MARRIAGE IN DOMONI

Husbands and Wives in an Indian Ocean Community

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Cover Photo: A section of the ancient town wall of Domoni

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Preface

My research for Marriage in Domoni began two decades ago when Dr. Robert Gray, then a professor of Anthropology at Tulane University, suggested that I undertake field research for my Ph.D. dissertation in the Comoro Islands. He had been intrigued by these islands ever since the time that he had briefly stopped there two decades earlier. Very little was known in the scientific community about the islands at the time that I began research and even the French Government, which administered them as an overseas territory, was not very informed. This was first made apparent to me when I approached the French Consul in the United States to apply for visas to the islands. He asked, "Oh, do we still have them?" Furthermore, the little information I did manage to find, before embarking for the Indian Ocean, was not always accurate. I was informed, for example, that the islanders spoke Swahili, a well known language in the area, and so I applied for, and successfully received, a National Defense Foreign Language Summer Fellowship to learn that language. It was not until I stopped briefly in East Africa, on my way to the islands, and I met J.W.T. Allen, an eminent scholar of Swahili life, that I discovered that this information was not accurate. Dr. Allen had just recently returned from a brief sojourn to the Comoro Islands and was emphatic about the fact that whatever the Comorians were speaking, it wasn't Swahili.

Still, the training in Swahili proved useful. In the islands I used it to talk to some of the Swahili-speaking migrants from East Africa. They had recently come to the Comoros and through them I was introduced to some of the forces of change that were to affect Comorian life. More important to the task of learning about Comorian life, my having learned Swahili made it easier for me to learn the speech used in the Comoros, for it is closely related to Swahili and shares many of the essentials of grammar.

Committed to the ideal of human research through personal contact, the only proper way this could be accomplished was by learning the language spoken in the islands. The people of Domoni made this possible by their hospitality and their great patience. Several people took the time and effort to teach Shinzwani to my wife and me. This could not have been an easy task for many of our teachers; they shared no language with us except

Shinzwani. Anyone who has participated in learning a language in a monolingual environment knows the difficulties inherent in such a situation and I am especially grateful to the people of Domoni for their efforts on our behalf.

Many families in Domoni extended their hospitality to take my wife and me into their homes, providing us with the opportunity to become familiar with intimate details of their lives. For this opportunity, I shall always be grateful. To the many individuals of the community who assisted in introducing us to life in Domoni and in providing the information for this book, I owe a debt that can never be fully repaid. Although it is not possible to list all of their names, I must mention Affane Mohamed and his son Nounou for inviting us to Domoni, Said Allaoui for all of his attention, and Mirghane, Anis, Bastoine, Lilie, Toihir, Salim, Abdallah, Rouchid, Djamal, Sumet, Siti, Nourou, Toiouyat, Nassuf, Mohamed, Loutfi, Othmane, Nene, Warid, and Soifaoui for their help and friendship.

I was very fortunate to have had the cooperation of President Said Mohamed Cheikh, President Ahmed Abdallah, and many other members of the Government of the Comoro Islands. Officials of the French government, too, during my first two trips to the archipelago, were very cooperative. All made my visits to the islands possible and made me feel warmly received. Without their assistance, no stay in the islands would have been possible and without their trust in the anthropological endeavor, no work could have been accomplished. The field work was also financed by grants from the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the Bureau of General Research at Kansas State University.

I am deeply indebted to my wife. Part of the information presented here was gathered by her while we were together in the Comoro Islands and in the writing of this book, much of her discussion, criticism, and editing is reflected. Without her, none of this would have been possible.

This book is written primarily for an audience with a minimal acquaintance with social anthropology. I have omitted as much of the technical jargon of Anthropology as I have thought possible. I have also eliminated the ritual language of numbers of the science in an attempt to comfortably introduce the general reader to the distinct way of life in the Comoro Islands. I hope, by my efforts, I have succeeded in contributing to a more widespread awareness about life in these little known, but significant, islands in the Indian Ocean.

