MADAGASCAR AND THE SLAVE TRADE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

by

James C. ARMSTRONG

Madagascar and its slave trade in the seventeenth century have not yet been extensively studied. There exists no monographic treatment comparable to J.M. Filliot’s study of the eighteenth century trade with the Mascareignes, a work which indeed deals with only a part of the history of the eighteenth century Madagascar slave trade(1).

G. Grandier published in 1958 a summary account the trade at Madagascar providing a provisional list of about a hundred European vessels which were known or suspected to have traded with Madagascar in the period 1506 — 1776(2). J. Hardyman’s brief paper on the Madagascar slave trade to the Americas (1963) adds to this account, though it does not draw on unpublished material(3). The account by P. Vérin in his Histoire ancienne du nord-ouest de

The Dutch East Indi Compa...
Madagascar gives a brief outline of the trade, without details(4).

This relative lack of primary research is of course reflected in secondary accounts which have little to say about the Madagascar slave trade, and in more specialized studies such as Philip Curtin's *The Atlantic Slave Trade* or Raymond Kent's *Early Kingdoms in Madagascar 1500–1700*. The lack of research arises partially from the fragmentary and dispersed nature of the archival record, which in turn derives from the nature of the Madagascar slave trade itself.

Arabs, Portuguese, English and Dutch all traded significantly for Malagasy slaves in the seventeenth century. In the seventeenth century, French involvement was negligible, despite their settlement at Fort Dauphin. The Arab and European trade was chiefly with the northwest coast of Madagascar, although other parts of the island were also involved.

The Arabs have indeed left few trading records. The records of the Portuguese trade, notably from Mozambique, are also very scanty. Since Madagascar was outside the charter limits of the major slave trading companies the (English) Royal African Company and the Dutch West India Company, the archival records of these companies have little to say about the Madagascar trade. Although the island did come within the area of the English East India Company's trade monopoly in the Indian Ocean, this company paid relatively little attention to it(5).

The English trade with Madagascar, as will be seen, was largely an illegal interloper trade, conducted by individual venturers seeking to avoid the Royal African Company's trading monopoly in the West Indies. Primary records left by these interlopers are scarce, although New World records of slaves landed (e.g., as published by Donnan) throw considerable light on this trade(6).

However one trading nation did maintain extensive records of its slave trade with Madagascar in the seventeenth (and eighteenth) centuries. The Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC), the Dutch East India Company, conducted a short-lived trade for Malagasy slaves from 1641–1647 from Mauritius, for a longer period from 1654–1786 from the Cape of Good Hope and intermittently for a few years from its Java headquarters, Batavia.

The Dutch trade with Madagascar, unlike that of other countries is quite well-documented. The Cape Archives, in Cape Town, and the Rijksarchief in the Hague have substantial VOC records. These pertain to the Dutch (primarily Cape) slave trade with Madagascar, and consist of ships' logs, trade journals (the richest source) and many miscellaneous other documents. Some of slave trade

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material has appeared in the various published Cape archival sources including Leibbrandt’s précis Précis, the Kaapse Archiefstakken and the Resoluties van die Politieke Raad(7). But most remains unpublished.

A French glimpse of these Dutch records has been available in the Grandidiérs’ Collection des ouvrages anciens concernant Madagascar, but historians of Madagascar have too long treated these brief translations as a closed body of data(8). In fact they are but a tiny fraction of the whole, a fraction which went to the Grandidiérs via H. Dehéralin, who in turn derived them from H.C.V. Leibbrandt’s English précis of the Dutch originals.

MASSAILLY : THE ARAB TRADE

For much of the seventeenth century the chief port for the Malagasy slave trade for both Arabs and Europeans was the town known variously as Nova Mazalagem (Port.), Magelage, Magelagie, Matele, Masaliët (Dutch), Musselage, Mathewledge, Matuleedge, Matuleedge, Massilige (Eng.) and Massailly located on an island in Boina (Boeny) Bay. The location of Massailly has long been a source of confusion to many writers on Madagascar, thanks to cartographic error and descriptive vagueness. But Massailly is clearly Nosy Antsboriby, in Boina Bay, visited in 1897 by M. Julli and more recently the site of excavations by P. Vérit(9). As a source of slaves it is frequently paired with Maringazan, Maningasnde, Maragaan, Manigaar : etc., by which name the bay of Bombetoka was known to seventeenth century European traders who frequently called at both.

Massailly is described in the early seventeenth century (1613–14 and 1616–17) by two Jesuit fathers, d’Azevedo and Mariano(10). It then had 6000–7000 Muslim inhabitants. They give no figures on the volume of the slave trade, remarking only that vessels from Malindi and Arabia frequent this port each year, taking many captives (i.e., slaves) para usos infames e abominavelis(11).

(7) For a recent description of the VOC documents at the Cape Archives, see C.F.J. Muller, The South African Archives as an important resource for the history of the Indian Ocean, 9p., a paper presented at ICIS Conference, Perth, 1979. An older guide is Grahame Botha, A Brief Guide to the Various Classes of Documents in the Cape Archives 1652–1806 (Cape Town, 1918)


(9) P. Vérit, Histoire ancienne, p. 22–26. The recent thèse de doctorat de 3ème cycle, by Mme. Isane Razanana Raso, Cartographie littorale et la vie maritime à Madagascar au 16ème et 17ème siècles Sorbonne (Paris IV), 1980, was not available for this paper.


(11) Mariano, Exploração, p. 319.
However, this Arab trade was subject to interruptions, as in 1635 and 1676, when the Portuguese sacked Masalagem, as noted below. A description from 1640 gives the population of Mathewledge being about 6000 soules and said that the country people the Hovas, came there in March and April to trade cattle and 2 or 3000 slaves with the inhabitants of the town, who then traded them to Portuguese and Muslim slavers(12).

In 1663, a Portuguese report gave the volume of the Modern slave trade with Madagascar as 3000 to 4000(13). And in 1667, the Jesuit Manuel Barreto put the annual number at more than 3000(14).

The area which supplied these slaves was by no means limited to the region immediately adjacent to Boina Bay, but extended far inland. A Dutch vessel calling at Antongil Bay, on the east coast, in 1644 was frustrated to find that the local ruler Filu Bucon had been obliged to send all his slaves to the other side of the island(15). The Frenchman Martin in 1665 noted that the inhabitants of the territory of Amboet, lying 60 leagues west of Ghaemboule (i.e., Fernerive, south of Antongil Bay) were raiding their neighbours for cattle and slaves(16). The slaves were sold on the west coast to English ships, to the Arabs, and sometimes to the Portuguese.

