

Textile History



ISSN: 0040-4969 (Print) 1743-2952 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ytex20

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Sarah Fee

To cite this article: Sarah Fee (2017) 'Cloths with Names': Luxury Textile Imports in Eastern Africa, c. 1800–1885, Textile History, 48:1, 49-84, DOI: 10.1080/00404969.2017.1294819

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/00404969.2017.1294819

| | Published online: 10 May 2017. |
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'Cloths with Names': Luxury Textile Imports in Eastern Africa, c. 1800–1885

SARAH FEE

In the nineteenth century, a vast area of eastern Africa stretching the length of the coast and into the reaches of the Congo River was connected by long-distance trade mostly channelled through the Omani commercial empire based in Zanzibar. As studies have recently shown, a critical factor driving trade in this zone was local demand for foreign cloth; from the 1830s the majority of it was industrially made coarse cotton sheeting from Europe and America, which largely displaced the handwoven Indian originals. Employing archival, object, image and field research, this article demonstrates that until 1885 luxury textiles were as important to economic and social life in central eastern Africa, textiles known to the Swahili as 'cloths with names'. It identifies the thirty or so varieties which élites — and, increasingly, the general population — selected for status dress and gifts, instrumental in building the commercial and socio-political networks that linked the great region. Finally, it shows that the production and procurement of most varieties remained in the hands of Asian textile artisans and merchants; most prestigious and costly were striped cotton and silk textiles handcrafted in western India, and in the southern Arabian nation of Oman. European industrial attempts to imitate them were hampered by several factors, including their inability to recreate the physical features that defined luxury fabrics in this region costly materials, rich colours, complex designs and handwoven structures.

While crossing the busy ivory trading trails near Lake Victoria in 1860, the English explorer John Haning Speke found his life hinged on a question of cloth. Chief Lumeresi was refusing his caravan passage unless Speke gave him an imported cloth of striped silk and gold thread known as *déolé*. Lumeresi would accept no substitute; he needed a *déolé* to wear 'on all great occasions'. After a four-day tense stand-off, Speke handed over not one, but two of the 'beautiful silks' valued at \$40.1 Typical of regional exchange practices, this incident vividly illustrates the complex roles of cloth in the social, political and economic life of nineteenth-century eastern Africa. It also spotlights luxury textiles, a category of cloth that has perhaps been overshadowed by low-cost industrial cotton sheeting and prints in the growing field of western Indian Ocean trade studies. As importantly, Lumeresi's insistence on a specific type of striped silk suggests that scholars likewise need carefully distinguish fibre, colour and pattern if they wish to understand consumption patterns, vertical markets and producers' strategies in eastern Africa's fiercely competitive market. The current widespread interest in 'cotton textiles' notwithstanding, a significant minority of trade textiles in the western Indian Ocean were not made of cotton at all.

This article aims to identify the imported luxury cloths that contributed to reshaping social and economic life in eastern Africa in the nineteenth century, and in the lands of its

trading partners. The same thirty or so cloth types were sought by élites, and, increasingly, the general population, across the vast area of Sub-Saharan eastern Africa engaged in the export trade in ivory, slaves, gum copal and spices which, at its peak in the 1870s, radiated from Zanzibar to Somalia in the north, to Mozambique in the south, as far west as Uganda and east to Madagascar and the Comoros Islands. Called 'cloths with names' by the Swahili, these luxury textiles made up a small part of cloth imports, from 6 per cent to 25 per cent of value depending on the time and place; yet they were indispensable to the social relations upon which trade depended.2 Employing archival, object, image and field research, this study shows that the majority of 'cloths with names', including the déolé, were striped cotton and silk textiles handwoven in Oman and western India. They represent another 'new fashion' that replaced the central Gujarati fabrics that had dominated imports through the eighteenth century. Europe and America both remained largely shut out of this high-end market. This study of eastern Africa thus supports scholarship on the resiliency of Asian handweaving in the colonial era, which as Douglas Haynes, amongst others, has shown, was characterised by 'geographic mobility' and 'pockets of growth'.4 The discussion concludes c. 1885, which marks the end of this phase in eastern Africa's textile topographies, one transformed by colonial borders and protectionist measures, the disruption of centuries' old trading networks, changing local fashions, and industrial innovations in both Europe and India.

'CLOTHS WITH NAMES'

Approaching the category of luxury textiles requires an understanding of its foil: common or coarse cotton cloths. As the export ivory trade in particular expanded far into the interior of eastern Africa in the nineteenth century, rising wealth and changing fashions led increasing numbers of people to give up their local barkcloth or hide dress for imported woven cloth. Studies have shown that the bulk of it — c. 51 per cent in amount and value — consisted in plain-weave, unbleached cotton yardage. Worn as rectangular body wrappers, the cloth served as dress for rural dwellers and the urban poor (Fig. 1), with certain specific varieties used in some areas as a commodity currency for obtaining labour, food and local commodities. A separate product in the category of coarse cottons was indigo piece-dyed cloth, known as *kaniki*, which likewise served for common dress and as a currency in the interior. In some times and places, *kaniki* was preferred over unbleached cloth and usually was not interchangeable with it. Over the nineteenth century, its price hovered below unbleached goods and overall was imported at a 1:3 ratio in value.

Until modern times, both types of monochrome cottons came from western India, then the world's foremost textile producer and exporter, one tightly connected to eastern Africa through favourable monsoon winds and dense commercial networks. Until about 1800, ports in central and southern Gujarat (the Gulf of Cambay) together with their hinterland weaving centres were ascendant. Thereafter, production, procurement and shipping of many varieties shifted to the independent territory of Kachchh, today the north-west district of Gujarat. Scholars, notably Chhaya Goswami, have traced this move to multiple factors, including British and Mughal policies, Kachchh's dynamic merchant groups who heavily financed and conducted trade in eastern Africa and, not least, the mobility and skills of regional textile artisans. Kachchh's great port of Mandvi emerged around 1800 as India's gateway to Arabia and Africa and a major regional emporium, home to an estimated 50,000



FIG. 1. Servant children dressed in wrappers likely made of unbleached American cotton sheeting. Madagascar, c. 1858–1863.

Photograph by William Ellis. Courtesy of the Royal Ontario Museum © Royal Ontario Museum.

people and 800 ships. ¹⁰ Both the port and its deep hinterland became heavily dependent on producing varieties of cloth for eastern Africa.

However, Kachchh's monopoly in supplying the all-important category of unbleached cottons was by 1830 challenged by newly emergent industrially made cloth. Bucking global trends, the greatest competition came from the United States, not from Britain. As several scholars have traced in great detail, merchants from Salem, Massachusetts, eager to acquire eastern Africa's ivory and gum copal, had New England mills develop an unbleached sheeting based on Indian prototypes. Dubbed *merikani* ('American'), the cloth proved wildly popular throughout the western Indian Ocean for its durability, and merchants of all nationalities were eventually required to trade in and with it. Disruptions in *merikani* supplies during the American Civil War created openings for new products and new suppliers, especially Bombay's first steam-powered factories which by 1878 supplied millions of yards. The fate of the indigo piece-dyed *kaniki*, which knew niche consumption throughout the century, was somewhat different. Although the base fabric was increasingly manufactured in British factories, into the 1880s the actual indigo dyeing continued to be carried out in western India, as African consumers steadfastly rejected European-dyed imitations.

In contradistinction to these common cottons, consumers in eastern Africa and foreign traders both recognised a second major category of imported cloth: luxury cloths with coloured patterning, fancy textures or weaves, and/or accents in silk or gold thread. They

were called by the Swahili 'cloths with names' and cost from three to a hundred times more than monochrome sheeting. ¹⁵ Conforming to general definitions of luxury, most types were relatively expensive and rare, initially the dress of élites, occasionally subject to sumptuary laws, and increasingly desired by the wider population as it, too, progressively engaged with the commoditised world of international trade, and the new social aspirations and possibilities it offered.

In 1856, English explorer Richard Francis Burton, the first European to cross the central ivory zone from Zanzibar to Lake Tanganyika, recorded detailed observations on nineteen 'cloths with names'. Indicative of their critical role in facilitating travel and trade, Burton went to great lengths to obtain information on them; he quizzed Zanzibar's custom master, Ladha Damji, on provenance and manufacture, acquired physical specimens of each type and sent them to London for analysis by the textile expert Mr Alderman Botterill. ¹⁶ Table 1 presents Burton's list, together with eleven additional names I have culled from other nineteenth-century sources.

The remainder of this article is devoted to identifying these imported 'cloths with names', their physical attributes, provenance, production details and 'biographies' once they entered eastern Africa. The names themselves offer important insights. Rarely do they reference physical patterning. Most retain a foreign name or toponym, suggesting that, as with luxury generally, the cachet of the exotic, 'the rare and the unusual', added to their appeal.¹⁷ A few names point to processes of domestication or appropriation. The northern Swahili coast, for instance, applied the Portuguese term for handkerchief, *lenço*, to all printed wrappers no matter their size, while further south several new local names were devised, *kikoi* and *kanga* being two prime examples.¹⁸ Finally, some names appear to have been created by producers or traders, one of their many ploys to attract customers and beat fierce competition.

By matching cloth names at producing and consuming ends and, where possible, to extant physical samples, we see that 'cloths with names' belonged to three main technological types: British woollen prototypes, 'prints' and, above all, stripes and plaids 'exported from India and Arabia'. An examination of the last two categories reveals enduring success for Asian merchants and artisans, even as they were increasingly displaced from the coarse cottons trade.

