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FIVE

History, Historical Archaeology, and the “History of Silence”

Forced and Free Labor Migration in the Indian Ocean, 1700–1900

RICHARD B. ALLEN

MORE THAN THIRTY-FIVE YEARS ago, Hubert Gerbeau discussed the problems that contributed to the “history of silence” that surrounded the history of slave trading in the Indian Ocean.1 As the publication of important edited collections since the late 1980s2 and recent surveys of slavery and slave trading in this oceanic world attest,3 this silence is no longer nearly as deafening as it once was. A review of this scholarship also reveals, however, that many of the problems that Gerbeau identified in 1979—the pervasive Atlantic-centrism of slavery and African diaspora studies, the paucity of archival sources on slavery and slave trading compared to the Atlantic, the difficulties of defining and conceptualizing this oceanic world—continue to limit our understanding of the nature, dynamics, and consequences of the labor diasporas that
are an important but frequently ignored component of Indian Ocean history. Similar problems constrain attempts to acquire a deeper understanding of the multicultural societies that developed in tandem with these transoceanic migrant labor trades. Other difficulties stem from the propensity of those who study these societies and cultures to view local developments through the lens of a dominant conceptual paradigm, to foreclose examining these developments in broader comparative contexts, and to avoid drawing on the methodological approaches and insights offered by other disciplines. In many instances, this emphasis on the particular has resulted in studies that, while informative and insightful in many ways, ultimately shed only so much light on the societies and cultures in question.

Scholarship on labor migration in the Indian Ocean and the sociocultural history of South Africa and the Mascarene Islands of Mauritius and Réunion attests to the complexity of the human experience in the Indian Ocean basin, especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as forced and free labor migration became an increasingly prominent feature of European colonialism in this part of the globe. This research demonstrates, moreover, that a deeper understanding of this experience is contingent upon developing a fuller awareness of the multifaceted and multidirectional connections between eastern Africa, Madagascar, the Persian Gulf, South Asia, and Southeast Asia that are a hallmark of the region’s history, and a greater appreciation of the need for interdisciplinary approaches to the study of the societies and cultures in question. Historical archaeology provides one such approach because its emphasis on recovering, analyzing, and contextualizing material culture opens an avenue to examine aspects of human activity on which documentary sources may shed little, if any, light. As Alan Mayne notes in his recent review of historical archaeology, studying materiality has the potential to emphasize and recalibrate ambiguity in ways that can expand the interpretative parameters of historical understanding.

What we now know about European slave trading in the Indian Ocean reinforces the need to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to studying the nature, dynamics, and impact of forced and free labor migration in this oceanic basin. British, Dutch, French, and Portuguese traders exported a minimum of 449,900–565,200 slaves from Madagascar, Mozambique, the Swahili Coast, the Persian Gulf, India, and
Southeast Asia to European administrative centers, factories, and colonies in the Indian Ocean basin between 1500 and 1850. Europeans also shipped hundreds of thousands of slaves from the Indian Ocean westward to the Americas and eastward to East Asia and the Philippines from whence thousands were subsequently transported across the Pacific to Mexico. Overall, Europeans traded at least 954,000–1,275,900 slaves within and beyond the Indian Ocean basin during this 350-year period, with much of this activity concentrated in the years between 1700 and 1850.7

While the volume of European slave trading in the Indian Ocean pales in comparison to the estimated 12,521,000 Africans consumed by the transatlantic trades, research on slavery in South Africa8 and the Mascarenes9 leaves little doubt that this transoceanic traffic in chattel labor had a pronounced impact on social, economic, cultural, and political life in European Indian Ocean establishments. Mauritius and Réunion played a particularly important role in the history of European slave trading in this region. Perhaps as many as 388,000 African, Indian, and Southeast Asian slaves were exported to the islands between 1670 and 1848, with approximately 85 percent of such exports occurring between 1770 and the early 1830s.10 That the Mascarenes may have consumed 68–86 percent of all European transoceanic slave exports within the Indian Ocean world between 1500 and 1850 further underscores the islands’ importance in regional and global migrant labor history.