A Dutch account from 1676 says that most of the inhabitants of Massailly fled inland from the Portuguese attack that year(17). The ruler was Sultan Hamet Boebachar, a circumcised Arab aged 36 who spoke Portuguese reasonably well. He had an Arab wife and several Malagasy concubines. His Muslim subjects numbered about 300 (sic) households. Various other local rulers, including the ruler of Manigaar were subject to him(18). An English account of the same year

(12) Account of a Voyage in the Ship Frances from Mozambique to St. Lawrence Madagasgar, with a description of the natives of the island, 1640. Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson A 334, L 55. This MS has been recently published by Stephen Ellis, Un texte du XVIIe siècle sur Madagascar, Omaly ny Anio, 9, (Jan.-Juin 1979), pp. 151-166.

On the voyage of the Frances see also, William Foster, ed., English Factories in India, 1637-41 (Oxford, 1912) pp. 226, 283, 294-99, and Eric Axelson, Portuguese in South-East Africa 1600-1700 (Johannesburg, 1969), p. 121. John Thornton’s 1703 description of the northwest coast of Madagascar, The English Pilot; the third Book (Amsterdam, 1700-facsimile of London, 1703 ed.), relies in part on the account of the Frances (1640), although his information on Morondava is more up to date. It seems likely that the description of the Asadi region is taken from the 1650 Wilde map.


(14) Manuel Barreto, Informação do estado e conquista dos rios de cuama vulgar e veradeiramente chamados Rios de Ouro... Il de dezembro de 1667, Boletin da Sociedade de Geografía de Lisboa, 4a series, n° 1 (1883), p. 55.


(16) F. Martin, Memoires, in COACM, IX, p. 552.

(17) KA 1899, f. 704-705; Appendix of cort relaas van’t situatie van’t eijlant Mapelage [1676].

(18) Ibid.
say that *Matheus Ledge* has about 1500 houses and could field no less than 15000 [(!) ] soldiers(19). If 1500 houses is accurate this would suggest a population perhaps three to four times as large.

In August 1686 the VOC ship *Jamby* traded at Maringando, and reported Magelagie was burned and deserted, having been at war with the mainland, i.e., with the *Sakalave* (Sakalavas), and Maringando was also under attack by the Sakalava(20). This August 15 1686 reference to the *Sakalave of lang oren* (= long ears) is perhaps the earliest written reference to this name.

According to Drury, this invasion was accomplished with about 800 men(21).

There is a dearth, itself suggestive, of specific references to Massailly in Dutch and English accounts from 1686—1694. The *Standwüstigheid*, in a 1694 voyage from Batavia, arrived too late (August) and noted that the *Arabs* had already shipped about 400 slaves to the Red Sea(22) This voyage also resulted in Jerimiah Brons' early account of Andia Simanata(23).

However the Dutch at the Cape had not appreciated the significance of the Sakalava conquest and their instructions to their slaving captains (*Tamboer* 1694, *Soldaat* 1696) continue to refer to the ruler of Magelagie as an *Arabier van afkomst*(24). They continued to address diplomatic Latin greetings to the *Illustri nec non praepotenti Domino atque Ducie Magellagii*. However, for an abortive 1698 voyage, a cordial Latin epistle to *Serenissimo ac Potentissimo Domino Andia Simanata* was prepared thanking him for his trade and friendship in 1696 with the *Soldaat*(25).

The *Soldaat*’s account of 1696 again mentions the presence of a great number of *Arab* traders and slaves at Magelagie(26). The supercargo, Abraham van Bogaard, was welcomed by an Arab captain of a ship stranded there, and by many others with more signs of friendship, he said, than he expected. He found that the Sakalava ruler, Simanata [Andrian Tsimanatona] did not maintain his residence on the island.

Van Bogaard reached Simanata’s residence at Mirarewarte, on an elevated plain, in the Maringaar region; he found that the king spoke Dutch, learned from a sailor fled from the *Tamboer*, in 1694(27).

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(20) KA 4000, f. 733 Dagregister gehouden int Jagt Jamby, 15 August 1686.
(22) KA 4011, f. 70v W. Outboorn to Simon van der Stel, 4 February 1695.
KA 4013, f. 674, ult. October 1696.
(25) KA 4017, f. 286, Simon van der Stel to Andian Simanata, 30 June 1698.
(26) KA 4014, f. 117v, Dagregister [ of Soldaat ] 15 December 1696.
(27) Ibid.; f. 1181.
In 1699 Massailly and Manigaar were reported not to have been visited by the *Arabs for a year or three*, and that the Dutch might thus expect good trade there, as indeed the *Peter & Paul* found later that year (28).

To summarize the *Arab* slave trade with Massailly, it is clear that the trade persisted throughout the seventeenth century, with apparent gaps of only a few years. The volume of traffic was, from several reports, as much as 3000 per year. Even if this figure is exaggerated, then other reported figures of several hundred a year from the latter decades still attest to a very considerable trade. Based on these figures one might make a *low* estimate of ca. 40 000 slaves exported by the Arab trade from Massailly in the seventeenth century. A *high* estimate would certainly be well over 150 000.

**THE PORTUGUESE**

By comparison with the Arab trade the pattern of the Portuguese trade with Madagascar in the seventeenth century is less well-documented. What is clear is that the Portuguese trade was both of lesser volume and less continuous than the Arab trade.

It was chiefly conducted by small vessels going from Mozambique to Mazalagem and Assada for slaves, cattle and sandalwood (29). According to Mariano, Bueni (Mazalagem Nova) *est le port le plus fréquenté par nos navires* (30).

In 1621, a Dutch fleet captured a small Portuguese vessel laden with sandalwood coming from the *Ysele Masalagem* (31).

Massailly was sacked in 1635 by a Portuguese expedition led by Roque Borges, which was seeking Yusuf (Ghingalia) the apostate Christian who led the Mombasa revolt on 1631 (32).

The English account of 1640 referred to above mentions the continuing trade of the Portuguese with Mathewledge for slaves and cattle.

Portuguese interests were signaled by the treaty of 12 June 1641 between Portugal and the States General, in which Madagascar’s west coast was recognized as a Portuguese *sphere* and the east coast as a Dutch one (33).

