Fr.	
	Z	Ann	(204)		£40,000	£40,400	£12,500	£ 600	£42,100
1827		Susan	(138)	£ 300	6,000	£ 7,400	£ 200		
		Fawn	(168)	£ 400	3,000	11,300	£ 1,000		
		Virginia	(137)	£ 1,000	4,000	12,000			
		Reaper	(229)	£ 400	7,000	14,100			
	Z.M.	Ann	(204)	£ 2,600	4,500	8,900	£ 4,700	£ 300	£16,500
1827/8	Z	Mary Ann (N.Y.)		£10,500		21,600		£13,800	18,900
1828	Mada	Talent					£11,500		24,600
		Susan	(138)				2,800	3,500	11,300
	Mada	Fawn	(168)					6,000	9,300
1829	M	Virginia	(137)	£ 1,000		2,100	£ 6,300	3,100	14,700
	Mada	Harbinger( )						10,800	22,200
1830/1	Z.L.	Shawmut	(150)				£ 400	700	17,300
	Moz.								
1831		St. Michael							
	Moz.	Monmouth (BOS)					745 Small	2,060 Fr.	
	Z.						329 Pcs.		
	Z.	Black Warrior	(231)	£ 5,600	30,000	38,000	£ 200	13,300	24,900
1831/2		Complex	(97)				£ 2,100	400	11,000
	Maj.	Lady Sarah(106)					£ 8,000	6,100	22,300
1832	L.Moz.	Shawmut	(150)		6,000	12,700	£ 900	3,600	17,200
	Z	Tigris	(158)				£ 2,500	18,900	22,000
1832/3	Z.L.	Dawn	(N.Y.)						
1833	Z.	Lady Sarah(106)						2,588 Fr.	
	Z	Th.Perkins(157)					£ 1,200	£10,000	£11,200
	Z	Tigris	(158)						
	Z	Cipher	(147)				£ 700	18,900	22,200
	Z	Waverley	(235)				£ 5,900	7,900	13,800
	Z	Sandwich	(190)						

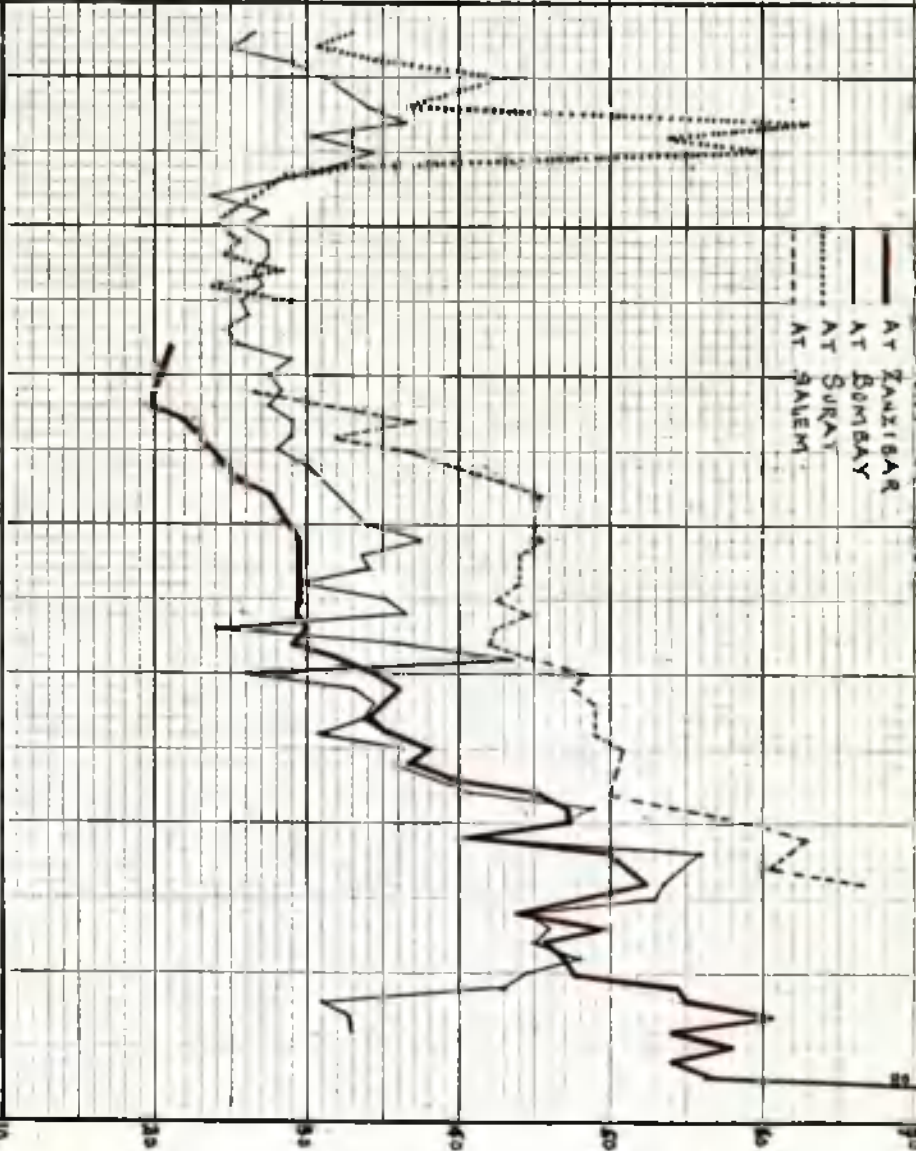
Z Zanzibar  
M Mombasa  
L Lamu  
By Bombay