Broadcloth and 'Turkey Red' Bunting: Speciality Fabrics from Britain

In addition to introducing industrial unbleached cottons in the second quarter of the nine-teenth century, traders from Europe and North America — primarily Hamburg, Germany and Salem, Massachusetts — came bearing many samples of finer, more costly cloths, and went to great lengths to develop and market them. However, both remained largely shut out of the luxury trade. Only two products of purely European design were adopted as 'cloths with names' and captured a tiny share of the market. They were broadcloth and bunting, export versions of British woollen prototypes. These cloths did not ship directly, but were re-exported out of Bombay, western India's major port city, which in the years 1850–1880 was the primary export market for British industrial textiles, notably Turkey red cottons.²⁰

Unlike West Africa, eastern Africa was little receptive to Europe's woollen fabrics, with one major exception: broadcloth. Made through labour intensive wool processing and surface felting, broadcloth is a thick, stiff fabric distinctive for its nap, sheen and durability, the stuff from which the 'redcoats' of the British army were made. By the eighteenth

TABLE 1. 'CLOTH WITH NAMES', OR LUXURY CLOTHS IMPORTED INTO EASTERN AFRICA, AS RECORDED BY RICHARD BURTON AND OTHER SOURCES, ESPECIALLY DICTIONARIES, C. 1850—1885, ARRANGED ALPHABETICALLY^a

| Name | Physical Description | Notes on Making, Consumption, etc. |
|--|--|---|
| barawaji also, barawazi, barouadji, barawadyi, mbarazady, barwani | 'nom d'une variété de kitambi, dont le tissu comporte des fils d'or et de soie entremêlés. Syn <i>mbarazadyi</i> ¹⁶ (Sacleux). See also Johnson, Mager. A sample of one loom-width from 1900 in the Natural History Museum of Lille shows a centrefield of large black and white checks, with striping at one selvedge in red, yellow, green, yellow and black stripes. | By 1900, the French Vice-consul of Muscat observed that it was worn locally by women, but primarily exported to Zanzibar. |
| barsati also, barasati, bersati, beresati | 'blue cotton cloth, with a broad red stripe extending along one quarter of the depth, the other three quarters being dark blue; formerly made of silk; the barsati in the interior represents the doti or tobe of Merkani' (Burton); 'B. ou <i>kitambi b.</i> , pagne de coton rayé, a fond bleu tirant sur le vert avec une large bordure rouge dans le bas. C'est un pagne commun, vendu aux waNyamwezi: il est importé de Katch' (Sacleux); See also Krapf beresati; varieties included barsati kuba and barsati mdogo (Stanley). | Indian stuff' whose dyes may be either of European or Kachchhi origin, the former preferred by copal traders on the coast; also 'on the coast, it is a favourite article of wear with the poorer freemen, slaves, and women'; comes in three varieties, and in the interior, chiefs refuse small or flimsy versions (Burton). |
| bendera also, bandira | 'red cotton bunting' (Burton). '(1) flag; (the Arabian flag being red), (2) red cotton cloth, Turkey red calico' (Madan). See also Krapf, Sacleux. | Imported from Bombay, 'prized in the interior by women' (Burton). |
| buraa also, burra, bura, bhurra, burrah, bouraha | 'a kind of Muscat cloth. From name of a place where it is made' (Johnson); '(ou kitambi b.), pagne de coton et soie avec quelques fils d'or, à fond bleu finement quadrillé de blanc, bordé en bas de bandes jaunes rouges et bleues, avec franges de couleur' (Sacleux). See also Mager, Kamusi Sanifu. | 'nom d'une localité près de Mascate, ou se confectionnait originairement ce pagne' (Sacleux). |
| debwani also, dabwani,deboani, debuani, dibuani | 'a kind of small blue and white check made at Maskat; one fourth of its breadth is a red stripe, edged with white and yellow. This stuff, which from its peculiar stiffening of gum appears rather like grass-cloth than cotton is of three kinds' (Burton). See also Krapf, Sacleux. | Made in Muscat. Versions made of Kachchhi dyes are cheapest and traded to far interior; medium quality of superior work and European dyes used in copal trade on the coast; best qualities retained in Zanzibar (Burton). |

TABLE I. (CONTINUED)

| Name | Physical Description | Notes on Making, Consumption, etc. |
|--|---|--|
| deuli also, deole, dewli | 'the Indian lungi with a red, yellow or green ground, striped in various ways, and much prized for uzar. garnished with a border of gold thread and a fringe at Zanzibar' (Burton). See also Krapf and Sacelux. | A 'Surat silk', garnished with a border of gold thread and a fringe at Zanzibar; the best when adorned with gold is 80\$ (Burton). |
| dusamali also, dusmali, dusumali | 'sorte de mouchoir ou voile de tête en soie à raies blanches et noires ou vertes et lisière rouge, des Arabes, des Indiennes, et en gén. des femmes de qualité. Ce voile, primitivement originaire de Mascate, correspond a l'ukaya des femmes du peuple' (Sacleux). | |
| <mark>gordi</mark> also, korti | 'name of a kind of cotton-print (gordi and shedi) (kihindi?)' (Krapf). 'sorte d'indienne (namna ya siti) de prix pour vetements de femme. R. Cf. Hind. Kurti, camisole, robe' (Sacleux) | |
| ismaili also, smaili | 'sorte de pagne tissé de diverses couleurs, à fond bleu foncé avec le bord inférieur rayé de rouge et de jaune' (Sacleux). See also Krapf, Mager. | 'Ismaili nom propre' (Sacleux) |
| jamdani also, dyamdani | 'sprigged or worked muslin' (Burton); 'a white brocade' (Johnson). | Imported from India; 'Prized for turbans by the dignitaries of the maritime races and rarely carried up country' (Burton). |
| jawi also, djavi, dyawa | 'a kind of cloth of Arab manufacture (R.) perhaps rather of Kihindi' (Krapf); 'Djavi, tissu à rayures rouges fondues en écossais, coupes de 23 inches sur 85 inches' (Mager); 'Dyawa, Java. Dyawa (Dyawi, ou kitambe ca Dyawa)' (Sacleux). | |
| joho | 'blue or red woolen broadcloth.' Arabs judge it by the 'shine of the exterior', and Africans by 'length of pile and depth of tint' (Burton). | 'cheap English article At Ujiji and other great ivory-marts; worn round the loins by men and round the bosom by women' (Burton). |
| kanga | 'Guinea Fowl cloth' (Stanley). | |
| kariati also, kareati, kariadu | 'variété de kitambi à fond rouge foncé, pour pagne ou turban' (Sacleux). See also Krapf. | 'de Kariat en Oman' (Sacleux). |
| khes i also, kess, khess | scarlet silk made at Tannah; rare importation (Burton). | Wanyamwezi chiefs prefer lower quality and smaller size; when larger and adorned with gold stripes, is prized by the Indians of Zanzibar (Burton). |
| | | |

| khuzarangi | European cotton 'dyed a reddish nankeen with pomegranate rind and other colouring matters at Maskat' (Burton). | Use 'almost confined to the Arabs, who make of it their normal garment called dishdasha or in Swahili khanzu' (Burton). |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| kikoi | 'white cotton, made at Surat, coarse and thick, with a broad border of parallel stripes, red, yellow, and indigo blue' (Burton). See also Krapf. | 'a superior variety is made principally for the use of women, with a silk border' (Burton). |
| kisutu also, kisoutou | 'a large piece of printed calico' (Krapf); an inferior version of the <i>msutu</i> , 'indigo blue upon a madder-red ground, spotted with white' (Burton). | Comes in three different sizes (Loarer). |
| kumbisa mpunga | | On caravan packing lists of Stanley, Becker. |
| kunguru (pl. makunguru) | 'Cutch-made cotton plaid, with large or small squares, red and white, or black and blue' (Burton); 'Indienne à carreaux bleus et blancs, pour.pagne' (Sacleux); 'a kind of calico, made at Cutch' (Madan). | 'Made in Cutch; An especial favourite with the Wamasai tribes' (Burton); 'C'est le pagne qu'on donne aux prisonniers; de l'emploi du terme pour designer le prisonnier lui-meme' (Sacleux). |
| l eso also, lesu, lasso | 'a handkerchief; <i>lesso ya ku futia kamasi</i> , a pocket-handkerchief' (Krapf); 'handkerchief, — of printed calico, often worn round the neck or on the head. <i>Z. ya upande mmoja</i> , the 'scarf of commerce, one piece forming a kanga, i.e. a woman's dress. <i>Z. ya ku- shona</i> , handkerchief, — two pieces of three handkerchiefs each being sewn together to make a kanga' (Madan). See varieties for a later period in Sacleux. | |
| masnafu also, masnafi, masenefu | 'mixed silk and cotton cloth, of striped pattern, made at Maskat' (Burton); 'pièce de soie dont les femmes se ceignent à la façon du mahazamu ou qu'elles se jettent sur les épaules en guise d'écharpe; la mode semble en avoir passé' (Sacleux); listed by Krapf. | Made in Muscat; Highly regarded in Unyamwezi; larger kinds rise in price and 'the Arabs will pay from 20 to 25 dollars for those worked with gold thread' (Burton). |
| msutu | 'indigo blue upon a madder-red ground, spotted with white; inferior variety is kisutu, Called shazar on the coast' (Burton). | European cotton, dyed at Surat; worn by Arab and Wasawhili women as a nightdress and morning wrappers; in the interior it becomes a robe of ceremony (Burton). |
| pasua-moyo | type of kitambi (striped, checked cloth) listed by Sacleux. | |

TABLE I. (CONTINUED)

| Name | Physical Description | Notes on Making, Consumption, etc. |
|--|---|---|
| pati also, badi, bathi, pathi | 'a coloured cloth brought from India; m'do wa pati, or kisabao ja pati, a cushion, or a jacket of coloured cloth, striped' (Krapf); 'name of a kind of coloured cloth' (Steere). | |
| rehani also reani | 'a kind of calico made at Cutch in imitation of Muscat fabric' (Madan); 'a kind of silk cloth with stripes in red or a coffee colour' (<i>Kamusi Sanifu</i>). | |
| sabuni also, sabouni | 'a silk-bordered cotton, a small blue and white check; the red and yellow edging which gives it its value is about 1/5th of the breadth? (Burton); 'a kind of cloth' (Krapf). | Made in Muscat; more expensive varieties 'rarely find their way into the interior' (Burton). |
| sahari also, sohari, sahary, sahare | 'a blue and white check with a red border about 5 inches broad, with smaller stripes of red, blue, and yellow: the ends of the piece are checks of a larger pattern, with red introduced. There are many varieties of this cloth'; also called ridia (Burton); '(1) a country in Arabia; (2) a kind of cloth brought from that quarter, checked stuff for turbans' (Krapf); 'name of a particular kind of striped cloth' (Johns). | 'Made at Maskar'; 'forms an acceptable present to a chief The cheapest kind, much used in Unyamwezi' (Burton). |
| shali | '(corruption of the Indian shal), common English imitation shawl pattern of the poorest cotton' (Burton). | English fabrication; Bright yellow or red grounds, with the pear pattern and similar ornaments, are much prized by the chiefs of Unyamwezi' (Burton). |
| shazar | See kunguru. | |
| shiti Also, shit, shedi | 'of many different kinds. The common English is a red cotton striped yellow and dark green' (Burton); 'the name of a kind of cotton-print (R.)' (Krapf); 'printed calico piece-goods, prints,—sold mostly in Z. for women's dresses' (Madan). | 'Little prized in the interior'; in Unyamwezi and Ujiji, French and Hamburg varieties are preferred (Burton). |
| Štirbazi also, sturbadi, schaterbaz, sitirbazi, sederbaz, chaterbasi, Štrabazi | 'sorte de pagne (<i>kitambi</i>) tissé de diverses couleurs, <i>kitambi salihi</i> des Arabes'. | |