The Portuguese raided Mazalagem again in April 1676 in retaliation of the deaths of seven Portuguese there. The *Nossa Signora de Miragules, [i.e., Mila-

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(28) KA 4019, f. 489 Daghregister [of Peter & Paul] aa April 1699.
gros?], Capt. Manuel Andrada Ferero, burnt the town and destroyed ten Arab vessels there (34).

For many years after 1676 there are apparently no English or Dutch archival references to Portuguese vessels on the Madagascar coast. It seems likely that the Portuguese left Madagascar to the English, the Dutch and to multinational pirates for the next half century.

There is indeed the well-known early eighteenth century Mortier map which bears the anachronistic note at Nova Mazalagem to the effect that the Portuguese trade there annually for slaves and cattle. But this anomalous legend is explicable by the fact that it appears on the earlier (1665) Ms. Atlas of Joao Teixera Albernaz which has a similar annotation in Portuguese (35).

**THE ENGLISH**

English awareness of Madagascar in the seventeenth century was whetted by their ships' frequent passage through the Mozambique channel en route to Surat and later to Bombay and their consequent use of the Comoros, especially **Johanna** (i.e. Anjouan), as a refreshment stop.

In 1636 Charles I decided on an expedition to Madagascar, which in the event never took place. In 1640 Walter Hamond published his *Paradox...*, an exaltation of the good life of the natural savage and a call to colonize. In 1640 also the ship *Francis* called at northwestern Madagascar and left an informative account, recently published. Richard Boothby's *Description of the... famous Island of Madagascar*, appeared in 1644 and the same year was the departure of John Smart's colonizing expedition, which constructed a fort at St. Augustine Bay. Refusing to become involved in local conflicts they were boycotted and starved. One of the survivors P. Waldegraave published a refutation of Boothby. In 1650 a new English attempt to colonize, under Col. Robert Hunt, was made at Assada, and Hunt and most of his party were massacred (36).

None of these efforts, with the partial exception of the *Francis*, reveal any significant slaving interest in Madagascar by the English until 1664. In that year the English *Little American* was hired (by the E.I. Co.) to *make discovery for trade* at Madagascar and the East African coast. It brought a number of Malagasy slaves to Surat; some of these were later destined for St. Helena (37).

The real spur to the English slave trade with Madagascar was an almost accidental consequence of the slaving monopoly granted to the Royal African

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(34) KA 3989, f. 668v, 670v, 673v; cf. f. 777. Journal... van't Jachtje Voorhout, 24 June 1676.


Company. By closing the western coasts of Africa to individual traders, the R.A.C. drove them to look for sources outside its monopoly area. For several decades Madagascar would be the main source of slaves for this interloper traffic. While the scale of this trade was slight compared with the main Atlantic slave trade, it offered an outlet for traders operating with low overheads: e.g., using small ships and crews and without the expenses of factories on shore. The interlopers were flexible as to where they traded, and could be venturesome in their involvement in local conflicts.

Aside from the Little American, the earliest voyage of record is that of the Lion, captain Jan Houwert (sic) and the Eagle, captain Robert Houwert, which stopped at the Cape in November 1664. The Lion carried 200 starving and naked children, the Eagle 135 slaves. Their slave port of origin is not mentioned, but Mathewledge seems likely, in view of the ages and numbers. The priority of this voyage is also suggested by the exorbitant price (£50 or £500) asked for the older slaves: there were no Cape buyers at this unrealistic price (38).

The number of English slavers in the next few years cannot have been large. H. Hugo reported, on his arrival in Magelag in August 1672, that an English slaver [the Johanna Catharina] which had preceded them by a few weeks, and bought 270 pieces was only the fourth English ship to call there, the first having called only in 1666 or 7 (39). However the English slavers increased in the 1670’s, calling at St. Augustine’s and Magelagie, as the Cape archives record. Between 1675 and 1700, there are in the VOC archives at the Cape and in the Hague and in other sources, mention of over forty English voyages from Madagascar to the New World with slaves as cargo, a total which included a number of pirates. But this is a minimal figure as by no means all of these ships called at the Cape.

The pirate aspect has attracted a good deal of attention from various hands, and need not detain us here (40). It should not obscure the fact that during the last decade of the seventeenth century and the early years of the eighteenth, Madagascar continued to serve as a source of slaves for the New World and to a lesser extent, for the Cape.

A brief listing 1675–1692 of some of these English vessels, known to have traded in Malagany ports, follows:

(39) KA 3985 f. 706v. [Pijl's Journal], 30 August 1672.
Table 1: English slave ships and Madagascar, 1675–1692 (41)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Vessel</th>
<th>Where Traded</th>
<th>No. of slaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1675–6</td>
<td>Society</td>
<td>Moz., St. Augustine’s, Magelage</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1675–6</td>
<td>[ Sea Flower ]</td>
<td>Magelage</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1676</td>
<td>Rebecca</td>
<td>Moz., St. Augustine’s, Magelage</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1678–79</td>
<td>Zeeblom [ Sea Flower ]</td>
<td>St. Augustine’s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1679–80</td>
<td>Bridgewater merchant</td>
<td>St. Augustine’s ?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1680–81</td>
<td>Daniel and Thomas</td>
<td>St. Augustine’s Mathaledge</td>
<td>200–300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1680–81</td>
<td>Robocq [ Roebuck ? ]</td>
<td>[ Madagascar ]</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1682–84</td>
<td>Francis</td>
<td>St. Augustine’s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1682</td>
<td>Philip</td>
<td>Lightfoots</td>
<td>[120 ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1682</td>
<td>Dortemouth ( = Darmouth)</td>
<td>Lightfoots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1682–3</td>
<td>Firebrace</td>
<td>Magelage</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1682–3</td>
<td>Living Friendship</td>
<td>Lytvoets</td>
<td>200 or 230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1683–4</td>
<td>John and Mary</td>
<td>Lytvoets</td>
<td>[50 ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1684–5</td>
<td>Tonqueene Merchant</td>
<td>St. Augustine’s, Lytvoets ?</td>
<td>180 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1684–5</td>
<td>Margriet</td>
<td>St. Augustine’s &amp; Lytvoets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1685–6</td>
<td>John and Mary</td>
<td>Malandara (Morondava)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1686–7</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Margarieta</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1686–7</td>
<td>Pelican</td>
<td>Bäy van St. Laurens</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1687</td>
<td>Fortune</td>
<td>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1689–90</td>
<td>Pearle</td>
<td>[ Madagascar ]</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1689–93</td>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>Madagascar, India</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1689–90</td>
<td>John and Mary</td>
<td>laden with slave</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1690</td>
<td>Tonqueene Merchant</td>
<td>Morondava</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1692–3</td>
<td>Little Josiah</td>
<td>Morondava</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

St. Augustine’s Bay is mentioned by several English (and Dutch) slavers in the 1660s and 1670s as a source of slaves: it was favoured because prices were relatively low, but disfavoured because of the erratic supply. It seems probable that the slave trade at this port had not as organized a basis as was plainly the case at Massaill, but fluctuated with the fortunes of local conflicts (42).