Maj.: Majunga  
Moz : Mozambique  
Mus : Muscat

GRAPH II

PRICE OF TORY PER PANDA

— AT ZANJIBAR  
 — AT BOMBAY  
 - - - AT SURAT  
 - - - AT SALEM



Source: *in P. M. / 1850/1875*

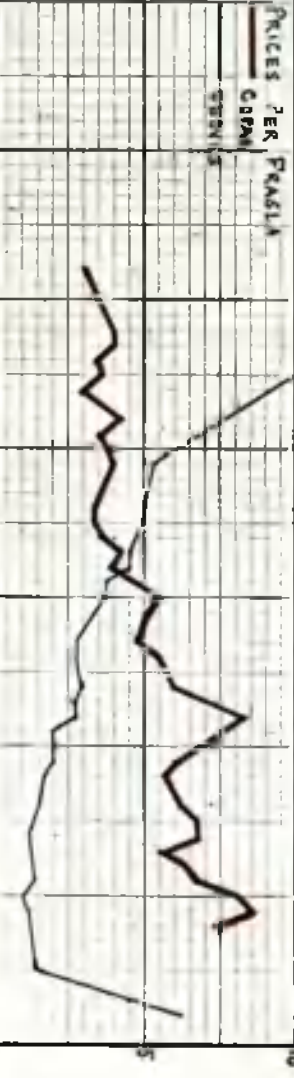
F.R. Bombay & Surat

Rest from

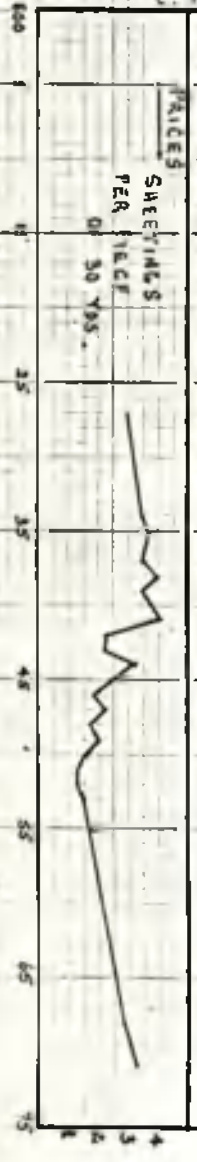
Panony Museum:

Waters, Shepard,  
West Papers, etc.