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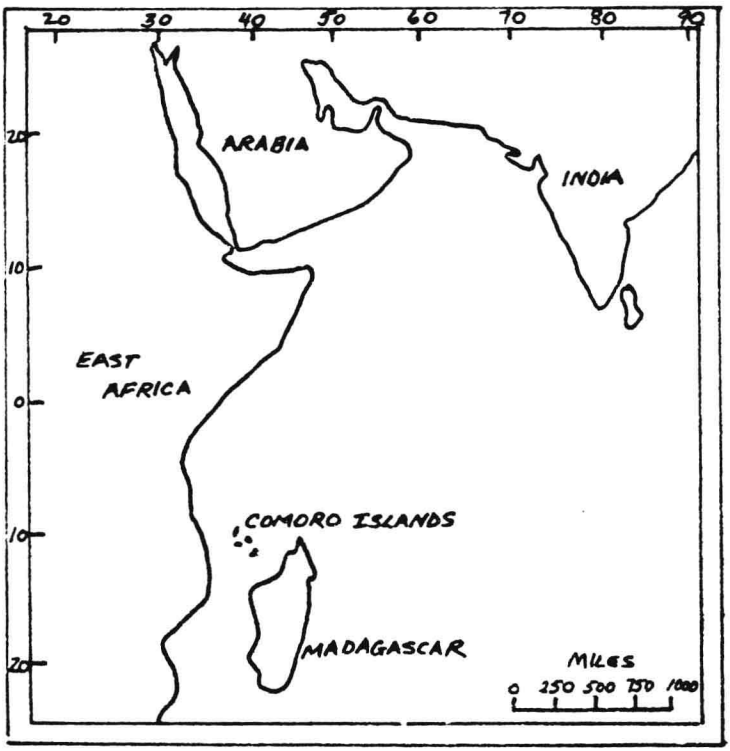
Chapter One

Introduction

There are many tales of travel and trade in the Indian Ocean. The exploits of Sinbad, the sailor, are widely recounted and are known far from the warm waters between Africa and Asia. Not as well known is the particularly intriguing legend of the Shirazi migration to the east coast of Africa and the Comoro Islands. Of considerable antiquity, the tales were recorded by the Portuguese as early as the sixteenth century. They tell of the arrival in the lands of the western Indian Ocean of a family from Asia. The father of the

The Western Indian Ocean



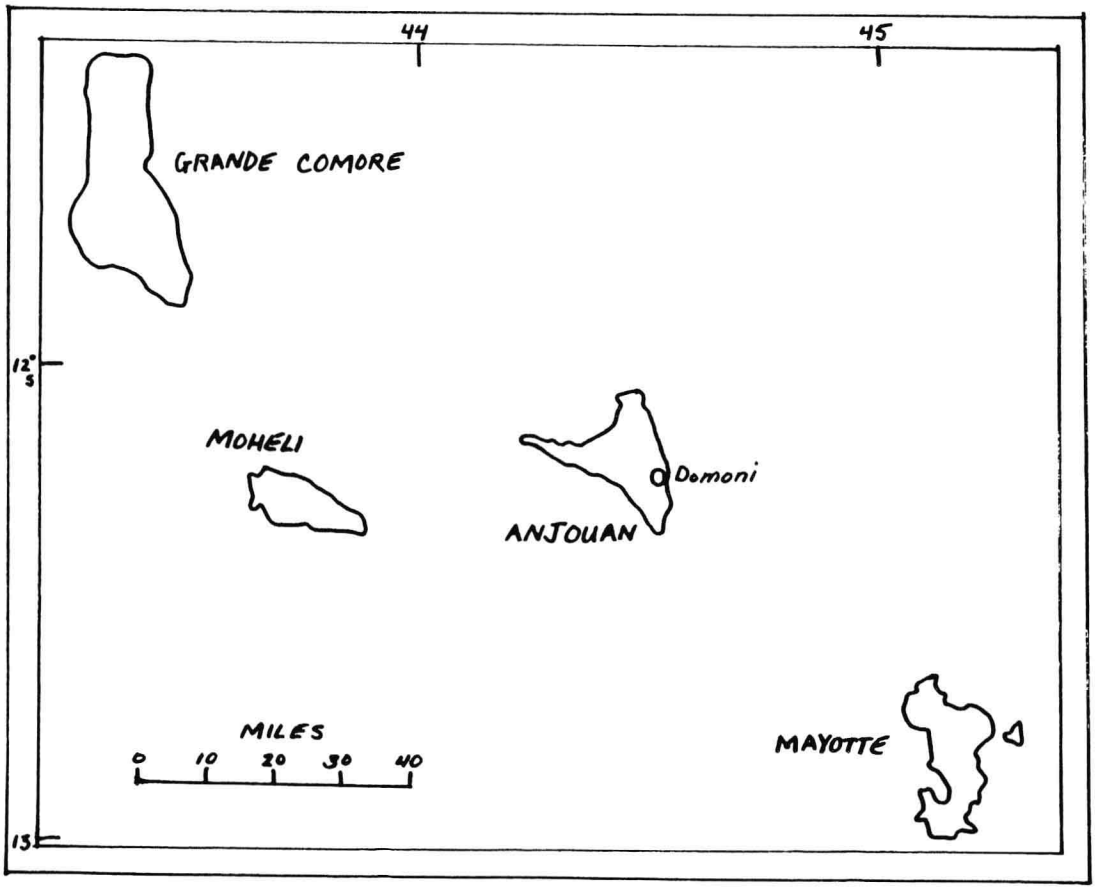
family settled in the archipelago of the Comoro Islands, on the island of Anjouan. Considerable discussion has arisen among scholars of eastern African and western Indian Ocean history and culture concerning the Shirazi migration. They seek to determine the precise date of the migration, the actual place of embarkation of the travelers, the significance of this migration in East African history, and the importance of the tale in the lives of people today. Linguists, historians, and anthropologists have already made significant contributions to the search for the answers of the many questions the legend has raised but additional data is still required before the legend's puzzles will be solved. Of particular importance is information from and about the Shirazi descendants themselves. Until now, not very much has been known about the culture of the people who trace their ancestry to these ancient migrants of the Indian Ocean.