The Sea Flower in 1679 reported good trading at St. Augustine’s where Dian Manangie was at war with his neighbour Lytvoet, i.e., lahefousy [ Andrian-dahifotsoy ] (43). The conflict between the St. Augustine ruler and the ruler of the Sakalava produced slaves from both sides. The Sea Flower made an

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(41) This table is based on over thirty different primary sources.
(42) J.T. Hardyman, Outline of the maritime history of St. Augustine’s Bay (Madagascar) (Studio, n° 11 (Janeiro 1963)) pp. 315–341, is a brief survey.
(43) KA 3992, f. 237v – 238r Daghegister, 20 February 1679.
abortive attempt at trading in Terra del Gadâ (19 1/2° S), i.e. in Lahefoutsy's kingdom (44).

The earliest surviving report of a slaving voyage to Light foot's River, as Morondava was known to the English, was that of the *Philip*, supercargo James Barre, which obtained about 50–60 slaves there, another 59 having been acquired at St. Augustine's (45). The *Philip* reported trading muskets, powder, shot and Nuemburg trinkets and bought its slaves cheaply at an average price of less than 3 Spanish Reals, despite the presence of four other English ships there. Three versions survive of the trade journal of this venture, one English and two Dutch (46). It was copied by the Dutch at the Cape in exchange for water, casks, sail-thread, pump-nails, etc. Its significance has been quite overlooked by South African scholars, and its existence has not hitherto been known to historians of Madagascar. It gives a memorable description of Lahefoutsy, and even quotes him:

> Light foot came to his town with what forces that might be useful, which were about 500 men, with about 200 small arms. I went and saluted him, he took me by the hand and asked me several questions, where the ship was from, what was her last port, [St. Augustine's] how many slaves we traded there...

> «You are a stranger and were never here before, I will trade with you, but iff ye had bene here before & bound to mee to trade with mee from Reyvan [i.e., ruler of St. Augustine's] I should not suffer you here, & none off my People should trade with ye».

So he drank to me in spirirts & I pleaded him afterward... he would build me a house in part by himself, of which I took not a little notice of so an ancient man as he is to work... he being not less then 68 years off age — a tall strong propery man... with a great deal [of] reason... alwayes in action when he is sober which is about 2 or 3 days a weke. Hee is a man mightily given to smiting—off wilde hoghs [&] alligators which are here in abundance (47).

By late 1683 at the latest Lahefoutsy was dead, succeeded by his eldest son (48). The date comes from the English slaver *John and Mary* which called at the Cape in January 1684 en route for Barbadoes (49).

Other slavers at Morondava also found that flintlock muskets were the basic

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(44) Ibid.
(45) KA 3995, f. 184r, *Philip's Journal* 12 Aug. 1682; KA 3995, f. 16v, Simon van der to XVII, 28 May 1683.
(46) KA 3995, f. 171–194v (English); f. 195–208 (Dutch); 0660, pp. 341–392 (Dutch)
(47) KA 3995, f. 194.
(48) Cf. R.K. Kent, *Early Kingdoms*, p. 201, where 1685 is tentatively given as the date of Lahefoutsy's death.
(49) KA 3997, f. 109v, Daghistger, January 18, 1684.
trade goods desired. The *Little Josiah*, Capt. Dering, traded at Morondava in April 1692 (50). The price for slaves they found to be:

- for a man or woman:
  - 1 gunn
  - 7 catheridges of powder
  - 20 short & 20 flints

- for a boy or girl:
  - 1 gunn
  - 4 catheridges of powder

In the supply of these weapons the English (and Dutch) traders held a distinct advantage over the *Arabs* who had few or no such weapons to trade. There are in the various accounts of the Morondava trade in the 1680's no mention of *Arabs* trading, a fact which may also be explained by the navigational problems faced by dhows which ventured past Cape St. Andre.

It is clear that the trade in slaves for guns transformed the Sakalava into a formidable military power, and doubtless contributed to their rapid military expansion. Their conquests created a continuing supply of prisoners for sale as slaves at west coast ports. The number of weapons and the proficiency in their use gained by the Sakalava was remarkable, as the crew of the *Barneveld* witnessed in 1719... a whole regiment of at least a thousand wild savages, each with a musket in hand... (51).

This trade in guns to the Sakalava is in partial contrast with the trading pattern with the Islamic rulers of Massailly prior to 1686, who sought specie and novelties. Firearms were also traded, however, and held in some numbers by the *Arabs* of Massailly as the *Voorhout*’s account of 1676 related:

*In time of war, [ the ruler of Magelagie ] could muster 3–4000 men, including inhabitants and their slaves, some of them using blunderbusses, others muskets and diverse long swords which they mostly purchased from the English, though the slaves are armed with spears and shields* (52).

With the Sakalava conquest of Boina by Anúrian Simanata [Andrian Tsimanatona], the demand was for guns, not specie, at Massailly and Maningaar. By 1699, at Maningaar, the price of slaves was defined thus:

- For an able young adult slave man:
  - 2 muskets
  - 5 small boxes of powder
  - 5 balls
  - 5 flints

- valued at 22 Sp. Reals.

- For an able young adult woman:
  - 1 musket
  - 10 boxes of powder
  - 10 balls
  - 10 flints

(50) Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson 334 f. 58–60.


(52) KA 3989, f. 764, *Appendix of cont rela... [1676]*.
valued at 18 Sp. Reals (53).
By 1715 the price for a man slave at Maningaar was:
1 musket, clean and bright van de lange boekens
3 lb. powder
12 flints
For a woman, and boys or girls of 8—10,
1 musket (54).