PRICES PER PANDA  
 — CASH  
 — SPENT



PRICES  
 SHEETINGS  
 PER TON OF  
 30 TONS





GRAPH III: TRADE BETWEEN BOMBAY AND EAST AFRICA 1900-1970

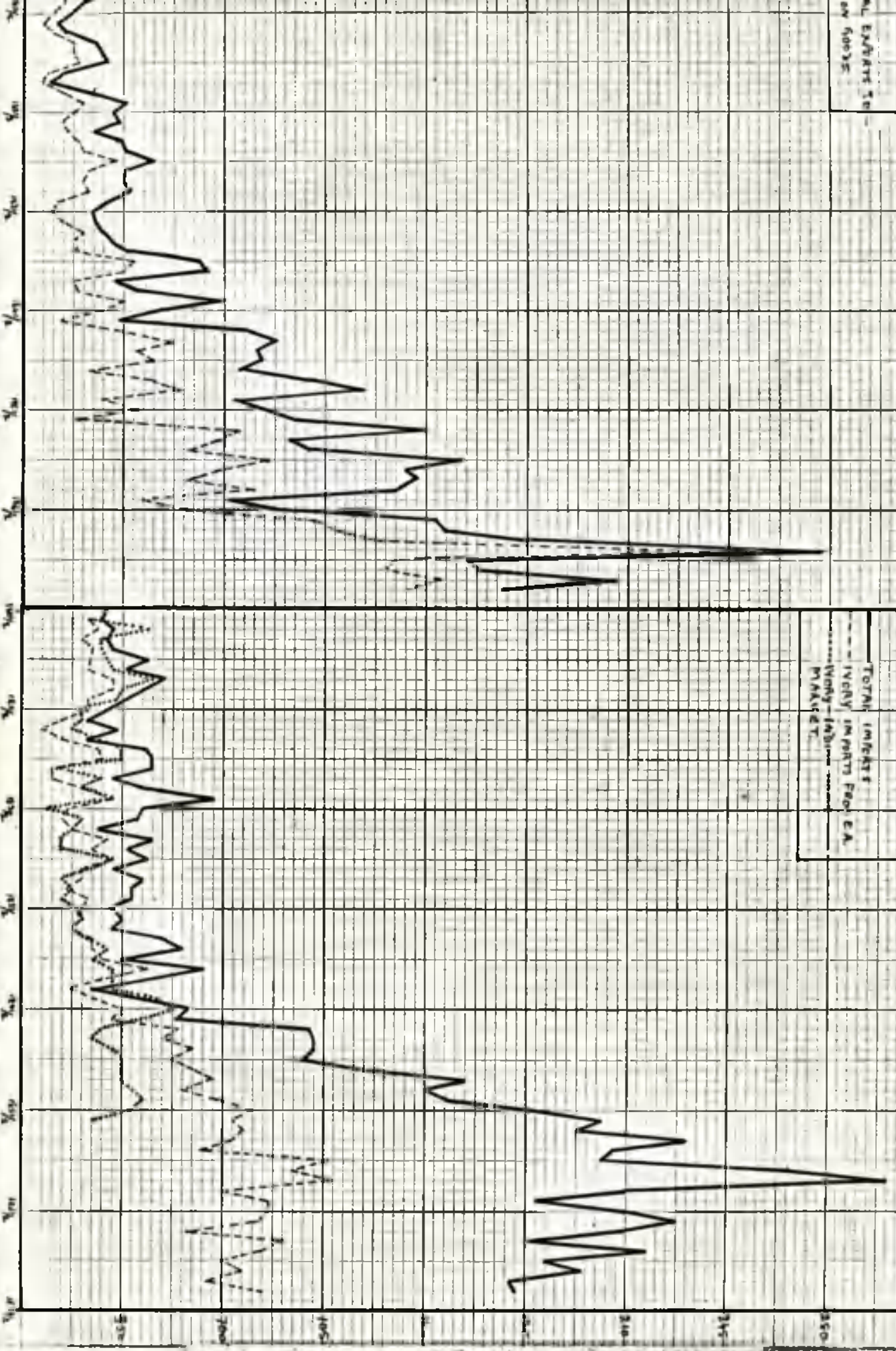
470

470

B: IMPORTS FROM EA

SOURCE: SEE APPENDIX A

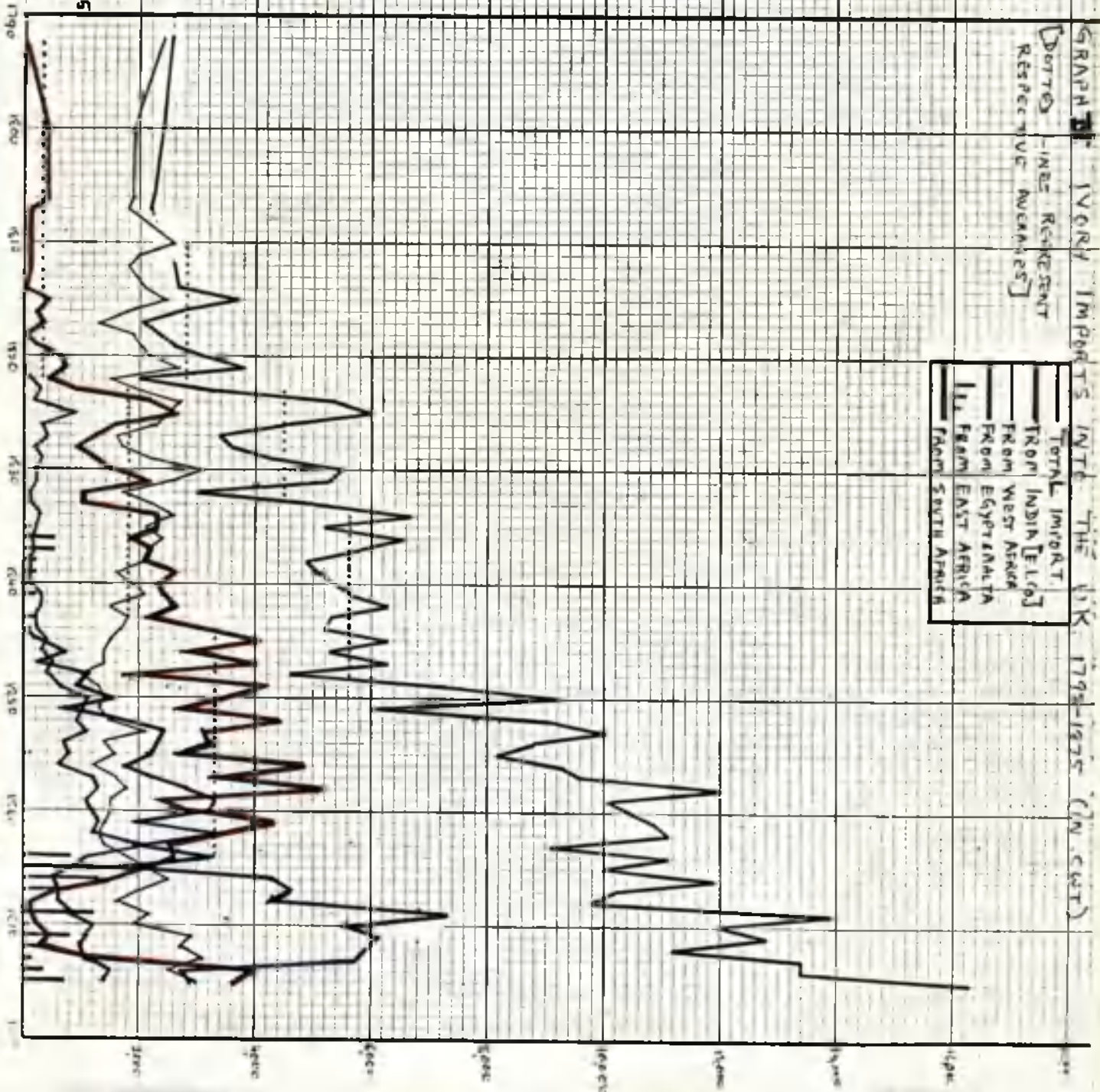
—	TOTAL IMPORTS
- - -	IVORY
.....	WOLLY - INDIA
.....	PLACED AT