| subaya | Cloth of 'silk and cotton mixed', 'a striped stuff with small | Made in Muscat; in Africa [in 1850s], the |
|----------------------|---|--|
| also, subai, subaia, | checks between the lines, and with a half-breadth of border, a | most popular of silk-and-cotton 'cloths |
| subaiya, subahiya, | complicated pattern of red, black and yellow. This cloth is used as | with names', worn as a loin-cloth by 'the |
| sabaya, sabaiya, | a uzar, or loin-cloth, by the middle classes of Arabs; the tambua, | middle classes of Arabs' with the medium |
| soabahia | taraza, or fringe, is applied to the cloth with a band of gold thread | quality 'generally preferred for presents |
| | at Zanzibai by the wasawanni (burton), name of a striped cloth (Johns). | in great ciners; intost expensive variety is interwoven with gold thread (Burton). |
| sweki | 'sorte d'étoffe pour turban' (Sacleux). | |
| also, siweki | | |
| taujiri | 'dark blue cotton stuff, with a gaudy border of madder-red or | Wanyamwezi prefer yellow border and |
| | turmeric-yellow' (Burton); See also tausiri under nguo Krapf. | Wahiao the red (Burton). |
| ukaya | 'jacconet resembling kaniki but is finer and thinner' (Burton); 'a | Cloth made in Europe, dyed in Bombay, |
| | long piece of thin blue calico or blue or black muslin or fine silk of | 'much used by female slaves and |
| | various corours (Journson). | concubince as mean vens (bureon). |

Kamusi ya Kiswahili sanifu (Dar as Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1981); Vice-consul of Muscat, Note explicative pour la collection d'échantillons bWe have chosen to retain Sacleux's detailed definitions in the original French; over the long run, translating textile descriptions often hinders underenvoyée au Musée Commercial de Lille', Registration Archives, Natural History Museum of Lille. standing, as terminology conventions change and new knowledge emerges.

Johnson, A Standard Swahili English Dictionary; Henri Mager, Rapport Adressé aux Chambres de Commerce de Rouen et des Vosges, 2 vols (Rouen:

bar, 2nd edn (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1884); A. C. Madan, Swahili-English Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903); Ancienne Imprimerie Lapierre, 1897), vol. 2, pp. 41-42; Becker, La Vie en Afrique; E. Steere, Handbook of the Swahili Language as Spoken at Zanzi-Sources = Burton, Lake Regions, pp. 531-32; Stanley, Dark Continent, p. 509; Sacleux, Dictionnaire; Krapf, Dictionary; Johns, Dikisionary Malagasy;



Fig. 2. The vest of an Arab trader from East Central Africa (former Belgian Congo). Broadcloth, embroidered trim, cotton print lining. Collected before 1900. Object i.d. 90.0/2700. Courtesy of the Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History.



Fig. 3. Arab merchant of Zanzibar, dressed in *dishdasha*, vest, turban, waist sash, c. 1848. Not seen is his hip wrapper (*wizar*).

Lithograph from a daguerreotype by Charles Guillain. Public domain.

century, broadcloth was the speciality of western England, its products exported around the world.²¹ In eastern Africa, British broadcloth knew great success in the small niche market of élite men's wear. It was the preferred fabric for making men's vests and ceremonial over robes (joho), long-sleeved, tight-fitting garments open at the front, often embellished with embroidery or metallic braid (Figs. 2-4). An Arab fashion carried by Omani men to eastern Africa, the robe was also adopted by Swahili élites and eventually rulers far in the interior, in western Madagascar and the Comoros Islands. Over fifteen shades, including 'dragon green' and orange, were imported, but scarlet, blue and black were favourites.²² In the interior, meanwhile, broadcloth was considered 'a present for a prince', worth seven times the price of unbleached *merikani*, and a favourite amongst people 'of wealth' residing at 'great ivory-marts'. Rather than tailor it, however, they wore lengths of the cloth wrapper fashion, wound 'round the loins by men and round the bosom by women', and overwhelmingly preferred shades of red.²³ Indeed, in Madagascar, scarlet broadcloth (*jaky*) was, from the late eighteenth century, adopted for royal dress and regalia, notably at the highland Merina court.²⁴ As in West Africa, its appeal appears to have derived from its novel saturated hues, produced by the unique combination of wool, nap and brilliant red dye.²⁵

A second import based on a European woollen prototype was British factory-made 'tur-key-red' bunting. Originally a worsted woollen fabric with a heavy glaze made in various areas of Europe, the bunting imported into eastern Africa was made of cotton and always bright red. It was known generally in eastern Africa as *bendera*, from the Portuguese term

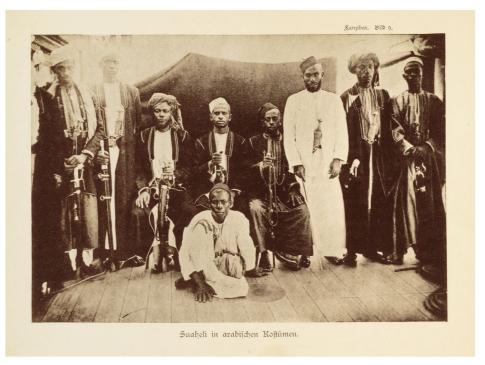


Fig. 4. Group of Swahili men in formal wear of *kanzu*, vests, over robes and fez or turbans. *Image courtesy of the Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies Winterton Collection*, *Northwestern University*.

for 'flag' (*bandeira*), as it originally served on the coast for making the blood-red flags of Mombasa and the Omani sultanate. ²⁶ Over the century, the term came to cover any bright 'Turkey red'-dyed cotton, for more important than the cloth's texture was its dye. ²⁷ The distinct cherry-red shade of 'Turkey red' was invulnerable to the sun of the tropics. A complex, labour-intensive madder-based dye, it was only made commercially viable for mass markets in the nineteenth century, produced by specialised European mills, notably in the export-driven region of Glasgow. ²⁸ In interior Africa, *bendera* yardage was, like broadcloth, appropriated for élite wrapper garments, 'especially prized by women' in some areas. ²⁹ In 1859, broadcloth and Turkey red fabrics accounted for 2.5 per cent of Zanzibar's total textile imports in terms of value. ³⁰

A final red wool prestige garment was the conical red felt fez, or tarbush (see Fig. 4). Worn by Swahili men and interior élites in the nineteenth century, this Ottoman fashion had spread from Egypt to eastern Africa. The hats were variously manufactured in France, Germany and Bohemia, their trade into the eastern African interior a speciality of slave peddlers. Some 6,000 were imported in 1859.³¹

FINE COTTONS AND 'PRINTS': COMPETITIVE CREATIVITY

While Britain's unbleached cotton vardage generally failed to find buyers in eastern Africa, several other classes of its cottons carved out niche markets by mid-century, a few earning the status of 'cloths with names'. A first gain was in the small market for bleached ('white') shirtings (Sw. bafta), which Arab, Swahili and élite men of the interior used for making their tailored garments, the iconic Swahili kanzu and Arab dishdasha, long-sleeved, ankle-length tunics (see Figs. 3 and 4), as well as associated caps, shawls and vests. Originally a costly and lengthy process, bleaching was expedited in Europe by industrial means, and by mid-century eastern Africans came to prefer British-made bleached fabrics over products from western India.32 Likewise, various grades of British 'grey' cottons were adopted, but only as the base fabric for piece-dyed or patterned-dyed goods. Prestholdt has thus conceptualised them as 'raw materials' that had to be 'radically redesigned' in Asia or Africa. 33 Even then they were destined as middling or low-end products. They might be indigo piece-dyed in Bombay or Kachchh to make kaniki, or sent to Muscat, Oman, for dying red with pomegranate rind, the latter (khuzarangi) serving for the dishdasha of poor Arab men, notably sailors. From mid-century, indigo dyers in Bombay used English loose-weave cottons to create the *ukaya* headscarf worn by free Swahili women in some areas (see Table 1). Africans, too, were observed to piece-dve or otherwise colour imported sheeting using local colouring agents.³⁴

As throughout much of the world, British factory-made cottons came to enter eastern Africa mainly as the base for 'prints', namely cloth pattern-dyed after weaving. From early times, Gujarat supplied eastern Africa with what the Portuguese called 'spotted cloths', whose design was undoubtedly effected through painted and/or printed resists and mordants. Throughout the period considered here, western India remained a major source of eastern Africa's imported 'prints'. In Kachchh in 1854, a 'stamped and dyed' cloth called *fallin* was observed being made 'chiefly for Africa'. On the African end, however, sources from the 1840s and 1850s suggest a provenance in Surat, particularly for the two main varieties of pattern-dyed cloth: the *msutu* and the similar but 'inferior' *kisutu*. These full-sized body wrappers were observed to form the standard dress of free-born Swahili women (Fig. 5). A smaller number went for bed coverings and men's bath wrappers. Burton's description



Fig. 5. A Swahili woman wearing a printed shoulder wrap with *kisutu* design, c. 1848. *Lithograph from a daguerreotype by Charles Guillain*.

of them as 'indigo blue upon a madder-red ground, spotted with white' is borne out by a few rare nineteenth-century samples (Fig. 6), which further reveal a classic Indian design: selvedges framed by a narrow floral meander and guards, a centrefield of small rosettes arranged in rows, with the most elaborate patterning — multiple rows of geometric motifs — reserved for the two ends.³⁷ Zanzibar alone imported 10,000 to 11,000 pieces annually.³⁸ Symptomatic of the era's entangled and hybrid production, dyers in Kachchh employed yellow mangrove bark (*mkandaa*) imported from mainland eastern Africa as a red colouring agent.³⁹ So, too, by 1860 at least, as printers throughout the world, they mainly employed British cottons as the ground fabric. There is convincing evidence that some printing was also done *in situ* in eastern Africa by resident artisans — either African, Indian or both.⁴⁰

The earliest article imported to eastern African that was both woven *and* printed in Britain seems to have been yardage of simple design (*shiti*, Table 1). 'Barred and striped' or with small repeats, it was the modest type of print which formed the bulk of global trade.⁴¹ In the late 1850s, Zanzibar imported 'many different kinds. The common English is a red cotton striped yellow and dark green'. It was mainly used for élite coastal women's tunics or as garment linings (see Figs. 2, 11); in areas of the interior by the 1870s, French varieties were also being consumed.⁴² Burton listed as well a separate category of print, *shali* (Eng. shawl), one of several new terms that began to enter lexicons; it was an Englishmanufactured print with a wider colour palette, including 'bright yellow' grounds, the harbinger of developments to come.⁴³

As foreign competition for the products and consumers of eastern Africa intensified in the 1870s, and as local incomes and aspirations changed, so, too, did varieties and producers



CSMB/Foto:Claudia Obrocki

FIG. 6. A hand printed and dyed example of the *kisutu* cloth, likely made in western India, collected between 1872 and 1881 in Zanzibar by Johann Maria Hildebrandt. Cotton, resist print, mordant dyed, hand painted indigo, 105 × 200 cm. Object i.d. III E 432. © *Ethnologisches Museum zu Berlin, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Fotografin: Claudia Obrocki*.

of imported printed wrappers. Scholars have shown that new printed fashions became ever more important to the identity of Swahili women, with status enhanced by the ability to acquire newly arrived designs. In this fashion driven by novelty, female consumers, Indian and European merchants and artisans all contributed to the creation of new formats, sizes and designs. Dutch, Swiss and British manufacturers produced to these needs, also influencing design along the way. As Ryan shows in this volume, after 1870, one printed wrapper design emerged victorious, the *kanga* (variant *leso*) whose design — wide framing borders, large-scale centrefield design and inscription — can be traced in large part to a separate design prototype: printed handkerchiefs. The older style *kisutu* came to be industrially printed in Europe, the term now applied to a class of patterns based on the Indian original; no longer used for daily dress, it was reserved for ceremonial occasions, especially bridal wear. Throughout these changes, all producers and consumers continued to prefer Manchester-woven cloth as the base fabric.