THE DUTCH

As with the English, Dutch knowledge of Madagascar was a by-product of their voyages to the Indies, starting with that of Cornelis de Houtman in 1595—97. But their early contacts were chiefly limited to Antongil Bay and, rarely, to St. Augustine Bay, as the VOC fleets rarely used the Mozambique Channel. After 1617 the east-bound VOC fleets kept in far southerly latitudes (the roaring forties) and were specifically enjoined to avoid a course inside Madagascar or even close outside. Return fleets and Ceylon vessels did pass by eastern Madagascar, but the inside passage was rarely taken by Dutch ships. The presence of the Portuguese on the western shore of the Mozambique channel, and their presumed strength there, was a natural deterrent. The Dutch were at war with Portugal several times in the seventeenth century and it was natural they would avoid the Mozambique Channel (55).

Occasionally, a storm or distress-driven vessel, usually homeward bound, would seek refuge in the Comoros, or even on Madagascar. Such sojourns did yield intelligence about trading conditions, e.g., when the Arnhem put in at Antongil in 1657 (56), in 1659, the Erasmus put in at Ansuany (Anjouan) and at an unidentified bay (15°—16° S.) near Massailly on the northwest coast of Madagascar, but erroneously reported the region to be unpopulated (57). Later, in 1674, the Middelburgh, which refreshed at Anjouan for four months, reported the arrivals there of two Moorish slavers as well as two English East India Co. vessels, which may have served to confirm other contemporary reports (see below) (58).

Certainly the impression given by contemporary Dutch references to Madagascar, until the 1660s, is that there was a dearth of hard information except regarding Antongil. St. Augustine's was, despite a few contacts in the 1630s,

(55) C. Halls, Dutch navigation off the East African coast, Tanzania Notes and Records, n° 67 (June 1967) pp. 39—48 is useful, though very incomplete, account of its subject.
(58) KA 3988, f. 300—311, Extract uit het Journal.
unfamiliar to the Dutch and the rest of the west coast was a blank, a rumored Portuguese ground.

However, Dutch interest in the possibility of obtaining slaves from Madagascar is found early in the seventeenth century. In 1617 Van den Broecke made an unsuccessful attempt to reach Madagascar to get slaves intended for Surat (59). Reference to the possibility of obtaining slaves there is found in a 1616 Resolution of the Heren XVII, and in 1617 (60).

However only after the Dutch settlement of Mauritius in 1638 did Madagascar play any considerable role as a source of slaves for the Dutch (61). As noted above, a 1641 treaty between Portugal and the States General, recognized Madagascar's East coast as a Dutch sphere. It seems unlikely, however, that Dutch activity at Antongil Bay in the 1640's can be regarded as a direct consequence of this treaty. In 1641, 1644, 1645, and 1646 voyages were made from Mauritius, chiefly to Antongil Bay, for slaves. The slaves were brought back to Mauritius, some retained and some were sent on to Batavia. These voyages are tabulated on Table 3.

The Dutch experience at Antongil Bay in the 1640s also illustrates the extent to which the slave trade on the opposite Northwest coast had developed. Adrian Van der Stel had bought 105 slaves from the Antongil ruler Fiu Bucun in early 1642 for the low average price of 2 1/8 Reals each (62). A treaty was signed in which the ruler and his chief men agreed to sell slaves and rice only to the Dutch. When Van der Stel, who left 2 men behind as agents, returned again in mid-1644, he was told that the king had thrice assembled groups of slaves, but had been obliged to send them in charge of his son to the other side of the island to sell to the Portuguese for cloths and cows. Nevertheless the Dutch were able to get 97 more slaves. Two more successful voyages were made in 1645 from Mauritius. A later Dutch voyage to Antongil in 1646 actually encountered a slave trading expedition of 120 men and 200 cattle sent from the other side of the island, and led by a lucorongh of king Ronetans. The local ruler protested to the Dutch that he preferred to trade with them, but could not refuse slaves to these strangers when they came (63).

By 1646, however, it was plain to Batavia that the Madagascar voyages were uneconomic, despite the low prices paid, and they were then discontinued.

Serious Dutch interest in Madagascar as a source of slaves came only with the VOC's settlement of the Cape in 1652. The first Cape commander, Jan Van

(59) H. Terpstra, De Opkomst der Westerkwartieren van de Oost-Indische Compagnie (Surat, Arabië, Persië) ('s Gravenhage, 1918) pp. 63-64.
(60) KA 249, f. 358v, Resolutions of 4 to 17 August 1616, n° 42.
(61) Heeringa, De Nederlander is the standard account.
(62) Heeringa, p. 1006.
Riebeeck, soon concluded that slave labour was essential for the new post, and within a few weeks of his arrival wrote to Batavia for slaves (64). Batavia could not supply them, however, and Van Riebeeck then sought to supply both the Cape and Batavia with slaves from Antongil.

The first slaving voyage was attempted in 1654 by the Roode Vos, which was to proceed to Mauritius and thence to Antongil Bay, where it was ordered to buy thirty or forty slaves, including ten girls twelve to fifteen years of age (65). This effort failed. The Tulip was dispatched in the same year from the Cape to Antongil, but obtained only two slaves (66).

Three successive voyages in the 1660s to Antongil and St. Augustine’s Bay also failed. The Dutch at the Cape did not yet have the key to unlock the Malagasy trade.

In the same period efforts were made both by Batavia and the Heren XVII to tap the Madagascar trade.

In 1660 the flute de Postillon was leased to the Batavian burger Jacques de Boulan for trading to Madagascar (67). De Boulan went first to Fort Dauphin, arriving there on 2 April 1661. He traded for 170 slaves, and set out for the Cape of Good Hope, but lost his passage. After touching at Antongil, he returned to Batavia via Tutucorin, with only 29 of his slaves, and a quantity of hides (68). De Boulan’s initiative was encouraged by the enthusiastic reports of Madagascar’s riches spread by one Pierre Gilton [Gelton], who had been shipwrecked on a Nantes vessel at the Cape in May 1660. Gilton, who had intended to establish a colony at St. Augustine’s Bay, went instead to Batavia, where officials heard his reports with some scepticism. In 1661, he went to Amsterdam, where the XVII were rather more impressed; they suggested to Van Riebeeck that he obtain salt-meat from Madagascar, but the latter demurred (69).