GRAPH OF IVORY IMPORTS INTO THE U.K. 1792-1875 (IN CWT)  
 DOTTED LINE REPRESENTS RESPECTIVE AVERAGES

—	TOTAL IMPORT
—	FROM INDIA [Del.]
—	FROM WEST AFRICA
—	FROM EGYPT/ITALY
—	FROM EAST AFRICA
—	FROM SOUTH AFRICA



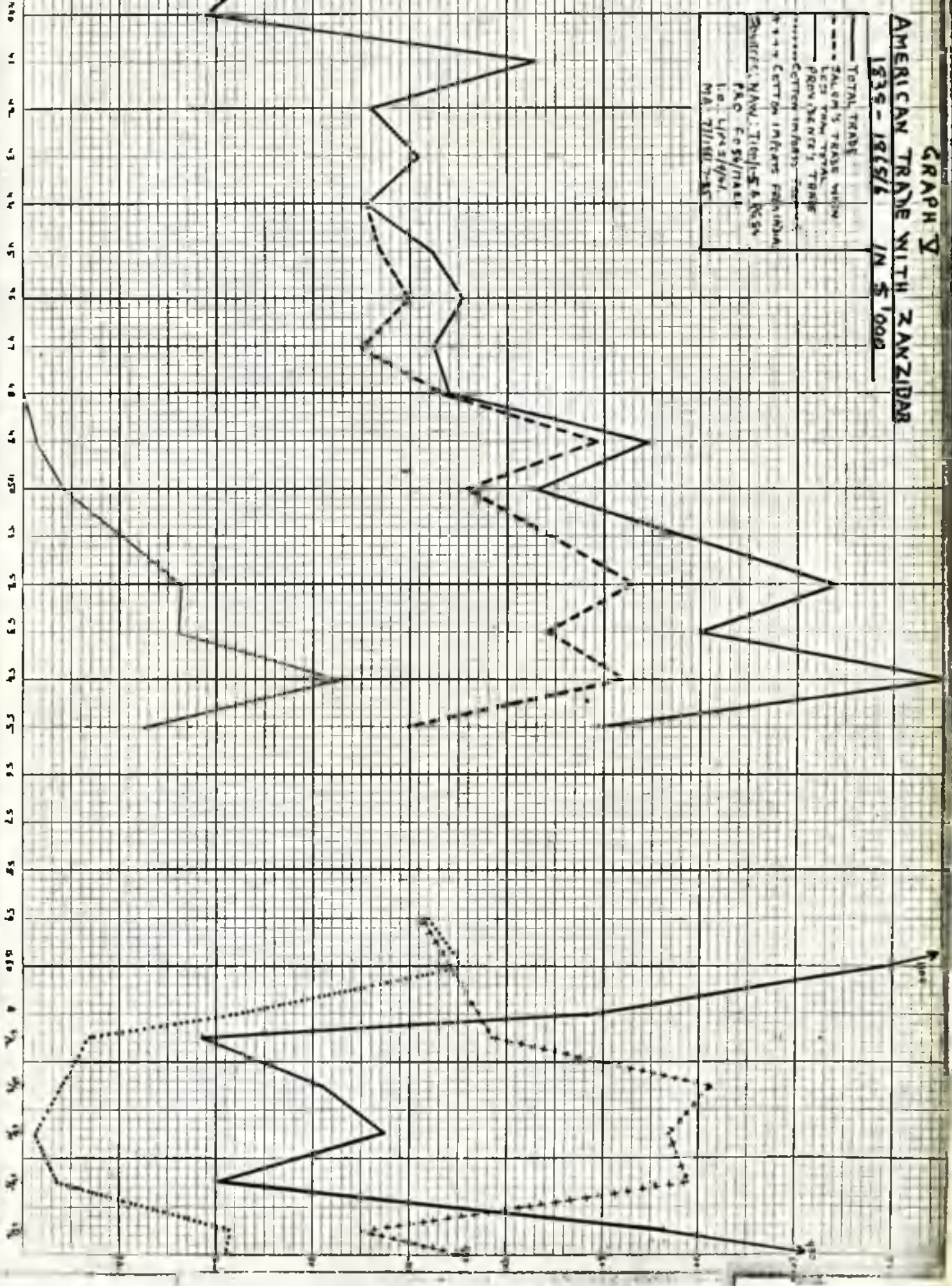
SOURCE: P.R.O.: CUSTOMS 445  
 FOR 1792-1875