Perhaps 277,000–318,000 of the slaves exported to Mauritius and Réunion reached the islands alive, where they made up the overwhelming majority of the islands’ inhabitants. The slave trade’s impact on Mauritian and Réunionnais society and culture is revealed in other ways. The islands drew chattel laborers from a global catchment area that stretched from West Africa eastward across the Indian Ocean to Southeast Asia. Early nineteenth-century accounts of Mauritius note that the colony housed “blacks of every ethnicity,” including individuals from West Africa (Bambara, Guinean, Wolof), Mozambique and the Swahili Coast (Makonde, Makua, Ngindo, Nyambane, Nyamwezi, Sena), the Comoros (Anjouanais), Madagascar (Betsileo, Merina, Sakalava), India (Bengali, Goan, Lascar, Malabar, Talinga [Telegu]), and Southeast Asia (Mala, Timorese).11 Early nineteenth-century Mauritian slave censuses shed additional light on the diverse backgrounds of these bondmen and bondwomen. The 1817 census, for example, reveals
that the men, women, and children who arrived from Madagascar, Mozambique, and the Swahili Coast, the most important sources of chattel labor in the Indian Ocean between 1500 and 1850, came from a large number of ethnocultural populations. At least thirteen such groups on Madagascar supplied slaves to the islands, while those exported from Mozambique and the Swahili Coast came from fourteen populations that can be identified with certainty, some of which were located as far away as modern Malawi and eastern Zambia. The census includes other African and Malagasy ethnonyms whose modern equivalents remain uncertain. Other sources report the presence of slaves from the Horn of Africa (Abyssinians), the Persian Gulf (Arabs, Persians), elsewhere in Southeast Asia (Bali, Java, Makassar, Nias, Sumatra), and even China among the island’s servile inhabitants.

Although British, French, Mauritian, Réunionnais, and South African archives have allowed historians to reconstruct European slave trading and slavery in the western Indian Ocean in some detail, various aspects of this slave experience remain hidden from view because of what documentary sources do not discuss. While the archival record has permitted the compilation of three inventories of European Indian Ocean slave trading voyages, detailed information about this traffic in chattel labor often remains elusive and problematic. An inventory of some 950 slaving voyages involving the Mascarenes between 1718 and 1809 by American, Arab (probably Omani), French, Portuguese, and Spanish ships, for example, is based mostly on the déclarations d’arrivée, or statements that ship captains made to authorities following their arrival at Port Louis. The content of these declarations varies widely. While statements made to admiralty officials during the 1770s, 1780s, and early 1790s are frequently more detailed than those made to colonial authorities during the first decade of the nineteenth century, this detail often consists of reports about weather conditions during the voyage and damage to the ship that captains wanted recorded for insurance or legal purposes. Many declarations are silent about exactly where or how a ship’s human cargo was acquired, its size and demographic structure, shipboard conditions and slave mortality during the middle passage from Madagascar, Mozambique, the Swahili Coast, or India, or how these cargoes were disposed of once they arrived. Problematic records likewise limit attempts to reconstruct the illegal slave trade that carried an estimated 122,000–149,000 slaves away from eastern Africa,
Madagascar, and Southeast Asia toward Mauritius, Réunion, and the Seychelles from 1811 to the early 1830s, some 107,000 of whom apparently reached the islands alive.16