The Comoro Islands attracted one voyage from Batavia during the 1660s. In October 1666, a small vessel, the Goede Hoop, owned by private persons, set out after it reached Madagascar, and did not reach its goal (70).


(65) Van Riebeeck, Daghregister, I, 222—23, 225, 248, 446. Also Instructie voor d’Oppéerhoofden van’t Calijot de Rode Vos... 8 May 1654 in Precis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope, Letters Despatched 1652—1662, ed., H.C.V. Leibbrandt (Cape Town, 1900) I, 306—305.

(66) Van Riebeeck, Daghregister, I, 235, 268—70.


(68) Dagh—Register Gehouden in’t Kasteel Batavia... 1661 (Batavia, 19 ) pp. 306—07. Entry for 15 October 1661.

Somewhat later the XVII’s attention was also directed towards the same source of slaves for the Cape and Batavia. They had been (mis) informed that slaves were plentiful in the Comoro Islands, and in September 1670 advised the Cape to send a vessel to the Majottes (71). The Cape despatched the Sandlooper, with a small cargo, and instructions to secure a good number of slaves aged 18 to 30, men or women. The Sandlooper got good refreshments, but no slaves, at Anzuyana, despite the fact that it had a supply of silver reals along (72).

A second attempt was made in 1672, with the Pijl. The Pijl’s voyage with its companion the Boogh is noteworthy because it was the first Dutch attempt which traded for slaves in north-west Madagascar, which thenceforth became the primary destination of Cape slaving voyages for the next century. The Captain of the Pijl was an ambitious and influential adventurer, Hubert Hugo (73). Hugo had persuaded the Heren XVII to appoint him as the new Commander of Mauritius, to establish a productive colony there, and to initiate a slave trade with the Majottes (74).

With Hugo sailed the widely travelled author, Joan Nieuwof, who was supposed to become the factor resident in the Comoros (75).

The two vessels sailed in company to St. Augustine’s Bay. After some desultory trading, they went to Mozambique, where they were well received. Here they obtained some ivory, and learned that slaves were not to be had at the

(70) Dagh-Register... Batavia... 1666, p. 159, 9 Oct. 1666.

(71) I have not traced the source of the Heren XVII’s belief on this point. English East India Company vessels frequently stopped at Anjouan, which served as a refreshment point for Arab slavers enroute from northwest Madagascar to Kilwa and beyond, and some report of their slaves may have reached the Heren XVII. It is possible that the Heren XVII were given this information by Hubert Hugo (vide infra) whose firsthand knowledge of the western Indian Ocean was extensive, and who definitely in contact with the Heren XVII by early 1671.

(72) KA 3984, f. 60—62v, Sandlooper’s Instructions. Also C 495, I, Uit. Br., 1668–1671, pp. 118–85. The Sandlooper departed on 17 June 1671.

KA 3984, 457v. Joan Maetsuyker to Pieter Hackius, 18 December 1671. Maetsuyker also reported the outcome of this voyage to the Heren XVII in his general missive of 19 December 1671, published in Generale Missiven... 1655–1674, R.G.P. 125, p. 778. The Batavia Dagh-Register 1670–1671, p. 475–6 notes the arrival of the Sandlooper there on 21 November 1671, and lists its cargo, worth only f. 2130.

(73) On Hugo, see F.W. Stapel, Hubert Hugo, Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde van het Koninklijk Instituut LXXXVI (1930) pp. 615–635, which concentrates on his last years on Mauritius. Hugo’s career was a varied one, and deserves more attention than it has received. Stapel’s account does not utilize French archival material. There are also some published Arabic sources relating to Hugo’s piracies in R.B. Serjeant, The Portuguese off the South Arabian Coast, (Oxford, 1963).

(74) Stapel, Hubert Hugo, p. 622.

(75) Nieuwof was the widely travelled author of Die Gesellschaft der Ostindischen Gesellschaft in den Vereinigten Niederlanden, an den Tartareischen Cham, Amsterdam 1660, and of the posthumous Gedenkwaardige Zee en Lant Reize door de voornaemste Landschappen van West en Oostindien. Included in this latter work is an account of the Pijl’s slaving voyage, which is based on the Pijl’s log, kept by Reyner Claesz and transmitted to Nieuwof’s brother and editor, H. Nieuwof.
Comoros, but that the Portuguese obtained slaves at a price of 10, 12, or 15 Reals from Magelagie, on the northwest coast of Madagascar (76). On going there they found 3 or 4 Moorish vessels and learned that an English flute from London had recently bought 270 slaves.

But Hugo's slaving venture soon ended in failure with Nieuhof's disappearance and death, and the Pill sailed on to Mauritius with only 22 slaves. However, despite its apparent failure, Hugo's voyage had opened the way.

The Dutch subsequently (18 January 1673) took, at St. Helena, an English prize, the Johanna Catharina, which proved to be the same ship that Hugo had reported trading at Magelagie. Its cargo of 270 had been depleted by death to 184, but it confirmed Hugo's report that Magelagie was a good source of slaves (77). The Heren XVII, on being informed, were amazed that the English should come so far for slaves (78).

For a time the Dutch war with England and France precluded any further voyages from the Cape for slaves, despite the immediate need for them at the Cape for the construction of the fortified castle.

No sooner was a truce with England concluded than the Heren XVII urged (12 May 1674) the resumption of the Cape's Madagascar voyages (79). At the same time they withdrew from their previous urgency in completing the construction of the Castle at the Cape. The major purpose of the resumed voyages was to exploit this presumably cheap source of slaves for the general gold mines at Salida on the west coast of Sumatra (80). The Cape received the news in October 1674, but no voyage was attempted in 1675, the Cape's Council of Policy claiming that there was no suitable vessel available. They did attempt to get the Helena (ex-Johanna Catharina) for the purpose, but no voyage was made until the following year, when the Voorhout, well stocked with Spanish reals, cloth, glass beads, Japanese copper, iron bars and brandy was sent to Magelagie (81).

The voyage of the Voorhout in 1676 was the first successful slaving voyage originating at the Cape (82). The Voorhout traded at Magelagie and Marangaan.