In the town of Domoni, on the island of Anjouan, are a group of people who describe themselves as Shirazi. They trace their descent to the legendary Shirazi migrants and claim that they have, for the most part, maintained the old Shirazi way of life. This book describes their system of marriage. It is a central focus of their way of life. The marriage system is somewhat unusual, including both the right of a man to marry more than one unrelated woman at a time and the right for each wife to remain in her own residence with her mother and sisters. This combination of general polygyny with matrilocal residence is a rare arrangement of a system of marriage. It has even been thought to be impossible.

When Vasco de Gama sailed beyond the Atlantic Ocean, introducing Europeans into the ancient maritime trade networks of the Indian Ocean, he employed the expertise of a local navigator, Ibn Majid, to guide the Portuguese fleet from the east coast of Africa to India. This famous navigator wrote about some of his exploits during this medieval period, describing the thriving trade of the Indian Ocean and noting its major centers. One of the centers of the complex network of Indian Ocean trade mentioned by Ibn Majid is Domoni on the island of Anjouan.

Anjouan is a major island of the Comoro Archipelago. The Archipelago is a group of volcanic islands located in the western Indian Ocean at the northern end of the Mozambique Channel. These islands rise abruptly from the sea floor approximately halfway between Mozambique and Madagascar, and between eleven and thirteen degrees south of the equator. They enjoy a maritime tropical climate. With the heat of the sun moderated by continuous sea breezes, the islands have a daily average temperature in the high seventies. There is some seasonal variation in temperature. A warmer season from October to April is produced by a predominantly northerly wind blowing across the Indian Ocean. This wind is also moist and produces major periods of rainfall from December to April. A cooler season with less rainfall is primarily due to drier, southerly winds issuing from high pressure centers in Southern Africa. This cooler, drier season lasts from May to September (Robequain 1958:360). Due to variations in

The Comoro Islands



each island's topography, there is some variation in rainfall and temperature from island to island and even between locations on each island.

Each of the four islands has its own distinctive characteristics. Mayotte, approximately sixty-five kilometers southeast of Anjouan, is geologically the oldest of the Comoro islands. It has a well eroded interior. It has deep, red soil. It has muddy, slow moving streams and mangrove swamps, and it is surrounded by a coral barrier reef. The people of Mayotte—including a large number of Malagasy speakers who are descendants of migrants from the nearby island of Madagascar—voted not to join the people in the other three islands when, in 1975, they formed an independent nation. Mayotte remains under French administration today, continuing an involvement with France that began in the early part of the nineteenth century. It is the island of Mayotte that has had the longest period of French control over administrative affairs in the Comoro islands.

The other three islands are politically united today as the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoro Islands, a unit created in 1978. The capital city of the republic, Moroni, is on the island of Grande Comore. This island is the largest (1147.82 square kilometers) as well as the youngest island of the archipelago. Its most prominent feature is a massive, active volcano that dominates the southern part of the island. Grand Comore is the only island with frequent volcanic activity. Its landscape is scarred with the jagged boulders of recent lava flows from fissure lines, from strombolian cones, and from the large volcano itself (Battistini 1967:191f). Water filters through the porous surface of this youthful volcanic island and, except for brief moments after a shower, there are no running rivers or streams on Grande Comore.