# GRAPH V AMERICAN TRADE WITH ZANZIBAR 1835-1956 IN \$'000

——— TOTAL TRADE  
 - - - - - ZANZIBAR'S TRADE WITH  
 LEAD TRADING COMPANIES  
 - - - - - EXPORTS TO AMERICA  
 - - - - - IMPORTS FROM AMERICA  
 SOURCE: MANU. TRADES & COMMERCE  
 DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D.C.  
 MA. 20540-7005





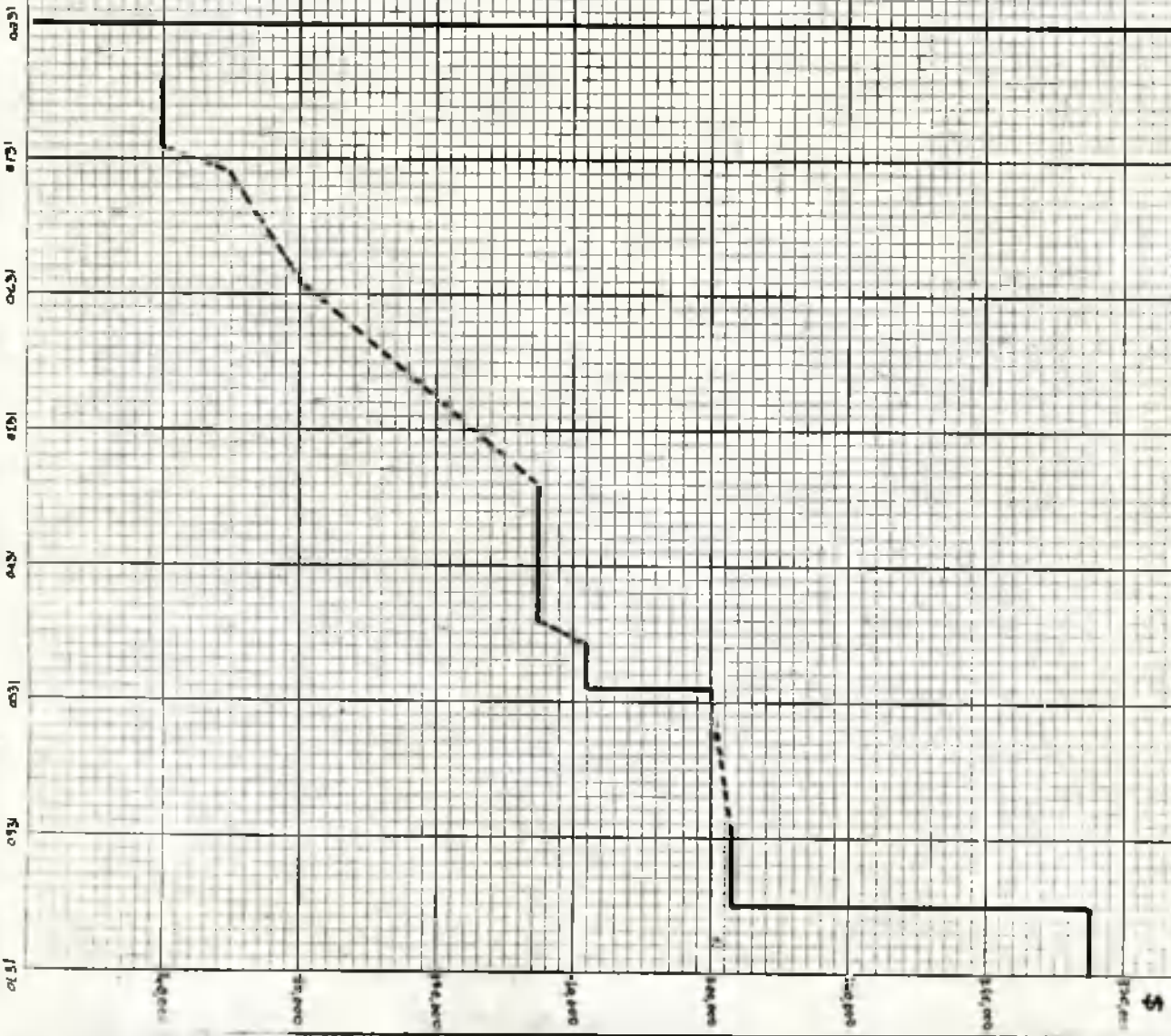
Sources: Revenue of Zanzibar 1800-1870.