Similar constraints compromise our ability to develop a fuller understanding of slave life in the Mascarenes before the abolition of slavery in Mauritius and its dependencies in 1835 and on Réunion in 1848. Although governmental sources such as censuses, judicial records, maroon registers, the reports of royal commissions of inquiry, and annual reports on the colony’s condition make it possible to reconstruct local slave populations’ demographic structure, to ascertain how slaves were employed and treated, and to discuss public acts of slave resistance, especially maroonage,17 much of this documentation dates to the first half of the nineteenth century. Comparable information on the eighteenth century is often less readily available, partly because of the officially sanctioned destruction of documents during the nineteenth century and the loss of others since then because of neglect, insect predation, and the damage wrought by cyclones and the island’s tropical climate.18 Studies of Mauritian, Réunionnais, and Seychellois slavery likewise reveal little about the internal dynamics of local slave society or slaves’ cultural beliefs and practices, much less processes of creolization.19 On those occasions when slaves themselves speak to us, often indirectly via colonial officials who recorded their complaints, they rarely refer to the sociocultural world in which they lived.20 Occasional archival hints about this world, such as the discourse networks they created,21 highlight the need for new strategies to probe otherwise opaque realms of slave life. A police report dated 26 September 1799 is a tantalizing case in point. The report notes that a male slave belonging to a Mr. Humblot had been murdered by maroon slaves who left the corpse surrounded by the heads of fowls (têtes de volailles) they had stolen from Humblot, an act that points to religious or cultural practices not unlike those associated with voodoo in the Caribbean.22

Recent excavations in Mauritius, South Africa, and elsewhere in the European colonial world underscore the important role that historical archaeology can play in deepening our understanding of European slave systems in the Indian Ocean. The discovery and excavation of the wreck of Le Coureur, a notorious slaver that landed six illegal cargoes, each containing 150–200 slaves, on Mauritius during 1819 and 1820,23 afforded an opportunity to explore the day-to-day dynamics of European
slave trading in the Indian Ocean in greater detail, recover potential ev-
idence of slaves’ material culture,24 and ultimately compare this activity
with that of European slavers that operated elsewhere in the region and
in the Atlantic.25 That only a few of the more than 180 documented
shipwrecks of slavers operating in the Atlantic have been located, much
less excavated,26 makes Le Coureur’s discovery all that much more note-
worthy and a powerful incentive to locate other wrecked slave ships in
the Indian Ocean.27 The Mascarene slave trade inventory includes 22
other wrecks between 1733 and 1803 (table 5.1). Of these, that of L’Au-
rore may be an especially suitable candidate for archaeological survey
and excavation. The ship, which was the site of a slave insurrection on
19 January 1790 while anchored off Mozambique Island, was wrecked
four weeks later in the Mozambique roads with a cargo of 600 slaves on
board destined for the Americas, only 269 of whom apparently survived
this catastrophe.28

That archaeological research has the potential to shed significant
light on hitherto hidden aspects of slave life in the southwestern Indian
Ocean is indicated in other ways. Excavations on the island of Trôme-
lin, 350 miles north of Mauritius, yielded significant information about
the determination of the slaves marooned on the island for fifteen years
after the 1761 wreck of the French slaver L’Utile to survive.29 Those
near Cape Town at the places along the Platteklip stream used by slave
washerwomen during the eighteenth century resulted in the recovery of
thousands of artifacts that have provided information about slave wom-
’en’s work in the kind of detail rarely found in documentary sources.30
Research in the caves near Shimoni on the southern Kenyan coast has, in
turn, provided insights into how slaves were held for export during the
nineteenth century.31 Archaeological sites that can be linked definitively
with slavery remain a rarity in Mauritius,32 but the reward that identifi-
cation and excavation of such sites may yield is suggested by fieldwork at
the Powder Mills in Pamplemousses that produced fifteen metal badges
similar to well-documented slave badges from Charleston, South Caro-
lina. Because these badges were probably worn by government-owned
slaves assigned to these gunpowder works, they may provide an oppor-
tunity to discern how this chattel workforce was organized and con-
trolled.33 Excavations of slave sites in the Caribbean provide a template
for the ways in which historical archaeology can deepen our under-
standing of the slave experience, including the creolization process, in
### TABLE 5.1. Shipwrecks and the Mascarene slave trade, 1733–1803