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(76) KA 3985, f. 664. H. Hugo to XVII. 29 December 1672.
KA 3985, F. 248, I. Goske to J. Maastruyker, 14 April 1673.
(78) C411, p. 1012, XVII (at Middelburg) to I. Goske, 17 May 1673.
(79) KA 3988, f. 65r. I. Goske to Joan Maastruyker, 20 Oct. 1674.
(81) KA 3989, f. 515v-516v.
(82) Cf. the wholly erroneous statement in A.J. Boeseken, Slaves and Free Blacks at the Cape 1658-1700 (Cape Town, 1977), p. 66 that no slaves were brought back.
obtaining 279 slaves for which the average price paid was over 12 Reals (83). After refreshing at Anzuany the vessel returned to the Cape with 257 slaves on 29 November 1676. A contemporary document noted that: Among the women one saw many fat ones, as the sailors (it is said) had pleasure by night for kindesses done by day, who when brought on land could not part from the sailors without much weeping and crying (84).

When the Voorhout returned to Magelie in 1677, it found no competing English slavers, but another VOC ship, the Hassenburg, sent from Batavia, in the wake of the Voorhout’s success. And to the Voorhout’s dismay, the Hassenburg was buying slaves at a much higher price than that which had prevailed the previous year (85).

There were three Arab vessels there for slaves as well, but they offered no serious opposition. Indeed, before their departure the Voorhout’s ship’s council issued the three Arab captains, Ajuijn Alim, Achmet Muzaret and Salem van Suratta each a passport, should they encounter any other Dutch vessels (86). It seems plain that the Arabs welcomed the Dutch presence at this time, as obviously did the ruler of Magelie, Sultan Hamet Boebachar.

Official VOC-sponsored slaving voyages from the Cape to Madagascar continued, on a sporadic basis, for more than a century. The following table summarizes these voyages, as well as those to other destinations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1652–1699</th>
<th>1700–1749</th>
<th>1750–1795</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>12 (1.064)</td>
<td>9 (779)</td>
<td>12 (977)</td>
<td>33 (2.820)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique, East</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African coast, and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zanzibar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delagoa Bay</td>
<td></td>
<td>several</td>
<td></td>
<td>several</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(c.280)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(c.280)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dahomey</td>
<td>1 (226)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (226)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>13 (1.290)</td>
<td>9 + (c.1.059)</td>
<td>17 (1.951)</td>
<td>39 + (4.300)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(83) KA 3989, f. 7r, J. Bax to XVII, 14 March 1677.
(84) D.B. Bosman, ed. *Brieven van Johanna Maria van Riebeeck en ander Riebeekkana.* (Amsterdam, 1952), p. 49.
(85) KA 3990, f. 503, R. van Goens to J. Bax, Feb. 1678. KA 3990, f. 1000r, Voorhout’s Journal. 9 August 1677, quoting Hassenberg’s supercargo: Ik moet slaves hebben, al sou ick 20 Rds. geven want sonder slaves ick op Batavia niet meijn te comen.
(86) KA 3990, f. 1011v, Voorhout’s Journal. 25 (?) Aug. 1677.
From the above it is evident that Madagascar furnished the Cape with over one thousand slaves for the Company's use in the seventeenth century. The results of the individual voyages in this period are summarized in Table 3.

Virtually all the slaves obtained on these Company-sponsored voyages were destined for use by the Company. In addition to those traded on Company account, however, some slaves were obtained by Company personnel in private trading. From evidence in the Deeds Office, Cape Town, it seems likely that roughly 10 per cent should be added to the official figures to include slaves obtained in this manner (88). This private trade was conducted without the knowledge or approval of the Heren XVII or the Council of India. It was not mentioned in official correspondence, nor were the numbers of slaves acquired privately included in the official reports on these voyages. Indeed, it was only after the Company ceased making slaving voyages, near the end of its administration, that the Heren XVII took any official cognisance of this individual trading by its Cape officials. It was defended as a customary usage, without any specific known authorisation, which compensated the ship's officers and supercargoes for the dangers and discomforts they underwent in the trade, and as an encouragement for them to go on future voyages (89).

In 1678 another pattern of slaving voyages starting from the Cape began, which would continue for a decade. In 1667 the VOC had acquired the gold mines at Salida, on the west coast of Sumatra and from 1670 they had attempted to exploit them (90). From the first, difficulties were encountered and results were disappointing. Returns were low and expenses were high. German mining experts were sent. Slave labor was used, and a major limitation on the mining effort was the high level of sickness and mortality among the slaves. Indonesian slaves were used at first from the nearby island of Nias, but without success. By 1674, Governor General Maetsuyker wrote to the Heren XVII that Macassarese, Buginese and Bimanese slaves were also unsuitable for the work at Salida (91). It seems very likely that working conditions in the mines themselves, which were notoriously wet, were largely responsible for the mortality among the slaves, rather than any deficiency in the slaves' physical constitutions. However that may be, the success of the Voorhout in 1676 in securing slaves from Magelagie encouraged the Heren XVII to believe that a solution to their labour supply problems at Salida lay in Madagascar. Batavia dispatched the Hassenburgh to Madagascar in 1677 (92).

The Elisabeth was sent out from the Netherlands in 1678, and set out for Madagascar from the Cape on 15 November, with a cargo worth f 13.625. 

(88) See Boesecke, Slaves and Free Blacks, Addendum 2, A brief summary of transactions pertaining to slaves... pp. 121–194.
(89) This paragraph revised from Armstrong, Slaves, pp. 78–79.
(90) References as in note 60.
(91) MacLeod, De Westkust, p. 138.
(92) KA 3990, f. 502v, R. van Goens to J. Bax, 15 February 1678.
chiefly in Mexican reals (93). The Cape provided its experienced interpreter, Sijmon and supercargo Albert van Breugel (94). At Magelagie 114 slaves were bought, but on a slow voyage to Sumatra 51 died (95). Batavia then suggested to the Heren XVII that the Cape be used as a refreshment post for slaves.

In a letter of 20 June 1680, the Heren XVII announced their decision to continue with the trade (96). A new vessel, the Sillida, designed especially for the slave trade, was sent out in December 1680 (97). It left the Cape for Madagascar on 25 June 1681, with a cargo worth f 21,306. chiefly in reals, which were in demand at Magelagie (98). Sijmon again served as interpreter. The Sillida obtained 168 slaves at Magelagie and another 68 at nearby Manigaar (99). Of these slaves most were women and girls, despite its instructions to secure males, 16–24 years of age. It delivered only 144 at Padang, the port closest to the Salida mines. Of these half died within 4 months at Padang (100).