Colourful, pictorial and the basis still today of Swahili women's dress, prints have dominated the scholarship on imported cloth in eastern Africa. However, they were a middling or even low-end product and, while all the rage in Zanzibar and coastal towns, until 1880 prints represented a small fraction of the imported cloth that moved inland, likely less than 4 per cent in value of Zanzibar's cloth imports, and its caravan cloth loads bound for the interior.⁴⁷ By far the most costly, luxurious and popular of 'cloths with names' in the nineteenth-century were stripes and plaids. Glossed by the Swahili as *kitambi*, and in

western trade literature as 'coloured cloth' or the Anglo-Indian term *lungee*, these striped and checked cloths represent highly elaborate and colourful versions of today's iconic eastern African *kikoi*. Arab and Swahili men favoured them as hip wrappers, waist sashes and turbans, and élite women wore them as head cloths and shoulder cloths; in the interior, meanwhile, people coveted them as waist or chest wrappers and, to a lesser extent, turbans.⁴⁸ These colourful stripes and checks were handwoven in Kachchh, as well as in the southern Arabian nation of Oman, each of which is examined below.

'THE STRIPED CLOTH OF CUTCH' AND 'COLOURED CLOTH' FROM ELSEWHERE IN INDIA

Long considered a victim of inexorable 'decline', Indian handweaving in the nineteenth century is now being recognised for its malleability, innovations and 'pockets of growth'.49 The striped and checked cloths made in Kachchh's major port town of Mandvi for export to eastern African represent one clear instance. Termed 'coloured cloth' or 'coloured goods' in western trade literature, this class of textile is distinctive for its patterning made on the loom, using pre-dyed yarns. 50 In Mandvi, these striped and plaid export cloths were known as seeah kupra, 'black cloth', likely due to the fact that most featured dark indigo threads in the centrefield.⁵¹ However, their distinctive feature was in fact the bright red and yellow striping along the selvedges, which was made of a novel fibre, British industrially spun and dyed cotton yarn. From the 1820s, British mills began to aggressively export cotton yarn, including Turkey red-dyed thread.⁵² At half the cost of Indian-spun thread, it was eagerly sought in Asia. Mandvi's weavers appear to have been among the first in western India to adopt it en masse, a century before artisans in neighbouring areas.⁵³ These innovations, coupled with what appears to have been the creation of a whole new line of named striping patterns, likely contributed to Kachchh capturing the African market from central Gujarat (Gulf of Cambay). In the late 1830s, some 950 bales of seeah kupra were shipped annually to Zanzibar, constituting the 'vigour' of Mandvi's commercial life.54

A port-based export product reliant on imported fibres and dyes, *seeah kupra* were woven by Muslim men, the finest by immigrants from the neighbouring province of Sind.⁵⁵ Working at pit looms, they produced pieces about 34 in. × 235 in., 'adapted to the taste of the people traded with', including northern Somalia (Berbera), Zanzibar, the African interior, with a small fraction shipped up the Gulf.⁵⁶ Table 2 presents fifteen named varieties which English administrators noted being made in Kachchh for African markets between 1837 and 1855.⁵⁷ Although of a wide variety, designs were 'usually in a small chequered pattern, with bright and variously coloured borders'.⁵⁸ They were 'distinguished from each other by their colour and number of threads in the warp', which varied from 800 to 4,000 threads, and by the width of the colourful border stripes (from a mere 1.4 in. to 21 in.), with corresponding differences in price and 'fineness'.⁵⁹ Visually similar striped and checked *lungees* were simultaneously produced by weavers in the Punjab, Sind and Madras, but Kachchh seems to have been India's sole supplier to eastern Africa prior to 1885.⁶⁰

Matching Mandvi's seeah kupra (Table 2) to eastern Africa's 'cloth with names' (Table 1) is not entirely straightforward, however. A neat match exists between the taujiri of Zanzibar and the towjeree of Mandvi, the latter described as a cloth of mid-range quality, with alternating dark and light blue stripes and borders of yellow, red, green, blue and white, a description that corresponds to cloths collected in Kachchh (Fig. 7) and Madagascar (Fig. 8) before 1905. Four other matches — the bhorah, ismail, sabbayeh, and kikooe — are discussed



FIG. 7. 'Coloured cloth' corresponding to descriptions of the *taujiri*, made and collected in Kachchh, India, c. 1867. One length of a wrapper garment. Cotton, stripes on one selvedge, checked centrefield, with warp sets of six dark blue threads alternating with two light blue threads. Said to be for the "Arabian market". 165 x 96 cm. Victoria and Albert Object i.d. 5612 (IS). © *Victoria and Albert Museum*, *London*.

later, as they likely represent Kachchhi imitations of striping styles associated with Oman. The *kess* made in Mandvi was probably a simplified, cotton version of the elaborate *khess*, a doubled-faced plaid of large checks, associated with Sind, although Burton observed the *kess* in Zanzibar to be a 'rare article', made of silk scarlet in Sind's major weaving centre in Tannah. The *panchputty* and possibly *kitanee* may in fact be cotton-silk *mashru* blends (see



Fig. 8. 'Coloured cloth' corresponding to descriptions of the *taujiri*, collected in Madagascar c.1899. One length of a wrapper garment. Cotton, stripes on one selvedge, checked centrefield, with warp sets of six dark blue threads alternating with two light blue threads. 280.5×49.5 cm. Object i.d. 2003.65.105.

Courtesy of Penn Museum, image # 251616.

below). The remaining seven names in Table 2 never appear in trade literature for eastern Africa; we learn only from Mandvi that they had 'close' (i.e. narrow) stripes in blue and white or red and white — presumably in the centrefield — and wide border stripes. Some presumably received new names in Africa, for observers there ascribed Kachchhi origins to two additional striped cloths, both inexpensive, simply patterned cottons. The barsati, regularly mentioned in African trade and travel literature from 1838 to 1885, had a restrained design of solid blue with a broad red band 'extending along one quarter of the depth', made of either European- or Kachchhi-dyed threads. ⁶² Perhaps originally a high-ranking cloth, by mid-century the barsati was generally of poor quality, 'the favourite among poorer freemen, slaves, and women', and the common wear of the Nyamwezi, worth half the price of other 'coloured cloths'.63 The second, kunguru (literally 'crow' in Swahili), has enjoyed a long life. This plaid of white and blue or white and red came in handkerchief-sized squares (75 cm square). In the late 1840s it was particularly popular as 'turbans and wrappers of the poor and slaves', especially in Portuguese Mozambique, although its fashionability was observed to be on the wane (Fig. 9).64 However, as the ivory frontier expanded, so too did the kunguru's fortunes. Kunguru is the probable origin of the iconic 'Maasai plaid', the red and



Fig. 9. A cloth industrially woven in the factories of Frohlich Brunnschweiler & Cie, Ennenda, Switzerland, for the Mozambique market, likely based on the Kachchh cloth style *kunguru*, but in a new colourway of yellow and brown. Cotton. c. 1905–1915. 75 × 42 cm. Object i.d. 13967.

Photograph courtesy of the Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, Collection of Applied Art. © ZHdK.

blue chequered wrappers worn still today by Maasai peoples of Kenya and Tanzania, who by 1860 were deeply involved in translocal trade. Scholars have proposed British industrial plaids as the origins of this famous 'Maasai shuka', but Burton clearly noted that Kachchhimade *kunguru* was '... [a]n especial favourite with the Wamasai tribes'. ⁶⁵ Sold by the yard by the 1870s, *kunguru* may have cost less than even American unbleached cotton sheeting. ⁶⁶

Striped and Chequered Cotton Cloths Observed Being Made in Mandvi (or Kachchh) for Export to Eastern African, 15 to 20\$ (per 20 cloths of 7 guz each) cloths of 7 guz each) cloths of 7 guz each) 15 to 20\$ (per 20 cloths of 7 guz each) cloths of 7 guz each) cloths of 7 guz each) 42 k. per score 8 rials, sometimes 15 to 20\$ (per 20 150 k./100 guz 20 to 25\$ (per 20 30 to 35\$ (per 20 25 to 30\$ (per 20 26 and 27 rials Price Mandvi Price Africa Io rials 80 k./100 guz 80 k./100 guz 60 k./100 guz 80 and 90 k. k./100 guz 60 to 100 80 k. Traded to Bur. Bur. C. 1839–1855, ARRANGED ALPHABETICALLY Breadth Border 13 tus. 13 tus. 13 tus. 9 tus. 6 tus. I tus. 2 tus. No. Warp Threads 1200 1000 4000 1600 1200 0091 6.75 guz Length zng / zng / zng / zng / 8 cub zng / 2 guz 1.25 cub I.5 guz Whole Width 13 tus. 22 tus. 4 cub zng 1 zng 1 zng 1 border red and blue (Postans) blue and white, close stripe, coarse red and white stripe, ismail potah blue and white close stripes, a white unbleached cloth ... worn by the women(Leech) close plaid, blue and white, 2 tassoos and an end of 6 with silk border (Postans) same as bissotah but fine with blue, red and yellow and having red border of Cloth Name Description (Source) oorder red (Postans) cexture (Postans) border (Postans) tassoos(Leech) (Postans) (English) chowaree TABLE 2. bajootia bissotah bhorah chadar dhotya billie