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ship</th>
<th>Tons</th>
<th>Slave Cargo</th>
<th>Wreck Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1733</td>
<td>La Vénus</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Réunion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1733</td>
<td>La Méduse</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>39&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Mauritius, Pointe aux Canonniers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1739</td>
<td>La Subtile</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>Mangaëls [sic], Madagascar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1761</td>
<td>L'Utile</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>60&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Tromelin Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1777</td>
<td>L'Indigent</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Anbonin, Madagascar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1778</td>
<td>Les Deux Amis</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Unknown – sailed from Bengal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780</td>
<td>L'Entreprenant</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Fort Dauphin, Madagascar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1784</td>
<td>La Ste. Anne</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>c. 364&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Ibo, Mozambique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1785</td>
<td>Le Béïsiaire</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>246&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Ibo, Mozambique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1786</td>
<td>Le David</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>386&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Mozambique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1786</td>
<td>La Belle Union</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>18&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Fort Dauphin, Madagascar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>La Françoise</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>43&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Zanzibar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>L'Insulaire</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>10&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Coetivi, Seychelles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>La Diane</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Cape of Good Hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>Le Chorèbe</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>East African coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>L'Aurore</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>Mozambique roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>La Paquete de Bourbon</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Matundo island, Mozambique coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>Le Diligent</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>60&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Seychelles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>La Belle Africaine</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>361&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>East African coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>L'Idée</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>10&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Foulpointe, Madagascar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>Le Sauveur de l'Île de France</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>144&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Soug Soug islands, Swahili Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803</td>
<td>L'Ana Joaquina</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>365&lt;sup&gt;h&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Unknown – Mozambique coast?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- <sup>a</sup> Number of slaves saved at time of wreck.
- <sup>b</sup> Number of slaves acquired during a 1783 voyage to Mozambique.
- <sup>c</sup> Number of slaves loaded; 168 deaths at sea and from shipwreck.
- <sup>d</sup> Number of slaves returned to Mauritius.
- <sup>e</sup> Fifty-five slaves saved.
- <sup>f</sup> Nine slaves saved.
- <sup>g</sup> One hundred twenty-seven slaves saved.
- <sup>h</sup> Approximately 55 slaves lost at time of shipwreck.

**Source:** Richard B. Allen, unpublished Mascarene slaving voyage inventory, 1639–1816.
the Indian Ocean.34 Excavation of such sites in the Mascarenes can also be potentially important for comparing the slave experience in these islands with that in the French Caribbean.35

Excavations at a small cemetery near Le Morne in the island’s southwestern corner demonstrate that historical archaeology also has the potential to expand our understanding of other important groups in colonial slave societies such as gens de couleur libres, or free(d) persons of color. The Mauritius National Archives’ extensive collection of notarial acts has been an invaluable resource in reconstructing the history of this population, which became increasingly important socially and economically during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as well as the life histories of individual gens de couleur.36 Such reconstructions ultimately remain incomplete, however, because archival information about these men and women comes largely, if not exclusively, from governmental and legal documents whose content is invariably circumscribed in one way or another. Analysis of the human remains recovered from the Le Morne cemetery, by comparison, provides a unique opportunity to investigate living conditions and cultural practices in a rural free colored or possibly slave community in early nineteenth-century Mauritius without having to contend with the distortions that invariably color contemporary accounts of slave and/or free colored life on the island.37

Historical archaeology’s potential to shed additional light on hitherto obscure or opaque aspects of the slavery and slave trading extends to the other migrant labor trades that flourished in the Indian Ocean between the 1780s and the late nineteenth century. Late eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century attempts to abolish European slave trading in the Indian Ocean resulted in the increasingly interconnected movement of slave, convict, and indentured labor within the Indian Ocean.38 British authorities transported at least 74,800 and perhaps as many as 100,000 or more Indian and Ceylonese convicts to the Andaman Islands, Bencoolen (Benkulen, Bengkulu) on Sumatra’s west coast, Burma (Myanmar), Malacca (Melaka), Mauritius, Penang, and Singapore, mostly between the late 1780s and mid-nineteenth century.39 The 1830s to early 1920s witnessed the migration of 2.2 million African, Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Javanese, Melanesian, and other indentured laborers throughout and beyond the European colonial plantation world in what is frequently characterized as a “new system of slavery.”40
structural links with slavery are a hallmark of the *engagé* system that entailed the recruitment of 50,000 ostensibly liberated slaves and free contractual laborers along the East African coast and in Madagascar to work on Mayotte in the Comoros, the island of Nosy Bé off Madagascar’s northwest coast, and Réunion during the second half of the nineteenth century.41