Similar details could be supplied for each successive voyage. Table 3 summarizes these voyages.

In 1687, the trade for slaves for Salida was abandoned, on grounds of cost, slave mortality, and the danger of piracy in Madagascar waters. There was a brief resurgence in the eighteenth century, for Batavia tried again in 1732 and 1733.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Vessel</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>Where Traded</th>
<th>No. Traded</th>
<th>Delivered</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(a) Mauritius</td>
<td>(b) Cape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1641</td>
<td>Eendracht &amp; Klein Mauritius</td>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>Antongil</td>
<td>105</td>
<td></td>
<td>50 (1644)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1644</td>
<td>Welsing</td>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>Antongil</td>
<td>97</td>
<td></td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1645</td>
<td>Welsing &amp; Dolphijn</td>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>Antongil</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1645</td>
<td>Welsing</td>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>Antongil</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1646</td>
<td>Welsing &amp; Jonge Saier</td>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>Antongil</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>51 ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1647</td>
<td>Zeemeeuw</td>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>Antongil</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1654</td>
<td>Roode Vos</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1654</td>
<td>Tulp</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Antongil</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1663</td>
<td>Waterhoen</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>St. Augustine’s</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Carried orders to halt the Trade
Failed to reach Madagascar.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1664</td>
<td>Waterhoen</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Antongil</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1667</td>
<td>Westwout &amp; Poelsnip</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Antongil, Verraders Bay</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1672</td>
<td>Pijl</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Mozambique &amp; Magelage</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1676</td>
<td>Woorhout</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Magelage, Maringaanz</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>257</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1677</td>
<td>Voorhout &amp; Quartel</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>St. Augustine's, Magelage, Moz.</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1677</td>
<td>Hassenburgh</td>
<td>Batavia</td>
<td>Magelage</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>248</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1678</td>
<td>Elisabeth</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Magelage</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1681</td>
<td>Sillida</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Magelage</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>144</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1682</td>
<td>Eenant</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Magelage ?</td>
<td>[271 ]</td>
<td>[220 ]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1683</td>
<td>Hoogergeest</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Magelage ?</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1684</td>
<td>Baeren</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Magelage, Mari-gaar, Anjouan</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1685</td>
<td>Westerwijk</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Magelage</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Captured by pirates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1686</td>
<td>Jamby</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Maringando [224]</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>164</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1687</td>
<td>Jamby</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Magelage ?</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1694</td>
<td>Tamboer</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Magelage ?</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1694</td>
<td>Standvastigheid</td>
<td>Batavia</td>
<td>Magelage ?</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>1696</td>
<td>Soldaat</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Maningaar</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>120</td>
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<td>1699</td>
<td>Peter &amp; Paul</td>
<td>Cape</td>
<td>Maningaar</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>184</td>
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A NOTE ON INTERPRETERS

Although the Dutch found English speakers at St. Augustine’s and the Comoros, and the Arab ruler of Massauly knew some Portuguese, the Dutch did not rely on such linguistic accidents, but provided their own interpreters. H. Hugo introduced the practice of using Malagasy slaves as interpreters and on his 1672 voyage took Louwijs and his wife.

Thereafter, it was the usual practice of the Dutch to use Malagasy Company slaves as interpreters on their slaving voyages to Madagascar. Most of these interpreters are known only by their names, plus a phrase describing their command of Dutch, (and sometimes Portuguese). In the instructions given to the slaving captains on departure, they are mentioned, usually with the admonition that they were to be rather gently handled, presumably to ensure their loyalty once on Madagascar. On virtually every voyage recorded, they did as was required of them.

One of them deserves more than passing notice, as his career yields several insights into the conduct of the Cape’s slaving ventures. His name was Sayyid (Zeijde), or as he was usually called, Sijmon die Arabier. Sayyid spoke both Arabic and Malagasy, and his actual place of origin is uncertain, despite his name (102).

Sayyid had already served as an interpreter on several English slaving voyages, and was on the English slaver Joanna Catharina when it was captured by the Dutch at St. Helena in 1673. He was thus well versed in the Madagascar trade. He was at first used by the Company at the Cape as an overseer of its Malagasy slaves (103).

At the Cape he was not regarded as a slave but rather as a prisoner of war at liberty. He was advanced credit by the Company, as was done for free burgers, but his name never appeared on the burger rolls. He had a house about a mile from the fort, where his wife, a slave who was excused from the Company’s work, and his children lived, and where he maintained a garden. His house was fired one night and an escaped slave was suspected (104).

He was the interpreter on the first wholly successful Cape slaving voyage to Madagascar in 1676, and went again in 1677, 1678 and 1681. There are numerous favorable references to his services in the Cape-Batavia correspondence of this period. On one occasion he lived in the house of Governor General

(101) Based on numerous VOC primary sources.


(103) KA 3987, f. 22v, I. Goske to XVII, 20 May 1674.

(104) KA 3994, f. 119r, Daghregister, 10 Jan. 1681.
Speelman in Batavia, and once he went to Holland in a return ship which sailed past the Cape. He returned to the Cape in the new Sillida in 1681, and went on with it to Madagascar for more slaves (105). On this last voyage, the ship's officers said they would have been unable to govern the slaves without him. His death was reported in 1683 by Batavia. The Cape commander, Simon van der Stel, regretted his loss (106).

(106) KA 3997, f.464, S. van der Stel to Cornelia Speelman, 21 May 1684.

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The Slave Coast was a major supplier of slaves to transatlantic markets. West Central Africa, by far the largest supplier of slaves to the Americas, experienced two diasporas. Captives from the northern ports went to the colonies of northern Europeans, those from Luanda and Benguela in the south went to Brazil. By the end of the third quarter of the eighteenth century, the transatlantic slave trade was close to the highest level it was ever to attain. In a watery grave off the coast of Florida lies the earliest slave ship ever recovered. The English-owned Henrietta Marie plied the waters from Europe to Africa and the New World, sinking in the year 1700. She has waited three hundred years to reveal her story. Told in part from the decks and the cargo hold of a single merchant slaver, this powerful and fascinating story covers a period that has heretofore been largely the territory of scholars - the late seventeenth century, when the slave trade began a period of explosive growth. Spirits of the Passage describes the story of the largest forced migration in human history, with a powerful text that personalizes the experience of slavery in the most gripping way.