Table 2 (Continued)

| Cloth Name | Cloth Name Description (Source) | Whole Width | Length | No. Warp Threads | Border Breadth | Traded to | Price Mandvi Price Africa | Price Africa |
|------------|---|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------|--|--|
| kess | plaid pattern, dark blue, light blue and white with red border (Postans) | 22 tus. | Z gaz | 800 | I.5 tus. | Zanz | 60 to 80 k. a score | 20 and 30 rials ro rials the score 15 and 16 rials |
| | Varieties according to Leech: kala khess, worn singly by women | 2 & 2.5 cub | 4 cub | | | Bur. | 42 k. per score | |
| | black khess, desacered English thread khess having red border of 2 tassoos and an end of 6 tassoos(Leech) | 5 cub | 2.25 and 2.5 cub | | | Bur. | | |
| kikoy | kikooee , Fine white cloth, with borders of red, blue and yellow; in alternate stripes (Postans) | 21 guz | 3.5 guz | 1700 | Io tus. | | zng 001/001 | 25 to 30\$ (per 20 cloths of 7 guz each)6 and 7 rials the double score |
| | kakoy cloth, In Mandvee in a score there are 40 single pieces (Leech) | .25 guz | 4 cub | | | Bur. | 45 k. per double score (40 single pieces in a score) | |
| kitanee | a dark-coloured cotton cloth, 3 cub with a red border 6 inches on each side (Leech) | 3 cub | 4 cub | | | Zanz | 70 k./score | 30 and 35 rials |
| moorbee | (Leech) | | | | | Bur. | 001 09 | 13 guz the rial |
| panchputty | close blue and white stripes, with yellow and red border (Postans); Type of <i>mashbru</i> cloth (Leech) | I.5 guz | Zng Z | 1200 | 8 tus. | | 60 to 100 /100 guz | 60 to 100 /100 15 to 20\$ (per 20 guz cloths of 7 guz each) |
| purin | chiefly for bedding (Raikes) | | | | | | | |

| robawee | very close blue and white stripes, border red, green and yellow, also red and white | zng 1 | zn8 / | 7000 | 6 tus. | zng 001/001 | 25 to 30\$ (per 20 cloths of 7 guz each) |
|----------|--|-----------------|-------|------|---------|-------------|---|
| sabbayeh | alt stripes of blue and red and yellow; border of yellow, border of yellow, | 3.5 guz | Zng / | 4000 | 15 tus. | zng 001/001 | 25 to 30\$ (per 20 cloths of 7 guz each) |
| towjeree | green, one and wine, crose textured (Postans) alt stripes dark and light blue, with border of yellow, red, green, blue and white | zvg Z znz Z znz | Zn8 / | 7000 | 7 tus. | 205 oo1/06 | 15 to 20\$ (per 20 cloths of 7 guz each) |
| | (Postans) | | | | | | |

Sources: Leech, 'Memoir on the trade, etc.,'; Postans, 'Some account of the present state of the trade'; Raikes in Goswami, Call of the Sea. Bur = Burburra

cub = cubits, about 27 inches

tus. = tussoo, about 1.4 inches

Zanz = Zanzibar

guz = 33.5 inches k. = korees, coories (379 korees to 100 Bombay rupees)

Excluded are sail-cloth (burane), monochrome white cotton cloths (tonkapana, ibalawadee, joree, merkulee, pankoras), indigo piece-dyed kaniki and other cloths either piece-dyed or printed in Kachchh (fallin, dabola), as well as mashru silk brocades. In 1880 J. Campbell (Gazetteer, p. 125) mentioned dark blue' cloths by names jodi; sadiamu and bungan 'woven in large quantities [in Kachchh] for export to Africa', but provided no description.



Fig. 10. An élite woman's headdress made of two seamed widths of *mashru*, with added side fringes and beaded loop for securing cloth to the forehead, collected in Zanzibar before 1880. Silk, cotton, beads. Satin weave and weft floats. 148.59 × 118.11 cm. Object i.d. 121973. © 2016 Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA. Photography by Bob Packert.



Fig. 11. Three Swahili girls wearing turbans of cotton-silk *mashru* similar to the cloth shown in Fig. 10.

Courtesy of Zanzibar National Archives.

Mandvi-based observers never mentioned silk weaving in relation to exports for eastern Africa, yet supplementary evidence suggests otherwise. 'Cutchi stripes' such as the barsati might have silken red or yellow stripes or be made entirely of the costly fibre.⁶⁷ Certainly, Mandyi was home to large numbers of silk weavers producing a specific silk blend for export: striped cloth known in the general literature as *mushru*, allatcha and doria. 68 Made of a silk warp and cotton weft, woven on a complex loom of multiple heddles, the 5:1 satin-weave of this textile brought the silk to the surface and pushed the cotton to the back. As only the cotton touched the wearer's skin, the cloth was 'permitted' (mushru) to Muslim men who are theoretically forbidden from wearing pure silks. Often further embellished with small floats or ikat, the cloth was made and used throughout much of West Asia. Table 2 suggests that Mandvi made at least one variety (panchputty, 'five colours') for export to Berbera.⁶⁹ Import records never list these satin weaves by name, but photos, local terminologies and museum collections reveal they were in use in coastal areas, where the cloth was known as kitanee, dusamali, darahani or dalahany, and generally employed for furnishings, notably bridal beds, and for the garments of the most élite women of Arab households: trousers or head cloths which were worn draped down the back or turban-style (Figs. 10-11, see also Fig. 15). On Madagascar's north-west coast, the Sakalava appropriated the silk-cotton dalahany as the dress of royals and their male ceremonial dancers.⁷⁰

Rather than from Kachchh, eastern Africa's plain-weave silks likely came primarily or solely — from elsewhere in western India. In the nineteenth century, Surat was a rising cloth manufacturing town with longstanding, dense and growing links to Zanzibar. The luxury cloth kumbisa mpunga appears on African packing lists from 1870, and points to the Koombees, a highly skilled Hindu weaving caste of Surat.72 Burton specifically noted that the resplendent deuli, featured in this article's opening struggle between Captain Speke and Chief Lumeresi, was 'a Surat silk'. For all the deuli's political and economic importance, however, historic descriptions are lacking. Burton vaguely noted it had a red, yellow or green ground 'striped in various ways and garnished with a border of gold thread and fringe at Zanzibar', while the Yao historian Abdallah remembered it as a red cloth.⁷³ Figure 12 presents a possible example from the Peabody Essex Museum.74 Still other areas of the Indian subcontinent supplied speciality cloths to eastern Africa in the nineteenth century, albeit it in very small amounts and nearly exclusively for the consumption of coastal Arab and Indian élites, *Jamdani*, a brocaded white-on-white loose-weave cotton produced in central and eastern India, was in Zanzibar '[p]rized for turbans by the dignitaries of the maritime races and rarely carried up country'.75 Kashmir shawls — tapestry-woven woollens from northernmost India — were worn as waist sashes by 'respectable' Arab men; they were also a favourite of the first Omani ruler of Zanzibar, Seyyid Said, who presented fine shawls as diplomatic gifts to foreign dignitaries, including Queen Victoria, and had at least one outer robe (*joho*) tailored from the cloth (Fig. 13).⁷⁶

Unquestionably, in both value and volume the largest number of 'cloths with names' shipped from India were the striped *seeah kupra* cotton wrappers made in Mandvi. However, Kachchh did not have a monopoly on this class of goods. As discussed below, competition also came from southern Arabia.



FIG. 12. Detail of a mostly silk cloth corresponding to descriptions of the *deuli*. Cotton, silk. Interlocking wefts and woven end bands. 229.87 × 113.66 cm. Object i.d. E4573. © 2016 Peabody Essex Museum, Salem MA. Photography by Bob Packert.



FIG. 13. An over robe (*johh*), tailored out of Kashmir cloth made in India, attributed to the first Omani ruler of Zanzibar, Seyyid Said. Wool, metal wrapped thread; double interlocking twill tapestry weave, applied decorative braid; 1803–1856. 133.4 × 161 cm. Object i.d. 24.123. *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of George L. Cheney*, 1924. www.metmuseum.org.

'Muscat Cloth': 'Cloth with Names' Made in Oman

There is a misconception that all Asian cloth that historically entered eastern Africa came from the Indian subcontinent. In the nineteenth century, however, a significant share of luxury cloth was woven in, and shipped, from Oman in southern Arabia. Known in Western trade circles as 'Muscat cloth', it, too, was checked and striped 'couloured cloth' made in narrow lengths (Fig. 14), two of which were seamed together to form a body wrapper of approximately 1.2 m by 2.5 m. The names and designs of Omani-made items, however, were largely distinct from Kachchhi wares. Also setting them apart, they usually featured more costly fibres and finishes. Finally, there is evidence that Muscat cloth — in both kind and number — from mid-century came to rival if not surpass Kachchh's cloth as the 'dearest thing' in eastern Africa.

The rise in popularity of Muscat cloth in Zanzibar and beyond parallels the economic and political rise of Oman in the western Indian Ocean world. 'By 1775, Muscat had emerged as the principal transshipment centre between the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and India.'78 From this time, too, Oman increasingly turned its sights to the rich trade of eastern Africa. Aided by Indian capital, Omani rulers from 1698 ejected the Portuguese from Mombasa and other Swahili port towns and set themselves up in their stead, exerting political and commercial influence along the whole eastern African coast, and well into the interior. This activity intensified in the late eighteenth century under the new Busaidi dynasty, particularly after 1832 when the sultan moved his capital to Zanzibar, and funnelled all international trade with the mainland through his new island home. Trade reached unprecedented heights when the rising global demand for ivory — from both established markets in India, and new middle-class consumers in Europe and North America — met the growing desire of eastern Africans for cloth and other commodities.



FIG. 14. One length of *debwani* cloth, collected by Henry Morton Stanley who labeled it 'Dabowain Ulyah Dark Blue. 17"0 per Korjah'. Cotton. 525 × 66 cm. Object i.d. HO.1954.72.194, collection RMCA Tervuren. *Photo J.-M.Vandyck*. © *RMCA Tervuren*.



Fig. 15. An élite Antalaotra woman of the north-west coast of Madagascar, c. 1900. Courtesy Défap-service protestant de mission, Paris.