Mauritius has long been acknowledged as the crucial test case in the use of indentured labor in the postemancipation plantation world.42 More indentured laborers landed on the island than any other European colony, while the total number of such workers in the Indian Ocean surpassed those who arrived in the Caribbean by 259,000. The Indian Ocean’s significance in the history of this global labor migration becomes even more pronounced if the 1.5 million or more men and women who emigrated from southern India to plantations in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Malaya to work under short-term, often verbal, contracts between the 1840s and the early twentieth century and the 700,000–750,000 Indian migrants who labored on Assamese plantations between 1870 and 1900 are included in this labor diaspora.43

As even cursory searches of the *World Catalogue* and *Historical Abstracts* reveal, indentured labor is the subject of substantial research, research facilitated by an extensive body of official and unofficial documentation about the men, women, and children who migrated throughout a colonial plantation world that reached from the Caribbean to South Africa, eastern Africa, the southwestern Indian Ocean, South and Southeast Asia, and the South Pacific.44 Indentured labor in Mauritius has likewise been a subject of considerable scholarly interest.45 A review of this scholarship reveals, however, that despite the existence of often detailed information about the indentured experience, including that provided by immigrants themselves in their petitions and letters,46 important aspects of the sociocultural world in which these men, women, and children lived remain hidden from view. While the Aapravasi Ghat, as the immigration depot in Port Louis is now known, and other structures associated with indentured labor in Mauritius have been the subject of archaeological investigation,47 these excavations have revealed little about the more intimate and intriguing aspects of these immigrants’ lives.

A striking feature of slave, convict, and indentured labor studies is the marked propensity among historians to study these populations in isolation from one another even though we know that these ethnically
and culturally diverse populations interacted with each other in various ways. Indentured Indians labored alongside slaves in Mauritian cane fields during the late 1820s and early 1830s, and continued to do so with the island’s apprentices and ex-apprentices after the abolition of slavery in 1835 and the apprenticeship system’s collapse in 1838, respectively. This historiographical apartheid is a product of the conceptual parochialism that is a persistent problem in indentured and global labor studies[48] and the content of the archival materials at our disposal. Mauritian colonial officials, for example, paid less and less attention to the island’s emancipated slaves after the “apprenticeship” system ended in 1838 as they focused on managing the tens of thousands of indentured Indians who arrived in the colony during the 1840s. As a result of this governmental disinterest, ex-apprentices largely disappear as a readily discernible sociopolitical entity in Mauritian history after 1851.49

While sources such as notarial records provide occasional tantalizing glimpses into the social and cultural world of the colony’s Creole and Indian immigrant populations,50 the nature and extent of these communities’ interactions with each other remain shrouded by the mists of time. Oral tradition and family histories provide obvious avenues to explore these relationships in greater detail but, as historians know only too well, such sources can be problematic, especially in societies with well-educated populations with access to published histories of their ancestors, community, or locality.51 As the excavation of an East Indian laborer’s house site at Seville plantation in Jamaica demonstrates,52 historical archaeology holds out the promise of providing an alternative opening to a more comprehensive understanding of cultural identity and diversity in the plural societies created by the slave and indentured labor trades.

If the multidirectional movement of hundreds of thousands of forced and free laborers in the Indian Ocean basin during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries provides an obvious starting point to establish a historical archaeological research agenda for the Indian Ocean world,53 historians and archaeologists must remain aware of the problems they will invariably face in pursuing such an agenda. Some aspects of slave life, such as maroonage, will never lend themselves to archaeological investigation unless sites associated with well-developed, long-term maroon communities, such as those found in the Americas and Kenya, can be identified.54 Recent attempts to use archaeology to document maroon activity in Mauritius are a classic case in point. Excavations conducted
on and near Le Morne, popularly regarded as an important refuge for fugitive slaves, yielded results that can only be characterized as problematic and inconclusive.55 These results, coupled with the small number of archival references to maroon slaves on and near Le Morne, mandated that the dossier nominating the Le Morne Cultural Landscape for inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) had to emphasize the mountain’s intangible cultural, rather than historical, value as a symbol of slave resistance and sacrifice.56