- 1804 40,000 piastres. Dallons, in S.D., 198.
- 1807 Sp. \$40,000 Caledon to Vausittart, 27.6.1810. Theal, R.S.E.A., IX, 13.
- 1809 \$40,000 Fisher, R.S.E.A., IX.
- 1811 50,000 piastres, Prior, in S.D., 211. Did not visit Zanzibar.
- 1811 \$60,000 Smee, (1811a), 512. Says that the revenue was \$150,000 of which \$60,000 was transmitted to Muscat.
- 1819 80,000 piastres. Albrand, 78.
- 1834 \$110,000 Ruschenberger, I, 144-5. The price of the farm of customs only.
- 1834 \$150,000 Hart, 274-83.
- 1837 \$150,000 Waters to Forsyth, 6.5.1837. NEMA, 216.
- 1839 \$80,000 Cogan's Memo, 5.12.1839, FO 54/3. Contradicted by other sources.
- 1844 \$125,000 Shepard's Account, NEMA, 260. But contradicted.
- 1844 \$150,000 Hamerton's Report, 5.9.1844, FO 54/8, ff.138-46. Desfosses to ?, MAE:C.C.Z.I, ff.211-3.
- 1846-7 \$165,000 Ward to State Dept., 21.2.1846, 13 3, 1847, NEMA, 355, 385.
- 1849 \$150,000 Putnam's Journal, NEMA, 428.
- 1849 \$165,000 Loarer, "Lois & Coutumes de Douane," AOM:O.I. 5/23(2).
- 1849 199,000 piastres. Guillain, II, 251; III, 386, inc. \$12,000 for Pemba and \$12,000 capitation tax on the Hadimu.
- 1860-3 G.C.206,000 Rigby to Anderson, 18.9.1860, MA:33/1861, pp. 261-71, inc. 6,000 for Pemba and 10,000 tax on the Hadimu. Same for 1863. Playfair to Anderson, 15.6.1863, FO 54/20.
- 1865-70. \$310,000. Playfair to FO, 28.6.1865, FO 84/1245. Kirk's Administrative Report, 18.7.1870, FO 84/1344.