From the late eighteenth century at least, major port towns in Oman, and nearby hinterland villages, teemed with weavers producing cloth for turbans, mantles and shoulder cloths. As in Kachchh, weavers were men, full-time professionals typically based in towns. They worked on pitlooms and relied mainly on imported thread and dyes. Their silk thread came via the Gulf, an important commodity flow controlled by Oman at the time. Finished 'Muscat cloth' was both consumed locally and widely exported, up the Gulf and around the rim of the western Indian Ocean. Sources specify that production became increasingly centred on the eastern Africa trade, Zanzibar in particular, with upwards of 100,000 cloths sent there annually from the late 1840s.⁷⁹ All the major Omani ports were involved over time, including Sohar and al Suweik and their hinterlands on the Battinah coast, the capital city Muscat and its sister port of Muttrah, with production later shifting southward to Qaryat, Sur and the latter's hinterland foothills.⁸⁰ In all likelihood reflecting weavers' reliance on African markets, Sur was precisely the region that continued the strongest trade ties to eastern Africa.

Nearly half of the thirty 'cloths with names' in Table 1 are of probable Omani design origins. Although there exist no *in situ* observations of Omani weavers producing for the eastern African market in the nineteenth century, the cloth's provenance can be gleaned otherwise. As a general rule, eastern Africa retained the cloth pattern names used in Oman (*subaya*, *ismaili*, *sabuni*, *rehani*), where most of these patterns are still woven to this day. Four names reference Omani port towns (*sahari*, *sweki*, *kariati*, perhaps *buraa*). As described in Table 1, most featured colourful border stripes and/or coloured bands at the ends, with the centrefields filled either fully or partially with tiny checks of blue and black. The several styles apparently specially made for eastern African markets departed from this template. They include the *barawaji*, named for the Benadir port of Brava, which had large black and white checks at the centre, the extremely popular *debwani* (Fig. 14), with its centrefield of small blue and white checks and unusual wide bands in beige at the two ends, and the iconic



FIG. 16. Emily Reute (Seyidda Salme Said) wearing élite coastal woman's costume of tunic, embroidered flared trousers, silk head wrap and striped shoulder wrap with gold trim, c. 1900.

Courtesy of the Zanzibar National Archives.

kikoi — today's classic Swahili male hip wrapper — with its all-white body and narrow edging of coloured selvedge stripes. Although *kikoi* were made in both western India and Oman, trade literature tended to assign their production to the latter place; élite versions had yellow or red stripes in silk.⁸¹

Figures from Zanzibar indicate that eastern Africa imported significant numbers of 'Muscat cloth': 100,000 pieces annually in the late 1840s, some 20,000 pieces in 1859; \$30,000 worth in Maria Theresa Thalers — or 3.6 per cent of total cloth imports — in 1864, and still nearly 2 per cent of total cloth imports in 1878. Beyond Zanzibar, Arab shippers also carried unknown amounts of the cloth directly to the Benadir coast, to Mombasa, Lamu, Kilwa and Nosy Be. Sources further suggest that over the course of the nineteenth century this Omani-made 'coloured cloth' overtook Kachchhi-made varieties, both in stature and in import volume. To the outsider, the checked and striped cloth of Kachchh and Oman may look alike; so, too, as we have seen, at times both areas produced several of the same striping styles. Nevertheless, African consumers recognised Kachchhi imitations of Omani striping styles, and vice versa. He to 1850s, the basic variety of Muscat cloth (debwani) cost twice that of the Kachchh variety (barsati). Altogether, Muscat cloth came to dominate



Fig. 17. The Sultan of Unyanyembe, centre right, with white ornament on head, 'showing himself to the people'. The striped wrapper he wears is likely the *subaya* striping style. *Photograph by Major R.E. Critchley Salmonson* 1907–1918. *Courtesy of the Royal Geographical Society.*

the costly end of imports, with five out of six of the most expensive 'cloths with names' in 1858. Increasingly, all-silk versions of western Indian-made cloth became a rarity, with rulers overwhelmingly demanding two Muscat styles, the *subaya* and *stirbazi*. Caravan packing lists from 1850 to 1880 show that despite their higher prices, Omani styles were carried into the interior by a margin of 2:1 over Indian types. The likely reasons for this shift include Oman's easy access to silk, growing wealth and desire for luxury in the interior, and the socio-political dimensions of fashion, which I explore in the final section below.

CONSUMING LUXURY: COLOUR, SILK, GOLD THREAD AND THE HANDWOVEN

A study of 'cloth with names' provides insight into three interrelated topics: criteria of luxury cloth in nineteenth-century eastern Africa, means for maintaining élite distinction in the face of a general population desiring — and consuming — luxury 'brands', and why Euro-American industry struggled to create versions of them in a highly competitive commercial environment.

In publications, British explorers listed varieties of 'cloths with names' as 'African currency' or 'monies', leaving the impression that the cloths served directly as a medium of exchange. However, they did not. A close reading of texts reveals that, with rare exceptions, only a few grades of coarse industrial cotton sheeting served as units of account, measures of value or means of payment: unbleached *merikani*, indigo-dyed *kaniki* and, from the 1870s, the half-bleached *satini*. And these were accepted in a restricted sub-area. Heterogeneous 'cloths with names', on the other hand, with their endless variety of materials, size, pattern

and finishes, as well as changing fashionability, were wholly unsuited to these purposes. Only in times of famine, and perhaps in Ugogo territory, which represented the busiest leg of the central ivory trading 'highway', might 'cloths with names' serve as higher units of account. Rather, they were luxury commodities that, in the terms described more generally by Maxine Berg, respond to 'psychological and sociological characteristics of status differentiation ... new and endlessly variable consumer goods that would continue to motivate individuals to earn enough to afford them'. In particular, fine Arab and Indian checks can be identified as the 'cloth' which élites energetically sought for building wealth, power and client bases, with the general population increasingly aspiring to cheaper versions of the same. Local merchants catered to both streams of desire by gifting fine cloths to leaders and providing less costly versions for sale to the masses.

As in much of the world, prestige cloths circulated in eastern Africa mainly as gifts to create and maintain relations. The colourful turban of the Swahili *jumbe* leader — a 'blue check pattern with a red border and fringe' — was an essential sign of his position and a prominent object of gift and ritual, including for title payments and burial. Above all, luxury cloths were central to attracting and maintaining trade partners. Caravans generated from the interior could choose to deliver their coveted goods to several coastal towns and merchants. Swahili traders and leaders, as well as Indian merchants, competed for them by offering precious gifts, often referred to as 'turbans'. In the 1840s, a pro-active gifting practice known as *magubiko* held sway: learning of the arrival of a caravan, coastal traders sent advance gifts to intercept it — up to three days' march inland. This offering 'consisted generally in one or two pieces of cloth to cover the m'chinza [African caravan leader] from head to foot'. The caravaner chose his partner in function of 'the beauty of the cloth' and sent in return a substantial load of ivory. Caravaners' wives and retinue might have to be similarly gifted cloth as part of *magubiko*.

Increasingly, caravans were organised from the coast, led by Swahili, Arabs and Europeans.⁹³ Traveling hundreds of kilometres inland, they relied even more heavily on luxury cloth, as the many local rulers they encountered required gifts of cloth in return for permission and protection to trade in, or simply cross, their territory. Variously known as 'toll', 'mouth', 'covering,' 'horn of the land' or 'handshake', this gift of cloth was typically the first in a ritualised series of exchanges, which rulers reciprocated with ivory, food or livestock.⁹⁴ The amount of cloth — a combination of coarse cotton yardage and 'coloured cloths' — was not fixed, but dependent upon political standing and acumen, and deliberations could drag out for days — or even months.⁹⁵ Most onerous was the heavily travelled 100-mile stretch of central Tanzania's Ugogo territory. One Swahili caravan in the early 1890s gifted from 250 to 600 cloths to each of the Ugogo chiefs it visited.⁹⁶ Although often heavily armed, caravans could neither circumvent chiefly villages nor abandon negotiations for risk of violent retribution, or desertion by their porters, who knew to fear open confrontation.

In these negotiations, quality mattered as much as quantity. 'Cloths with names' were not interchangeable with common cloths, nor were the different types interchangeable.⁹⁷ Rulers often insisted on a very specific type of cloth, as in the encounter between Lieutenant Speke and Chief Lumeresi narrated at the start of this article. And this was invariably a striped or checked handwoven wrapper from Oman or Kachchh. Rulers' exigencies, it appears, were based not on personal whims; rather there existed regional cloth hierarchies that changed over time. Lumeresi's overriding concern to force a *deuli* from Speke was in knowing that Speke must have been carrying the costly cloth to a more important ruler further west. In

such instances, the caravan leader was forced to cede the cloth, to buy one from a member of his caravan (fellow merchants, guides or even porters), dispatch someone in search of it or face open warfare. One ranking criterion was the striping pattern, with, *grosso modo*, the *deuli*, *subaya* and *stirbazi* succeeding each other as the top cloth. As much so as in medieval times, luxury in nineteenth-century eastern Africa was measured in materials and finishes: in silk, gold thread, quality dyes, high thread count and elaborate finishes (Figs. 15 and 16).98 Europeans designated cloth so embellished as 'first-class' or 'royal'. It was through these costly details that rulers and other élites maintained distinction in the face of growing popular consumption. In addition, gifts to rulers needed to contain sets of lesser quality 'coloured cloths' — anywhere from four to thirty pieces (see below). Altogether, 'coloured cloth' accounted for up to 10 per cent of caravan total outlay costs and 25 per cent of porters' loads.99

Bright red fabrics (broadcloth and Turkey red *bendera*) likewise had defined and critical roles to play within the context of exchange relations. Caravan leaders appear to have offered them to rulers to close a protracted negotiation, or as special inducement.¹⁰⁰ They had also to provide red cloth for the distinctive dress of the all-important caravan headmen (*nyamparas*) and guides (*kirongozi*) who managed relations with caravan personnel and with local populations; deprived of it, these men might refuse to march, as a group of novice French missionaries discovered, having to send a man eighty miles in search of it.¹⁰¹ Amongst the Yao, a small piece of red cloth was required porter pay; the returning caravaner wore it as a waist sash to say, 'I have been to the coast and look how wealthy I am'.¹⁰² Broadcloth and bunting thus always appear in small amounts on caravan packing lists, forming together around I per cent of outlay costs.¹⁰³ By contrast, prints seem to have had little defined role in this complex choreography of exchange, except perhaps as gifts to wives of rulers; they were thus, as noted, carried in only tiny numbers into the interior before 1880.¹⁰⁴

Once in the hands of leaders, striped and checked 'coloured cloths' assumed other roles, values and meanings. Rulers were observed to immediately don new cloth (Fig. 17), display being primary 'strategies of distinction', a 'main component of the cultural capital of a prestige economy'. They further used costly fabrics to drape areas of state, sacra and graves. The greatest of Swahili rituals featured the sponsor seated in a palanquin covered in 'rich imported materials'. The good patron did not merely display wealth, he also gave it away'. The Having received his own gifts, a leader typically insisted that traders present 'showy cloths' to members of his family or retinue: wives, brothers, mother and close advisors. Political élites might further redistribute lesser grades of luxury goods 'to attract and reward their followers', elders and subchiefs or, in decentralised areas, all adult men. The Galla were observed to do so by solemnly 'turbaning' all men in attendance. In Mombasa the leader was required to provide gifts of cloth to every newborn baby, bride and deceased in his territory. Leaders also re-gifted some to their own trading partners, to those who supplied them with ivory, or granted them passage when they dispatched their own caravans to the coast.

