

Between *Ushenzi/Ujinga* and *Ungwana*: Slavery in Transitioning East African Coastal Urban Society in the 19th Century

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Introduction

The 19th century was a crucial period for the East African Coast, notably in Zanzibar. At the very beginning of the century various polities held power over their areas of the coast, many of them operating from port towns of all sizes, but then throughout the first half of the 19th century, the Bū Saʿīd dynasty steadily extended their influence over the major ports along the mainland coast settling on Zanzibar as their base. Later, towards the end of the century, the British in turn increased their influence over the Bū Saʿīd and finally in 1890 Zanzibar became a British protectorate. There was a significant economic transformation during this century. As soon as Saʿīd b. Sulṭān (r. 1806–1856) had established his base at Zanzibar and settled the major ports along the mainland coast, he reduced the tax to be paid at the Zanzibar port and used commercial treaties to restrict European and American merchants to trading only via Zanzibar and not on the mainland.¹⁾ The effect of this merchant prince's move was to concentrate the commercial activities of at least European and American merchants on Zanzibar. Another significant point about the 19th century is that it was the century of the African slave trade, when the trade in slaves on the Western Indian Ocean reached its peak. While slave exports from other sources declined—the Treaty of Turkmenchay for instance stopped slave imports from Central Asia to the Qajar territory—the significance of the East African Coast as an exporter of slaves increased. Interestingly however, at the same time as demand rose for slaves overseas, demand rose too on the East African Coast itself, especially in Zanzibar which began to demand a large number of slaves after the successful introduction of cloves from the Mascarene Islands to Zanzibar triggered a boom in cultivation of cloves. Expanded production on Zanzibar both of cloves and coconuts drove a population increase, which naturally created greater demand for food which was covered by establishing new plantations on the mainland, notably in the Malindi area. More labour was then required to increase plantation

production both on the coast of the mainland and on Zanzibar itself. That requirement was fulfilled with new slaves brought from the hinterland of the mainland coast.

This overview shows that slaves were deeply involved in 19th century transformations along the East African Coast, and if that was so, it is interesting to ask how slavery changed, especially in urban societies along the coast and on the islands off the mainland. How did slavery function during this era of transformation? The aim of this article is to capture the practice of slavery in those societies in transition, using Zanzibar as a case study. In other words, it tries to capture how slavery in Zanzibar changed as Zanzibar itself turned to plantation production, which increased demand for slaves and pushed the slave-supply grounds farther towards the interior of the East African mainland. The use of slaves is often thought of as a static system, but this article examines it as a dynamic process, placing it properly within its context of rapidly changing circumstances. The following section will therefore deal with the transformation of the East African coastal urban societies as related to the progress of the slave trade and the plantation economy, and will explain the effects it had in Zanzibar. We shall see how slavery changed as well as how it stayed the same in rapidly changing circumstances.

The Transformation of East African Coastal Urban Societies and the Multi-ethnicity of Slaves in Zanzibar

Clove cultivation in Zanzibar had begun sometime in the early 1810s. Originally produced almost exclusively in the Molucca Islands and exported from there, cloves had been extremely expensive, and it was from the Mascarene Islands that they were transplanted to Zanzibar. In fact it was a French expedition that brought clove saplings secretly from the Moluccas to the Mascarenes, but their cultivation there was not commercially successful, and it is believed that either the French or envoys of Sa'īd b. Sulṭān to Mauritius then brought back some clove samples to Zanzibar,²⁾ where the deep loam of the north-western part of the island provides soil conditions highly suitable for growing cloves.³⁾ There was a problem, however. Historically, interior of the north-west of Zanzibar had been isolated from human development, and indeed most of the pre-19th century major settlements such as Unguja Ukuu where extensive ruins have been excavated, Kizimkazi and Fukuchani are along the coastline or in southern Zanzibar. Consequently, the land of the north-western part of Zanzibar had to be reclaimed before the cloves could be satisfactorily cultivated. Even then, it usually takes ten years

from planting before cloves can be harvested, so that there was a new labour demand on Zanzibar which would be continuous for many years. That demand was met with slaves. To put a figure on the requirement for labour, according to the early 20th century British colonial administrator, clove production required 10 people for every 100 trees.⁴⁾

Loarer, a commercial attaché on the French exploratory naval expedition led by Charles Guillain in the mid-1840s, mentioned that easy profits gained by clove planters in the early days of clove cultivation made all the inhabitants of Zanzibar turn their eyes towards the business.⁵⁾ Al-Mughayrī, the author of a locally produced chronicle, described the enthusiasm of the local people for clove cultivation more vividly. As soon as they saw how clove prices were rising, the people of Zanzibar and Pemba “reached the top of glory, delight and enthusiasm.”⁶⁾ People built mansions, held great feasts and turned into pleasure-seekers. Part of the profit was reinvested into the clove business; they purchased more land, which automatically meant that more labour was needed. Naturally therefore, slave imports to Zanzibar, already increased by demand from overseas, accelerated even further, now for domestic use.