If some facets of the free and forced migrant labor experience in the Indian Ocean will remain beyond the historian and archaeologist’s reach, other aspects of that experience will undoubtedly lend themselves to collaborative interdisciplinary research. What we now know about slaves and indentured laborers suggests that a central component of such a research agenda should be the identification and excavation of sites that housed both slave and indentured populations.57 Such an agenda should likewise include identification and excavation of sites associated with the convict systems that scattered tens of thousands of individuals throughout the Indian Ocean basin during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Excavations in western and northern Australia and Tasmania58 highlight the potential value of doing so at Bencoolen and Penang and in the Andamans where structures closely associated with convict laborers or constructed specifically to house them have been documented. As research in the Caribbean demonstrates, historical archaeologists working in the Indian Ocean also need to focus on sites associated not only with sugar and other commodity production, but also with marketing these commodities.59

Any such agenda must invariably include a commitment by both historians and historical archaeologists to situate the results of their research in appropriately developed comparative contexts. As reports on the excavation of Dutch East India Company (VOC) forts at Katuwana in Sri Lanka and Vieux Grand Port in Mauritius illustrate,60 examining these sites in isolation does little to deepen our understanding of the ways in which these constituent elements of the VOC company-state functioned. The need to contextualize such studies is underscored by the growing body of scholarship on the British, Dutch, French, and Portuguese imperial networks that are a hallmark of European presence in the Indian Ocean,61 networks that intersected and overlapped in ways that we are only beginning to discern, much less understand.
6. Alan Mayne, “Edges of History,” 94. On the ways in which archaeological fieldwork can transform our understanding of the Indian Ocean world before c. 1500, see Edward A. Alpers, this volume.


12. National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew: T 71/566, Registry of Personal Slaves, 1817; and T 71/571, Registry of Plantation Slaves, 1817.


14. Michael Reidy, Ocean of Suffering: Trans-Indian Ocean Slave Trade Database, 1654 to 1860 (n.p.: Amazon Digital Services, 2015), which includes information on more than eight hundred slave ships that passed the Cape of Good Hope between 1654 and 1860, is currently available only as a Kindle download. The two inventories that I compiled on the Mascarene slave trade from 1639 to 1816 and British East India Company slaving voyages between 1622 and 1772 have yet to be published; their contents are discussed in R. Allen, European Slave Trading.


20. See, for example, the complaints slaves lodged with the Mauritian Protector of Slaves, some of which were published in the British Parliament Sessional Papers (hereafter PP) 1830–31 XV [262-VI]. The office of protector was established in 1829.


37. Appleby et al., “Non-adult Cohort.” That some of these burials may date from the late mid- or late 1820s is suggested by the recovery from one grave of French and Italian coins dated between 1812 and 1822; that dated 1822 shows few signs of use. On these excavations, see also: Krish Seetah, “The Archaeology of Mauritius,” Antiquity 89 (2015): 922–39; and Seetah, “Objects Past, Objects Present.” That those buried in this cemetery were probably of free colored origin or descent is suggested by the cemetery’s proximity to Makak, a settlement on the north side of Le Morne inhabited by gens de couleur libres during the early nineteenth century. See Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh, Sophie Le Chartier, and Sharon Jacquin-Ng, “The Search for Makak: A Multidisciplinary Settlement History of the Northern Coast of Le Morne Brabant, Mauritius,” International Journal of Historical Archaeology 18, no. 3 (2014): 375–414. On the value of these kinds of excavations, see A. Pearson et al., Infernal Traffic.


49. R. Allen, Slaves, Freedmen, 134–35. The last expression of official interest in this population dates to 1866.

50. R. Allen, 163–64.


53. For an overview of the archaeology of slavery and indenture in Mauritius, see Seetah, “Archaeology of Mauritius.”


61. For example: Kerry Ward, Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Machado, Ocean of Trade; and R. Allen, European Slave Trading.