But political élites were not the only people to covet 'coloured cloth' or leverage it for status. In Swahili societies of the nineteenth century, as Glassman and Fair show, clothing became central in the struggles of marginalised groups to fully participate in community life. The Acquiring striped and checked cottons can be seen as central to this striving. Observers noted both on the coasts and far in the interior that the poor and enslaved might dress in striped and checked cottons. This democratisation was made possible by weavers in

Oman and Kachchh producing specific striping styles aimed at modest budgets, as well as lesser qualities of major striping patterns. By lowering the thread count and dimensions, using less costly dyes and dispensing with silk and gold thread, they produced 'secondary' or 'ordinary' qualities affordable to the masses. These circulated in various ways, sold at interior markets, and by caravan personnel, including porters who received cloth as part of their contracts, or acquired it at the coast before returning to their homes in the interior.¹¹⁴ Some 500,000 porters (mostly of the Nyamwezi ethnic group) annually crossed the central trading route alone.¹¹⁵ They famously wore rags while on the march, saving their 'coloured cloths' to sell along the way, or to wear 'for displays at home', thereby also parlaying the cloth into social capital.¹¹⁶ The general population of the interior did likewise, gifting fine textiles at all major events: betrothal, bridewealth, circumcision, female initiation and burial as well as ceremonies associated with blood brotherhood, the settlement of blood price and the presentation of new mothers.¹¹⁷ The cloth may also have served in local exchanges involving livestock.¹¹⁸

It was in the manufacture of this 'imitation' luxury or 'semi-luxury' that European industry eventually met some success in making 'coloured cloths' for Zanzibar and beyond.¹¹⁹ The very traits that made 'first rate' versions scarce and valuable — silk and gold thread, richly dyed silk, tapestry weaves — were difficult to replicate industrially or with fly shuttle looms. As K. N. Chaudhuri observed of India's cloth-making generally, 'In the production of luxury fabrics manual skills were irreplaceable and complex implements were at an actual discount'. 120 Nevertheless, locked out of both the American-dominated coarse cotton trade and the Asian-dominated luxury market, European merchants active in eastern Africa — especially the French and Hanseatic — from the 1840s went to great lengths to commission less expensive, factory-made versions of Kachchhi and Omani 'checks'. They found the necessary specialised equipment, artisans and supply chains in rural weaving areas of Switzerland and the Netherlands. Both areas, moreover, had prior experience in producing striped and printed cloths for South-East Asian markets. Instructed by Hamburg firms based in Zanzibar, workers at powerlooms in the canton of St-Gallen and at handlooms in the eastern Netherlands produced stripes and plaids in close imitation of Omani and Kachchli patterns (see Fig. 9). Their products were partially successful in capturing a share of the 'low end' trade. The eastern African case thus supports Berg's general proposition that European industry created not a direct replacement of Asia's luxury textiles, but 'an alternative, a high-quality cotton in a varied product mix' accessible to the many.¹²¹

Conclusion

'For the entire nineteenth century', remarks Jeremy Prestholdt, 'cloth was at the centre of eastern Africa's global exchanges.' Yet not all cloth was created equally. Although industrial sheeting made in Salem, Manchester and, later, Bombay, did present a serious challenge to the handcrafted coarse and fine plain cottons coming from western India, it did not compete with or entirely displace other classes of imported cloth, or artisanal practice in Asia. Departing from past studies, the focus here has been on luxury, on the rare and costly types of patterned cloths or 'cloths with names' whose demand in eastern Africa helped fuel the region's great commercial boom of the nineteenth century. A small portion were British-made speciality industrial fabrics appreciated for their gleaming whiteness or vibrant colour. Overwhelmingly, splendour consisted in handwoven stripes and checks made not

only in western India, especially Kachchh, but also increasingly in the port towns of Oman in southern Arabia. Although 'trade textiles', they were not used directly in commercial transactions; rather, merchants employed them to create and sustain the social relations on which trade depended, while leaders — and ultimately the wider population — relied on them to mark and expand their own networks. Costly materials (silk, quality dyes, gold thread), complex designs and handwoven finishes defined 'first rate' or 'royal' luxury cloth, distinguishing it from visually similar products geared toward more modest means. These same physical features made the cloth initially unwieldy and unprofitable for European industry to imitate, but with heavy investments in machinery and labour they would eventually capture a share of 'luxury', although never entirely replace local and regional producers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Edward Alpers, William Gervase Clarence Smith, Pedro Machado, Noel J. Gueunier, Karen Pallaver, Mackenzie Moon Ryan and the two anonymous reviewers for their comments on earlier drafts of this work, but take all responsibility for the final version. For their expertise and generosity in object research, I thank Silvia Dolz, Paola Ivanov, Sandra Feracutti, Floriane Morin, Karen Russell Kramer, Mathilde Leduc-Grimaldi, Dwaune Latimer and their staffs. Research was made possible by grants from the Pasold Fund, Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada and the Department of World Cultures, Royal Ontario Museum.

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- ³⁶ Loarer, 'Marchandises'; C. P. Rigby, 'Return of the imports'; Burton, *Lake Regions*, p. 533; Speke, *Journal*, p. 618; L. Krapf, *A Dictionary of the Suahili Language* (London: Trubner and Co., 1880).