Southeast of Grande Comore is Moheli, the smallest of the four major islands (290.44 square kilometers) in the archipelago. It is essentially composed of a single mountain range, rising 790 meters above sea level, running along a central, southeast-northwest line. Intermediate in age between Mayotte and Grande Comore, it has fresh running water, rugged mountains with an occasional, discernible volcanic cone and its accompanying lava flow. There is no apparent evidence of recent volcanic activity.

East by north of Moheli lies the island of Anjouan. It has three mountain ranges that meet in the central and highest point of the island. The peak reaches 1575 meters above the surrounding sea and the four hundred twenty-four square kilometers of the island, roughly in the shape of an isosceles triangle pointing westward, slope steeply from this central peak to the seashores. There, one can see long expanses of sandy, black beaches, sparkling with metallic elements. These are occasionally bounded by cliffs or by cascades of smooth black boulders, not yet ground into sand by the sea.

A luxurious tropical forest caps the mountains of Anjouan. This forest is rapidly diminishing. An expanding population—83,486 in 1966 (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques 1966) and now estimated to be more than 110,000—cuts the trees for lumber, firewood, or

to clear land for cultivation. The estimated 10,400 hectares that remained in 1965 had been reduced to merely 2950 hectares by 1974 (World Bank 1979:146-151). It now simply shades the highest peaks and the streams beginning their rapid descent from the interior to the shore.

The majority of the island's surface is now being used in the cultivation of a large variety of plants. Grown by the people of Anjuouan, and of primary importance in domestic consumption, are rice, cassava, pigeon pea, yam, sweet potato, taro, banana, coconut, and breadfruit. These foods, plus fish and the meat from domesticated sheep, goats, cattle, and chickens make up the bulk of the diet. Eggplant, tomato, onion, corn, coffee, lentil, papaya, mango, pineapple, lettuce, peanuts, cashew, orange, lemon, and lime are also utilized domestically. But, in spite of the great variety of plants that can be grown, the rich fertility of the volcanic soil, and the abundance of moisture, the island's agricultural production has difficulty in meeting the demands of its rapidly growing population. This difficulty has been explained in several ways. It has been ascribed to changes in land ownership, cash economy, and population density (Robineau 1966). Recently, the traditional methods of production and management have been seen as a major factor contributing to the inadequacy of the island's resources to meet the demand for food by the island's population (World Bank 1979).

Food must be imported. Rice, in particular, is imported in large quantities and, in recent years, it has accounted for more than twenty per cent of total imports (World Bank 1983). This demand for this crop far exceeds its domestic production today but this traditional starch of the Comorian diet has been imported into the islands for many years, not always because of any insufficiency on the part of local farmers to supply demand. In the nineteen sixties, wealthier townspeople were importing rice grown outside of the islands because they preferred the varieties grown in Southeast Asia and South America to the home grown variety. Rice has been imported into the Comoro Islands for over three hundred years (see Sir Walter Payton's mention of imported rice in 1615 in Purchas 1965,IV:292) and has been a part of the trade in the area since as early as the twelfth century (see al-Idris' comments in Freeman-Grenville 1966:19).

Not all of the agricultural land is dedicated to the production of food for domestic consumption. A large number of plants is grown to produce copra, vanilla, cloves, and essential oils. These have been the most important products in the cash economy. The distillates made from the flowers or leaves of aromatic plants are the chief exports of the islands. Ylang-ylang oil is an especially important export. Produced as a distillate from the flower of the ylang-ylang tree, it is used as a stabilizer in the manufacture of perfume. The Comoros account for 80.4 percent of the world production of this essential oil (World Bank 1983). Anjouan is the home of much of this production. Over twelve hundred hectares of the island are planted with ylang-ylang trees (World Bank 1979).

The plants used in the production of essential oils, plus the many spice, fruit, and orchid plants found throughout the island, exude a luxurious aroma that permeates the air of Anjouan, particularly after a rain shower. This sensuous delight is complemented by the feel of the cool sea breezes in the warm, tropical sun, by the sights of cascading waterfalls running down the ancient volcanoes to the black, sandy beaches of the island's shores, and by the sounds of the ocean meeting the island with an uninterrupted swell of energy from as far away as Southeast Asia. Surely, it was this rapture of the senses that led the French to call the island, "the pearl of the Indian Ocean."

