Empire Builders, Slave Traders
East - Central Africa (c.1850-1900)

Mirambo

Tippu-Tib

Msiri

[see also Case Study – Zanzibar, Oct. 29 – Nov. 2]
Late Nineteenth-Century Empires of Msiri, Tippu-Tib, Mirambo
‘Tippu Tip’ (1837-1905)

‘Tippu Tip’:

- Hamad bin Muḥammad (bin Jumah bin Rajab bin Muḥammad bin Ṣaʿīd al-Murghabī)

- Ruled commercial empire Equatorial Africa, 1860s to 1890

- Father and paternal grandfather coastal Swahili, involved in earliest trade to interior

- Mother Omani Arab
‘Tippu Tip’ (1837-1905)

- paternal great Grandmother: daughter of man from respected Omani family and African woman from village near Dar es-Salam

- built trading empire based on ivory and slaves in interior

- reinvested on Zanzibar (1895 said to have acquired 7 plantations and some 10,000 slaves)
‘Tippu Tip’ (1837-1905)

Interview -- Henry Louis Gates, Jr. with Ummi Hammid (from ‘Swahili Coast’):

• GATES: How do you feel about your great great grandfather [Tippu Tip]?

• OUMI: I feel that it was the trend of the time, that was business, purely. You either be a slave or a slaver. You choose the lesser of the two evils. And if you are in a position to be a slaver why should you be a slave. The slavery was different from the slavery of American. The Arabs took their slaves and married them and they intermingled with them. It was quite different with the slaves in the West, America where they were mostly used for plantation and they never, there was racism.

• GATES: Yes.
‘Tippu Tip’ (1837-1905)

• OUMI: With Arabs they, they married their slaves. So this is the difference.

• GATES: Arab men married African women.

• OUMI: Married, women, yes.

• GATES: But not the other way round.

• OUMI: Oh, not vice versa, but at least they married them and they had children with them, here are the products.
‘Tippu Tip’ (1837-1905)

[only partial transcription; for four-minute segment on Gates, Ummi Hammad and ‘Tippu-Tip’, go to ‘Wonders of the African World’, (also linked directly in ‘Resources’)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spkQ7F2aNC4&feature=relmfu

[Episode 4 begins at 54:00min; Tippu-Tip interview 137:25– 141:17min]
‘Mirambo’ (c. 1840-1884)

‘Mirambo’:
- born Mtyela Kasanda

- Nyamwezi (African) trader in ivory and slaves

- challenged political and commercial power coastal Swahili traders

- major competition: Tabora (see map, above)
‘Mirambo’ (c. 1840-1884)

Tabora:

“In the early years of the town, the size of the community varied seasonally, as traders arrived and departed with the caravans. Increasing numbers of Arabs and coastal Muslims settled there in the latter half of the nineteenth century, making Tabora the most important Muslim town in the interior. Men of Omani descent controlled important sectors of the economy and, through business partnerships, linked the Congo River basin with the Indian Ocean.”

[From ‘The Marriage that was not to be…’, Additional Readings; my added emphasis.]
Abolition and ‘Arab’ Slave Trade

Tabora, 1907: traders with slaves. An ‘Arab’ town?
‘Msiri’ (c. 1830 – 1891)

‘Msiri’:

- born c.1830 near Tabora (Mwenda Msiri Ngelengwa Shitambi)

- father Mazwiri-Kalasa: ‘Arabized’ Nyamwezi chief, engaged caravan trade between copper-producing areas (modern-day) Katanga, Congo and East African Coast

- M'siri established blood brotherhood with many chiefs to facilitate trade
‘Msiri’ (c. 1830 – 1891)

- Accumulated copper, ivory, slaves
- Purchased rifles, powder
- Undertake his own slave-raiding expeditions
- Also purchased slave women to marry to his men
- Founded his own Kingdom (c. 1856) based on the export of copper, ivory and slaves