- ³⁷ I thank Dr Paola Ivanova for sharing her discovery of one such *kisutu* cloth in the collections of the Ethnologisches Museum zu Berlin.
- ³⁸ Loarer, 'Marchandises'. Loarer noted *kisutu* came in three sizes (108 × 184, 120 × 208 and 138 × 236 cm) to accommodate different body sizes and budgets; once the cloth had been stitched into a wrapper garment it was called *mboutu*. For possible etymologies and later production of the *kisutu*, see M. M. Ryan, 'The Global Reach of a Fashionable Commodity: A Manufacturing and Design History of Kanga Textiles' (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Gainesville: University of Florida, 2013), pp. 160–76; K. Schwidders, 'Das Hamburger Kolonialhandelshaus Wm. O'Swald & Co. und die Einführung von "Techniken" in die Kolonien 1890–1914' (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, 2004), p. 436.
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- ⁴² 'Hamburg varieties' would have been shipped from that port but manufactured in the Netherlands, Britain or Switzerland (Schwidders, *Das Hamburger*). The print type called *gordi* or *korti* appears to have likewise been a simple repeat.
- ⁴³ In nineteenth-century European trade literature, 'shawl' normally referred to printed wrappers, although there exist references to brocaded shawls (Schwidders, *Das Hamburger*, p. 515). Another print wrapper variety, *malabar*, was differentiated by the use of glaze, two colours versus the three of the *kanga*, and use of red shades (ibid., pp. 441–44).
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- ⁴⁷ This estimate is based on available European caravan packing lists, considered representative of general trading practices, as Europeans bought their cloth based on the recommendations of the main Indian cloth wholesalers in Zanzibar or Swahili and Arab traders. Prints accounted for 1.24 per cent of value of Speke's cloth loads in 1859–1861, for 10 per cent of the cloths given by Livingston to Stanley for his return from Tabora to the coast, but for only 0.3 per cent of cloth values Stanley carried 1886–1888 *en route* to Equatorial Africa.
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- ⁵⁰ Forbes Watson, *The Textile Manufactures*, p. 82. Laymen, however, including some observers in eastern Africa, might use the term 'coloured cloth' to denote all patterned cloth, be it printed or loom patterned.
 - 51 Postans, 'Some account', p. 171.
 - ⁵² Nenadic and Tuckett, Colouring the Nation, pp. 104, 113.
 - 53 Haynes, Small Town Capitalism, pp. 44, 51.
- ⁵⁴ Postans, 'Some account of the present state', p. 171; M. Postans, *Cutch, or Random Sketches taken during a Residence in one of the Northern Provinces of Western India* (Cornhill: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1839), p. 274. Male dress in Kachchh at the time likewise consisted in rectangular wrappers, but *seeah kupra* appear to have been produced solely for export. On turbans, see Campbell, *Gazetteer*, p. 39; Postans, *Cutch, or Random Sketches*, p. 45.
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- ⁵⁶ Postans, 'Some account', p. 174. Two such panels had to then be seamed lengthwise to create a body wrapper. On the social identities of the Muslim and Hindu weavers of Kachchh, see Campbell, *Gazetteer*, pp. 49, 70, 74, 83, 98.
- ⁵⁷ Curiously, only two names, *kikoy* and *kess*, appear on more than one list on Kachchh's cloth-making for Eastern Africa.
 - ⁵⁸ Postans, Cutch, or Random Sketches, pp. 14, 273.
- ⁵⁹ Postans also mentioned 'texture' as a distinguishing feature, but did not elaborate ('Some account of the present state', p. 171).
 - 60 Forbes Watson, The Textile Manufactures.
 - ⁶¹ Leech, 'Memoir on the trade', p. 216. Both Burbura and Zanzibar consumed khes.
- 62 Burton, Lake Regions, p. 532. See also Speke, Journal, pp. 617–18; H. M. Stanley, In Darkest Africa, 2 vols (New York: Scribner & Sons, 1891), vol. 1, p. 37; Loarer, 'Marchandises'.
- ⁶³ Ibid. The *barsati* came in at least three sizes and qualities and, as late as 1890, was still 'loved passionately' by the Wabondei and Washambaa (O. Baumann, *Usambara Und Seine Nachbargebiete* (Berlin: Reimer, 1891)).
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- ⁶⁵ C. Spring, African Textiles Today (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2012); L. Rabine, The Global Circulation of African Fashion (London: Bloomsbury, 2002), p. 94; Burton, Lake Regions, p. 533.
- 66 Kunguru was so inexpensive, it was issued as prison garb. C. Sacleux, Dictionnaire Swahili-Français (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1939), p. 452.
 - ⁶⁷ As examples, Speke, *Journal*, p. 145; Burton, *Lake Regions*, p. 532.
- ⁶⁸ Leech, 'Memoir on the trade', p. 214. In 1880 Mandvi's *mashru* weavers still numbered some 681 makers (Campbell, *Gazetteer*, p. 70); a few families continue the craft there today.
- ⁶⁹ Leech does mention *kitanee* exports from Mandvi to Zanzibar, and *mashru* to Berberah ('Memoir on the trade', pp. 216, 221).
- ⁷⁰ G. Feeley-Harnik, 'Number One Nambawani Lambaoany: Clothing as an Historical Medium of Exchange in Northwestern Madagascar', *Michigan Discussions in Anthropology*, 14, (2003), pp. 63–102. I thank Feeley-Harnik and Samuel Sanchez for sharing images of the royal cloth they collected in north-west Madagascar.
- ⁷¹ L. Subramanian, 'The political economy of textiles in western India', in G. Riello and T. Roy eds, *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles*, 1500–1850 (London: Brill, 2009); Haynes, *Small Town Capitalism*.
 - ⁷² Stanley, Dark Continent, p. 509; Subramanian, 'The political economy', pp. 258, 269, 270.
- ⁷³ E. Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 22. The Queen Mother of Uganda owned *deuli* and Mtesa sent several to Speke to have them tailored into garments (Speke, *Journal*, p. 331).
- ⁷⁴ The large red silk cloth, of two seamed lengths, has no recorded date or provenance beyond 'India'; it entered the Peabody Essex Museum before 1910, gifted by Lucia Ropes, member of American Ropes business family who had extensive business dealings in Zanzibar. Lucia also donated several costly silks made in Madagascar, pointing to Africa as the provenance of her material. Certainly, the cloth's dimensions, striping pattern, texture and woven end band are uncharacteristic of Indian domestic consumption but highly typical of eastern Africa's luxury imports, especially the alternating checked and solid stripes.
- ⁷⁵ Burton, *Lake Regions*, p. 532. Elsewhere Burton wrote that he carried \$15 worth of *jamdani* as 'presents for native chiefs', and Wanyamwezi chiefs wore it as turbans (R. Burton, *Zanzibar*, vol. 1, p. 484).
- ⁷⁶ Burton, Zanzibar, vol. 1, p. 383; Queen Victoria received ten gifts of Kashmir shawls from the sultan in 1842 (FO 54, vol. 4, British National Archives).
- ⁷⁷ S. Fee, "The dearest thing on the Eastern African Coast": The forgotten nineteenth century trade in Muscat cloth', in P. Machado, S. Fee and G. Campbell eds, *An Ocean of Cloth: Textile Trades, Consumer Cultures and the Textile Worlds of the Indian Ocean* (New York and London: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming).
 - 78 Goswami, Call of the Sea, p. 82.
 - 79 Loarer, Marchandises.
- ⁸⁰ Ruschenberger, A Voyage, p. 77; J. R. Wellsted, Travels in Arabia, 2 vols (London: Murray, 1838), vol. 1, p. 320; J. Buckingham, Travels in Assyria, 2nd edn (London: Colburn, 1830), p. 412; S. B. Miles, The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf, 2 vols (London: Harrison and Sons, 1919).
- ⁸¹ Schwidders, Das Hamburger, pp. 466, 475; 'Residency and Muscat Political Agency for 1881–82', Report on the Administration of the Persian Gulf Political Residency for the Year 1881–82, p. 139.
- ⁸² Loarer, 'Marchandises'; Rigby, 'Muscat-Zanzibar', p. 244; 'Report by Lieutenant-Colonel Playfair on the Trade of Zanzibar for the year 1864', Commercial Reports Received at the Foreign Office from Her Majesty's Consuls (London: Harrison and Sons, 1865), p. 175.
 - 83 Loarer, 'Marchandises'.
- ⁸⁴ 'Note explicative pour la collection d'échantillons envoyée au Musée Commercial de Lille', c. 1895, Registration Files, Musée d'Histoire Naturelle de Lille; C. Guillain, *Documents sur l'Histoire, La Géographie et le Commerce de l'Afrique Orientale*, 3 vols (Paris: Bertrand, 1856), vol. 2, p. 344.
 - 85 Burton, Lake Regions, pp. 26, 233; Speke, Journal, p. 617; Stanley, Through the Dark Continent, p. 509.
 - 86 Cf. n. 5.
 - ⁸⁷ On the limited zone that accepted cloth currency, see Palaver, 'What East Africans got'.
 - 88 Sissons, 'Economic Prosperity', p. 51.
- ⁸⁹ M. Berg, 'Luxury, the luxury trades, and the roots of industrial growth: a global perspective', in F. Trentmann ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 174.
- ⁹⁰ J. F. Elton, Travels and Researches among the Lakes and Mountains of Eastern and Central Africa (London: J. Murray, 1879), p. 49; Baumann, Usambara, pp. 28, 65; Glassman, Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast (Portsmouth, CT: Heinemann, 1995), p. 156.
- ⁹¹ Customs of the Swahili People, pp. 8, 53, 58, 63, 64, 148–50, 174. Luxury cloth was also gifted by Europeans to interior-dwelling Arabs (Cameron, Across Africa, p. 82; J. A. Grant, A Walk Across Africa, or Domestic Scenes from my Nile Journey (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1864), p. 52; Becker, La Vie en Afrique, vol. 1, p. 219).
 - ⁹² Guillain, Documents sur l'Histoire, p. 378. On the magubiko, see also Harries, Swahili Prose Texts, p. 182.
- ⁹³ J. Thompson, To the Central African Lakes and Back, 2 vols (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1881).

- ⁹⁴ A. C. P. Gamitto, *King Kazembe* (Lisbon: Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, 1960); J. W. T. Allen ed. and trans., *The Customs of the Swahili People. The Desturi za Waswahili of Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bakari and other Swahili Persons* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 161. See also Abdallah 1973, p. 32.
- ⁹⁵ Grant, A Walk Across Africa, p. 41; J. Becker, La Vie en Afrique ou Trois Ans dans l'Afrique Centrale, 2 vols (Bruxelles: J. Lebègue & Cie, 1887), vol. 1, p. 133; Elton, Travels and Researches, p. 286; Gamitto, Kazembe, p. 172.
 - ⁹⁶ Chande, 'My journey up-country', pp. 236–37.
 - 97 Sissons, Economic Prosperity, p. 51
 - 98 Becker, La Vie, vol. 1, pp. 249, 277; Elton, Travels and Researches, p. 286; Prestholdt, 'As artistry', pp. 7, 35, 36, 50.
 - 99 Becker, La Vie, vol. 1, p. 461.
 - ¹⁰⁰ Speke, Journal, p. 145; Grant, A Walk across Africa, p. 118.
- 101 G. Leblond, A l'Assaut des Pays Nègres. Journal des Missionaires d'Alger dans l'Afrique Equatoriale (Paris: A l'Oeuvre des Ecoles d'Orient, 1884), p. 62.
- ¹⁰² Y. B. Abdallah, *The Yaos, Chiikala cha Wayao*, 2nd edn, trans. Meredith Sanderson (London: Frank Cass, 1973 [1919]), p. 27.
 - 103 Stanley, In Darkest, vol. 1, p. 37.
- ¹⁰⁴ Both *leso* and *kisutu* prints were occasionally gifted to rulers, usually paired with one or more costly coloured cloths, or to élite women (Speke, *Journal*, p. 176; J. Becker, *Troisième Expedition Belge au Pays Noir* (Bruxelles: J. Lebecue et Cie., 1889), p. 122; H. H. Johnston, *Kilima-njaro Expedition. A Record of Scientific Expedition in Equatorial Africa* (London: Kegan Paul, 1886), p. 312).
- ¹⁰⁵ Livingstone, Zambesi, p. 237; Prestholdt, 'As artistry', p. 19; Glassman, Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast (Portsmouth CT: Heinemann, 1995), p. 24.
 - ¹⁰⁶ Gamitto, King Kazembe, vol. 2, pp. 48, 126; Glassman, Feasts and Riot, p. 155; Abdallah, The Yaos, p. 55.
 - 107 Glassman, Feasts and Riot, pp. 129, 157.
 - 108 Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁹ Burton, *Lake Regions*, pp. 115, 197, 461, 531. Although rulers might retain 'cloths with names' for themselves and wives, and give only *merikani* and *kaniki* to followers (Burton, *Lake Regions*, p. 115). Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves*, pp. 146, 152.
- ¹¹⁰ W. F. W. Owen, Narrative of Voyages to Explore the Shores of Africa, Arabia and Madagascar, 2 vols (London: R. Bentley, 1833), II, p. 154; Joseph Thomson Collection, Royal Geographical Society, CB6 1871–1880.
 - ¹¹¹ New, Life, Wanderings, and Labours in Eastern Africa, p. 159.
- 112 S. Rockel, Carriers of Culture: Labor on the Road in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Africa (Portsmouth, CT: Heinemann, 2006), p. 45; Alpers, Ivory and Slaves, p. 58; Sheriff, Slaves, Spices and Ivory, p. 184.
- ¹¹³ Glassman, Feasts and Riot; L. Fair, Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890–1945 (Ohio University Press, 2001).
- ¹¹⁴ Customs of the Swahili People, pp. 161, 164; Chande, 'My journey up-country', p. 234; Stanley, In Darkest, vol. 1, p. 242; Becker, La Vie, vol. 1, p. 271.
- ¹¹⁵ R. W. Beachey, 'The East African ivory trade in the 19th century', *Journal of African History*, 8, no. 2 (1967) pp. 269–90.
 - ¹¹⁶ Burton, Lake Regions, pp. 237, 242.
- ¹¹⁷ For a few examples, see Stanley, *Dark Continent*, pp. 204, 375; *Customs of the Swahili People*, pp. 53, 64, 143, 149; Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves*, p. 16; Johnson, *Dictionary*, under deuli; Sacleux, *Dictionnaire*, p. 817.
 - 118 Grant, A Walk Across Africa, p. 359; Burton, Lake Regions, p.172; Sissons, Economic Prosperity, p. 51.
- ¹¹⁹ For a discussion on the complex nexus of imitation and luxury, see M. Berg and H. Clifford, *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe 1650–1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).
- ¹²⁰ K. N. Chaudhuri, 'The structure of Indian textile industry in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *The Indian Economic and Social Review*, 11, nos 2–3 (1974), p. 182.
 - 121 Berg, 'Luxury, the luxury trades', p. 189.
 - 122 Prestholdt, 'Global repercussions', p. 767.

SARAH FEE is Curator of Eastern Hemisphere Textiles and Costume at the Royal Ontario Museum, and Affiliated Faculty at the University of Toronto. She currently holds a 5-year SSHRC Insight grant to study the interconnected weaving worlds of the western Indian Ocean.