Today, the French have a major naval base on Mayotte and Grande Comore is the home for a force of well-armed mercenaries. Anjouan was a coaling station for British ships steaming Indian Ocean waters before the French took over administration of the island. Even earlier, in the seventeenth century, it was a base of operations for some of the most notorious pirates ever to plague the ships of the East India trade (Bulpin 1969). This island of Anjouan—in fact, the entire archipelago—is situated in a highly strategic location. It has had a long history of involvement in the political, commercial, military, religious, and social affairs of the Indian Ocean. This involvement is just beginning to be understood today.

It is not known just how long ago the Comoro Islands began their involvement in the maritime trade of the Indian Ocean but the language, traditions, architecture, and written documents of the people of the islands indicate that there were trading contacts as early as the first millenium A.D. (Ottenheimer, 1977). Archaeological surveys have uncovered, on the island of Anjouan, fragments of tenth century Persian pottery (Henry Wright, personal communication) and, on the island of Mayotte, pottery dating from the 8th century A.D. (Kus and Wright 1976). More detailed evidence about the early occupation of the islands and the nature of the extent of the Comorian participation in the Indian Ocean's early maritime trade networks still awaits discovery.

With increasing interest in the area, archaeological and historical research may soon uncover the nature of the early involvement of the Comorians in the history of the Indian Ocean. The approximately two hundred miles between the island of Madagascar and the Comorian Archipelao or the similar distance between the archipelago and the East African coast would not have posed any serious problem to early navigators. Ben Finney (1967), Thomas Gladwin (1970), and David Lewis (1972) have demonstrated that peoples without compass, sextant, or any other of the instruments of modern navigation have the capability to traverse large bodies of water and make accurate landfalls. Furthermore, seafarers can utilize a variety of techniques, including the observation of birds, cloud formations, and wave motions, not only to set and maintain an accurate course for destinations far from the point of departure but to sail to land never before discovered. Substantial water craft are also known which early seafarers could have

used to cross open water. The traditional sewn boats of the Indian Ocean, constructed without any metal, are a notably seaworthy example. The durability and capability of these craft can be illustrated by the Laccadive sailing vessel, *Odampoodam,* which is of traditional construction. This vessel, approximately sixty feet in length overall with a beam of seventeen feet, is entirely held together by coir stitching and has been used to carry large cargoes of freight in the Indian Ocean for over forty years. It all points to the fact "that the sewn ships of some centuries ago were quite capable of long sea voyages providing that the seasons were understood. There is no doubt they were!" (Hawkins 1977:105)

Early seafarers may have been attracted to the Comoros indirectly through flotsam carried by currents or the smoke from the volcano, *Kartala.* This massive volcano on the largest island of the archipelago, Grande Comore, is visible sixty miles from the island; any smoke issuing from its crater can be carried over a wide area of the northern Mozambique Channel. Another factor, however is even more likely to have brought early seafarers directly to the Comoro Islands. The only practical means of navigating northwards from the Southern African coast is to sail with the favorable southerly breeze in March and April, using the northward flowing counter-current along the western coast of Madagascar to the Comoro Islands (Datoo 1975). Thus, any early navigation in the Mozambique Channel would more than likely have brought seafarers directly to the islands.

In the likelihood of early contact between Southern Africa and India (see Summers 1969), the chances are that the Comoros were a part of the Indian Ocean trade before the current millenium. Maritime commerce between India and Southern Africa is constrained by conditions that make the archipelago an excellent stopover location for sailing vessels and an excellent site for an entrepôt. The ports of the west coast of India, the ones most likely to have been used in the African trade, are generally closed to sailing vessels for several months beginning about mid-May due to the arrival of the onshore southwest monsoon (Hawkins 1977:32). Yet, a ship had to leave the southern African coast in March or April in order to take advantage of the southerly winds and the northward flowing counter-current to negotiate the Mozambique Channel. Since it took at least thirty to forty days to cross the Indian Ocean (Hawkins 1977:96), there was the danger that any vessels attempting to sail directly between southern Africa and western India would arrive at a poor time. To minimize this danger, merchants could establish an entrepôt in the Comoro Islands. Thus, ships coming from Africa would not be constrained by the monsoon timetable. They would transport goods to a warehouse in the Comoros and load wares brought by ships from Asia. Ships from Asia, loading and unloading in the Comoros, would be freed from having to enter the Mozambique Channel. They would be free to come and go, in rhythm with the Indian Ocean's monsoons, without fear of a return to Indian waters too late for safe disembarkation. The use of the

Comoro Islands as an entrepôt in this way may be, in fact, what was occurring when Sir William Jones (1799) noted Indian and Arabian traders on Anjouan in the late seventeen hundreds.