**GRAPH I THE REVENUE OF ZANZIBAR 1800-1870**

— FARM OF THE CUSTOMS  
INC. PEMA & TAX IN  
HANDS



LEVIATHAN

474



THE HINTERLAND OF ZAMBIA, C. 1913

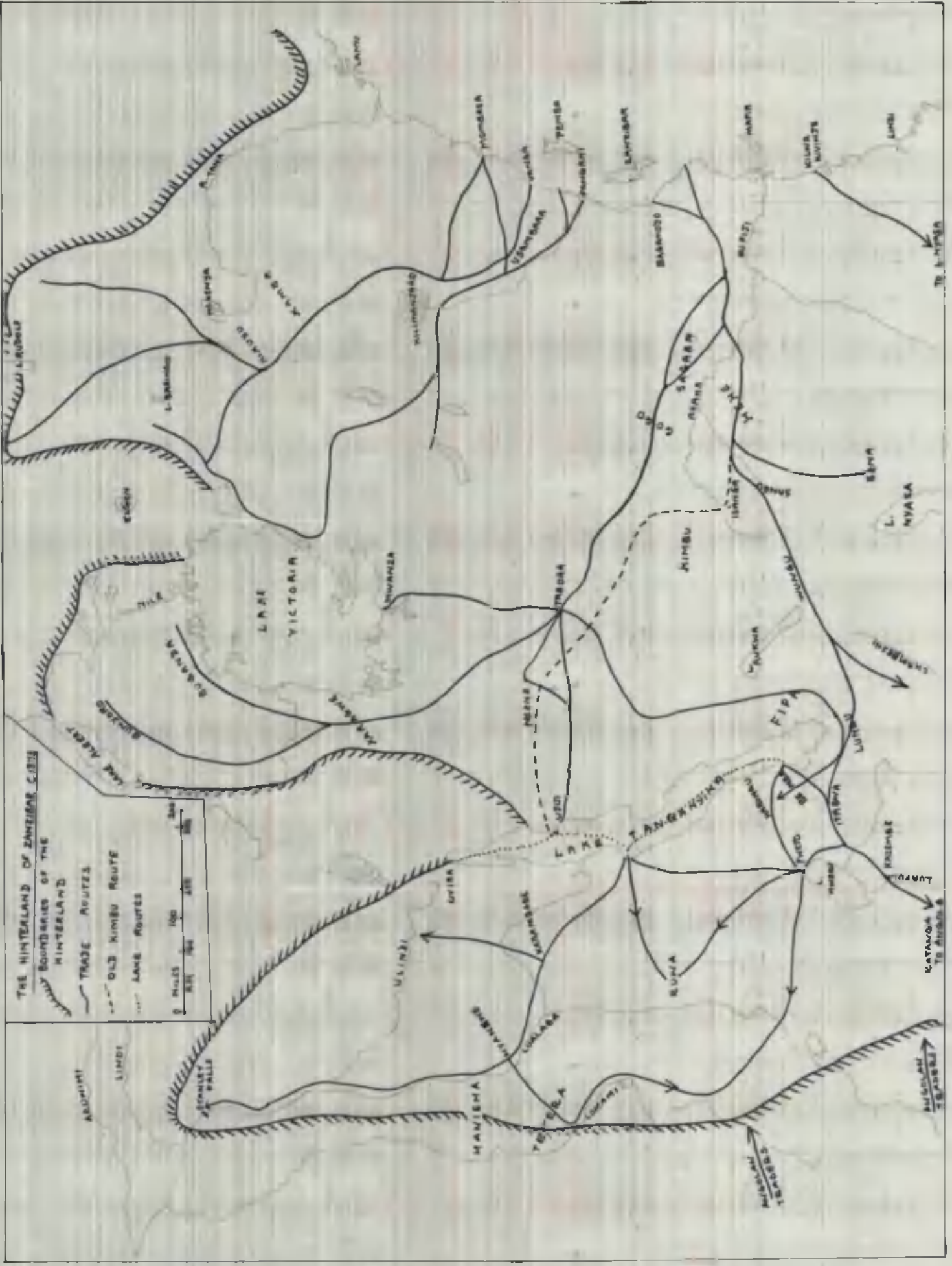
BOUNDARIES OF THE HINTERLAND

TRADE ROUTES

OLD KIMBU ROUTE

LAKE ROUTES

0 100 200 Miles  
0 100 200 Kilometers





BIBLIOGRAPHYA. Manuscript Sources1. Public Records Office, (P.R.O.), London.a. Foreign Office Records:

Series FO 54 (Muscat), Vols. 1-24A. Contains a large part of consular correspondence relating to Zanzibar until the late 1850's which does not directly relate to the slave trade. Volume 16 deals with Kuria Muria Islands and the later volumes with Muscat and Oman.

Series FO 84 (Slave Trade). A large number of volumes containing important correspondence not always exclusively about the slave trade, relating to East Africa under 'Zanzibar', 'Muscat', 'Persian Gulf', 'Domestic Various', and 'Admiralty', especially from volume 425 (1842) to 1393 (1873), including original correspondence relating to the Frere mission.

Series FO 403: Foreign Office Confidential Prints - Africa, a printed selection of Foreign Office correspondence, fairly complete for certain periods and events, and containing some documents missing from the above series.

b. Admiralty:

Adm. 1/62. Admiral's despatches, Cape of Good Hope, 1809-10. Contains Capt. Fisher's Report of a visit by H.M.S. Racehorse to East Africa 1509.

Adm. 1/63, ibid., 1810-11. Contains Capt. Tomkinson's report of a visit by H.M.S. Caledon to Zanzibar, 1809.

Adm. 52/3940. Journals of Lt. J.B. Emery.

c. Customs:

Cust. 4, Vols. 5-70, Ledger of Imports: Countries, 1809-1875.

Cust. 5, Vols. 1A-114, Ledger of Imports: Commodities, 1792-1875.

Cust. 8, Vols. 33-116, Ledger of Exports of British Merchandise: Countries, 1831-1875.

Cust. 10, Vols. 22-73. Ledger of Exports of Foreign and Colonial Merchandise: Countries, 1831-1875.

2. India Office. (I.O.), London.
  - a. Marine Records, Miscellaneous (M.R. Misc. 586). "Steam Communication with East coast of Africa. Various Reports", ----- contains Smee (1811 b.), his original journal and sailing orders, revised and published, see Smee (1811 a.). Hardy, his important and unpublished journal and "Account of Different Rivers on the coast from Qualiffe towards Mozambique". I am grateful to Dr. B.A. Datoe for bringing this important document with such an improbable title to my attention.
  - b. Political and Secret Department Records. 1778-1947. (L/P & S79/ Vols. 12, 37, 38, 40-3, 48-50). Copies of consular correspondence between Zanzibar and Bombay, partly duplicating the records in the F.O. series, and those at New Delhi and Bombay.
  - c. Bombay Commerce: Internal and External Reports (P/419/Vols. 39-106; continued under Bombay, Annual Statement of the Trade and Navigation of the Presidency, 66 (1148): 1848/9 - 1869/70). Contains tabulated trade figures, shipping and price lists for Surat and Bombay, and sometimes Bhownager, together with some general comment.
  - d. Bengal Commercial Reports. P/174/13-23. Consulted for ivory trade with Eastern Africa and the price of ivory.
3. National Archives of India (N.A.I.), New Delhi. Proceedings of the Government of India in the Foreign Department. They contain copies of consular correspondence forwarded from Bombay, arranged in files. They can be used only by consulting the excellent decennial Indexes from 1830. Consulted under Muscat, Zanzibar, Slave Trade, Kutch, Kathiawar, Gujarat etc.
 