The island of Anjouan is particularly well suited as a potential site for such an entrepôt since it offered a number of advantages to the early trader. It had plentiful fresh water, abundant food crops for provisioning, plus a tropical forest with such desirable wood as ebony, mahogany, and teak. Furthermore, and most important, there was an excellent harbor facility. The town of Domoni is located at the base of a large promontory, the remnant of a large, volcanic cone that juts eastward into the Indian Ocean. Its base slopes quickly down into beaches, one on each side of the promontory. The beaches are protected from large wave action by the surrounding land and by a shallow coral shelf. In addition, the promontory protects the southerly beach from the prevailing northerly winds during the warmer, wetter, season and protects the northerly beach from the prevailing southerly breezes of the drier time of the year. Thus, no matter what the prevailing wind, no matter what the monsoon season, the traditional sailing vessel, which was brought to shore to load and unload cargo, would have had a protected beach in Anjouan, at Domoni.

In his world map of 1154 A.D., the Arab geographer, al-Idrisi depicts the Comoro Islands (Miller 1927,2:70-71) and he mentions, in his geography text, the participation of the people of Anjouan in the Indian Ocean trade (Freeman-Grenville 1966:19). Later, Ibn Majid made clear the prominence of the people of Anjouan, specifically those from Domoni, in maritime trade of the fifteenth century. The town of Domoni had become important enough at that time to be noted by this famous medieval Arab pilot and navigator. He outlined distinct maritime trade routes between Domoni and four major trading sites on the east coast of Africa: Mombasa, Zanzibar, Kilwa, and Kitao (Grosset-Grange 1978:25).

Precisely how early Domoni, or any other location in the Comoros, was a stopover site of the trade in the Indian Ocean awaits the proper identification of locations such as the "Pyralaae Islands" of Greek sources, the "Kalidvipa" of Indian sources, and the "Qanbalu" of medieval Arabic sources. More archaeological research on the islands is required. The potential is high for significant archaeological discoveries. In Anjouan, for example, the remains of buildings thirty feet below the existing soil surface have been uncovered by local workmen digging pit latrines. Although archaeological survey work, begun on a systematic basis in 1975, has recorded sites from as early as the eighth century A.D. (Kus and Wright 1976), no significant investigation has been undertaken to determine what the inhabitants were like or the extent of their participation in the trade. Nor has there been any intensive excavation at sites, such as Domoni, where long-term occupation is known.

Oral traditions in Anjouan speak of the habitation of the island by autochonous people and of the migration of a Shirazi family now believed to

have occurred sometime around the twelfth century (Chittick 1965, Ottenheimer 1977). The father of the migrants, according to the tradition, settled in Anjouan and some contemporary inhabitants of Domoni trace their ancestry to him. He had several sons and the traditions maintain that after his death a quarrel among his sons resulted in some of them leaving Anjouan to settle on other islands of the archipelago. Today, eight centuries later, there is some recognition of genealogical ties between the descendants of the Shirzai migrants, but there is also a hostility between the inhabitants of the different towns in the archipelago where the sons allegedly settled. Some islanders attribute this hostility to the original quarrel. This hostility expressed itself during my fieldwork when I asked some young men from Domoni to accompany me to a town on another island to compare some of the life in the communities mentioned in the oral traditions. Most refused, stating that the animosity between the people in the two communities was old and deep and they feared for their safety. Finally two young men, with affinal ties to people in the other community volunteered. The quarrel among the Shirazi migrants, according to the tradition as it is told on Anjouan, also resulted in some of the brothers leaving the island for locations along the East African coast, such as Mafia and Kilwa, where versions of the legend have also been recorded.

The traditions also record a period of time when there was considerable prosperity in the Comoros due to trade and each major community on the island was ruled by a "Fani." These rulers were replaced by later migrants who called themselves Sultans and there appeared a considerable amount of strife between the communities in the islands (Faurec 1941). This shift in the title of the rulers and the strife noted among the islanders probably is related to the period of turbulence in the Indian Ocean associated with the appearance of the Portuguese. The appearance of the Europeans in the Indian Ocean during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however much it disrupted the pattern of life, did not halt the involvement of the people from the Comoros in the continuing development of the area. The Portuguese noted that contact between the islands and Kilwa were well established (Theal 1964,3:21) and Comorian participation in the Indian Ocean trade was evidently important enough for the Portuguese to have developed a plan in 1569 to conquer the islands (Theal 1964,3:209f). Although this plan was never carried out, the threat of the invasion plus the general instability produced by the presence of the Portuguese in the area might have been the primary stimulus for the construction of a large stone wall around Domoni. Seen by John Davis when he sailed by Domoni in 1599 (Markham 1880), parts of this wall still stand today.

Migration of people to Domoni has repeatedly resulted in construction or renovation of buildings in the town. In the early part of the sixteenth century, the sacking of Kilwa by the Portuguese resulted in a movement of coastal merchants from East Africa to the Comoros (Davidson 1969:113). The renovation of a mosque in 1567-8 (Freeman-Grenville and Martin 1973:

122) and the construction of two palaces in the town by a Sultan Idarousi may be related to this particular in-migration. According to some townspeople the palaces were built at approximately the same time that the mosque was renovated but a written document, in the possession of other townspeople, purports that one of the palaces was originally built in 1462. These buildings are still in use today. However, particularly since the late nineteen seventies, the upkeep of many of the ancient structures has not been maintained with the same vigor as in the past and there is some question about their continuing existence. Construction of new buildings, beyond the confines of the town wall, has led to a decrease in the perceived value of many ancient buildings in the center of the town as domiciles. As a result, these ancient structures in the older part of the town are gradually being dismantled. Their stones and timbers are being used as materials for the new buildings on the perimeter of the old town.

Although Comorians were still present in ports throughout the area as late as the nineteenth century (Gevrey 1870), the changes in political circumstances and in technological developments since the Portuguese first entered the Indian Ocean had significantly reduced Comorian participation in the trade. The town of Domoni, once the seat of political authority for much of the archipelago and the hub of a network of international trade, eventually became an isolated community even from other towns on the island of Anjouan. By the nineteen sixties, vessels had ceased to stop at the town. Today, although super tankers almost daily pass close to its shore, Domoni is far removed from the new trade routes of the Indian Ocean and this relatively small and quiet community has, at first glance, little to lead one to suspect anything about its role in the past. It is only when looking closely into one of the dim ruins of the town that it is possible to discover, for example, a wall exquisitely decorated with fine plasterwork, or a ceiling inlaid with antique Oriental porcelains, and to catch a glimmer of the role of Domoni in the wealthy and ancient maritime trade of the Indian Ocean.

Their involvement in this trade brought the people of Domoni into contact with a number of different peoples and cultures. Life in the town, as one might expect of a trade center, has been enriched by this contact. The language spoken in Domoni, *Shinzwani*, is African—one of the family of Bantu languages closely related to Swahili—with numerous loan words from Arabic, Persian, Hindi, Malagasy, Portuguese, English, and French. French, in particular, has had a recent impact. From the first half of the nineteenth century, when Mayotte was established as a French protectorate, France has had some authority over the islands. Moheli and Grande Comore came under French rule in the last part of the nineteenth century while Anjouan delayed becoming a French protectorate until 1912. From 1912 until Comorian independence in 1975, Anjouan was administered by France as a part of an overseas territory. French was the prominent language of politics and commerce but it is only within the last twenty-five years that public education has been instituted on the island of Anjouan. Only

recently has French been spoken by a significant number of the island's population.

Music in Domoni reflects a variety of influences. There are European, African, and Asian instruments, for example. The saxophone (purchased from a mail-order catalog in 1968 by one of the young musicians in the town; my wife subsequently taught him how to play the instrument), a five stringed lute called a *gabus,* and a box zither called an *ndzedze* are just three of the many and varied instruments used by musicians in the town. Drumming accompanies many of the major traditional rituals. It is an essential element of many spirit possession dances. One of the most interesting aspects of the music in Domoni is the way it reflects the pervasive division of life by sex that is a major characteristic of the community. There are distinct contrasts between the musical style of the men and that of the women and virtually all of the traditional musical events involve the separation of the sexes. At the events in the cycle of festivities at a major wedding ceremony the men and women dance separately and even though both groups may dance to drumming the women use the single-headed, frame drum while the men use a two-headed, barrel drum. In general, men's music

Women dancers with single-headed drums.