Indian and Bombay Political Despatches to the Court of Directors, with a summary of the document forwarded to the India Office.
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- 5/23 "Mémoire sur la population, l'organisation et l'économie de l'île de Zanzibar", including Loarer's:
  - No.1. Île de Zanzibar: Population commerciale; Poids, Mesures et monnaies.
  - No.2. Lois et coutumes de Douane: Commerce sous les divers pavillons: Arabe, Nord Américain, Anglais.
  - Nos.3-6. Commerce d'exportation.
  - No.7. Merchandises d'importation.
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- 15/59 ibid., 1842-4.
- 15/60 Affaires commerciales: Propositions de M. Aubert Roche relatives au développement du commerce français en Asie et dans l'Afrique orientale 1842-53.
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- 15/62 Affaires sanitaires: Topographie médicale des îles de Zanzibar et de Quiloa, 1820.
- 15/63 Constitution de Zanzibar du 20.4.1843.
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- 21/108 Missions françaises et étrangères, 1846-1892.
- 22/124 Rapport de consul de Zanzibar sur l'arraisonnement des boutres arabes par les croiseurs anglais, 1863.

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- b. Record Group 84: Incomplete consular records collected at Zanzibar, partly duplicating but contains some documents missing from R.G. 59, especially.
  - c.3. Misc. Record Books, 1836-1910.
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  - c.24.1. Ships' Daily Journal, 1857-1916.

- c. Special Missions. Microcopy 77, Roll 152, containing letters from the State Dept.  
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9. Library of Congress (L.C.), Washington.

E. Roberts' Papers.

Volume I, Correspondence 1808-28, with the State Dept., Seyyid Said and Woodbury. Typed copies in Box VI.

Box VII; Daily Journal, 1827-8.

Shufeldt's Papers, include detailed reports of economic conditions of the Ports visited by U.S.S. Ticonderoga in 1878.

Box II. Miller's Journal (2).

Box IV. Shufeldt to Sec. of Navy, re: Zanzibar, and Description of Zanzibar.

10. Salon: Peabody Museum (P.M.) and Essex Institute (E.I.).

A large collection of private commercial papers of American merchants trading with Zanzibar. A selection has been published in NEMA.

- a. M. Shepard's Papers. (1836-53) (P.M. 60 boxes and 12 account books. E.I.: 9 account books). One of the most important collections of a principal of one of the trading groups at Salon, providing the longest series of documents for the period.
- b. M.V. Shepard's letter (1844), inserted in the logbook of the Star, an intimate account of the history and conditions of Zanzibar, at P.M.
- c. B.F. Faben's Papers. (1843-7) (P.M.: 4 boxes and 11 account books.) As one of the resident agents at Zanzibar, he provides important information on local trade and merchants.
- d. West Papers (P.M.: 30 boxes, 2 account books and microfilm 19). Papers of the West brothers of the West-Pingree group of merchants at Salon trading with Zanzibar.
- e. R.P. Waters' Papers. (1836-47), P.M.: 14 boxes; E.I.: 1 Vol. The first American consul at Zanzibar and resident agent for the West-Pingree group. Box 13 contains his 'Journals' and 'Notes'. The volume at the E.I. contains Arabic letters; daily Meteorological Observations, incorporating details of shipping; and a list of foreign vessels at Zanzibar, 1832-7.
- f. C. Ward's Papers. (E.I.: 5 account books, 2 letter books and 3 boxes). The second consul at Zanzibar and agent of the Bertran-Shepard group.
- g. Pingree Papers: A large collection still being catalogued at the E.I. and only cursorily examined.



- h. E.D. Ropes' Papers (P.M.: 3 boxes and 3 account books). One of the later consuls and commercial agents at Zanzibar, and later a merchant resident at Salon. Box 2 contains a very important table of exports from Zanzibar, 1863-7.
- i. F. Brown's Papers, (1825-90), (P.M.: 3 boxes). Miscellaneous papers of an American captain and merchant, including a copy of the table of exports for 1863-7.
- j. H.B. Putnam's Papers, (P.M.: 1 box). Miscellaneous papers of an American captain.
- k. Ahmed b. Noonan Papers, (P.M.: 1 box). Seyyid Said's emissary to the U.S. in 1840. Includes a photostat copy of his Arabic accounts with an English translation, and Eilts' comments.
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