Along with dried coconuts—known as copal—cloves became one of the most important export items produced in Zanzibar, such that the level of enthusiasm seen among the Zanzibari for cloves was often known as “Clove Mania”. However, and perhaps inevitably due to oversupply, the price of cloves gradually began to decline. In about the early 1840s for example, a *frasela* of cloves had been worth 5 or 5.5 piastres, but by the middle of the 1840s had fallen 4 piastres.⁷⁾ The decrease in profitability was covered by extensions to clove cultivation, which was increased in two phases from 8,000 to 30,000 *fraselas*.⁸⁾

The rapid increase in the slave population triggered by “Clove Mania” can be clearly seen from various reports and letters at the time. The British Consul at Zanzibar wrote in 1844 that, “the people are growing rich, and able to buy more slaves to cultivate cloves.”⁹⁾ However, slavery was not limited in its function to mere labouring. A Salem merchant named Emerton noted, “slaves are owned here because it is fashionable to have them, not because it is profitable,”¹⁰⁾ while again the British Consul stated, “a man’s wealth and respectability in the dominions of the Imam of Muscat¹¹⁾ is always estimated by the number of African slaves he is said to possess.”¹²⁾ In Zanzibar society, slaves functioned socially to display their masters’ wealth and dignity, which was another instance of Clove Mania’s effect of increasing the slave population in Zanzibar. Unfortunately, lack of reliable sources makes it impossible for us today to count the exact number of slaves in Zanzibar during the 19th century,

but in the middle of the 1850s Richard Burton estimated that two thirds of Zanzibar's population were slaves.¹³⁾ While the rising slave population within the island can be confirmed for the beginning of the 1860s, that increase came from slaves newly imported from the mainland. Paul Lovejoy has estimated that 1,651,000 slaves were exported from inland East Africa, and that 46.6% of them remained in the coastal region.¹⁴⁾ Sheriff too has pointed out that during the 1860s 19,800 slaves were brought to Zanzibar annually, and estimated that 12,000 remained on the island.¹⁵⁾ Meanwhile Customs records at Stone Town reveal that between May and December 1866, approximately 59.5% of slaves imported from the mainland remained on the island.¹⁶⁾

Loarer observed further effect of Clove Mania. He recorded that "elsewhere along the coast, people cut, people demolished coconuts trees, any kind of fruit trees... People disregarded farms of manioc, potatoes and cereals in order to plant cloves."¹⁷⁾ In the mid-1850s nearly a decade later, Burton reported the consequence. He wrote, "the clove mania has caused cereals to be neglected; formerly an export, it is now imported, and in 1860 it cost the Island £38,000."¹⁸⁾ That is, food production in Zanzibar was unable to keep up with the increasing population, so the solution, as Burton mentioned, was simply to import food. Mājid b. Sa'īd (r. 1856–70), successor of Sa'īd b. Sulṭān, established grain farms in the area around Malindi to supply food.¹⁹⁾ Thus, for this reliance on plantations to produce both cash crops and food crops, slaves were in great demand as the major labour force.

With demand for slaves in the coastal urban societies rising continually, the slave grounds extended into the interior of the mainland. Many contemporary observers reported depopulation of the coastal region outside the port towns and their hinterlands,²⁰⁾ something especially clearly revealed in the 1860 Manumission List composed by C. Rigby, then the British Consul at Zanzibar.²¹⁾ We can see from that list that as a general trend the older individuals mentioned on it had been brought from the coastal region or just inland, while the younger people had come from regions much further into the interior. In addition, a certain proportion were second- or third-generation individuals born to slave parents in Zanzibar. Overall, we can find over 84 ethnic groups on the list originating from places covering the vast region bordered by the Zambezi river basin where the Manganja lived, people from the Luapula river basin such as the Tonga, the Bisa and the Senga, and people such as the Fipa, the Jiji, the Nyamwezi, the Ganda and the Senga from the lake region. The list is clear evidence that while Zanzibar's Stone Town attracted merchants from various directions across the ocean, the plantations had also become firmly and widely multi-ethnic.

Break-down of the Slaves

Many mid-19th century European and American visitors to Zanzibar noticed that there were two categories of slaves, referred to locally as *mzalia* (pl. *wazalia*) and *mjinga* (pl. *wajinga*).²²⁾ *Mzalia* literally means “one who has been born”, while *mjinga* indicates “barbarian”. In a literal sense the two categories make for a stark contrast to each other, as “locals” as against “strangers”, or “civilised” versus “uncivilised”. The mid-19th century visitors’ records also reveal a significant difference in treatment of each category by their masters, further confirming the sense of a stark contrast. Many visitors mentioned that *wazalia* seemed to enjoy a high degree of liberty, such as Richard Burton again, who observed, “yet the slave if dissatisfied silently leaves the house, attaches himself to another master, and returns after perhaps two years’ absence as if nothing had occurred.”²³⁾ By contrast, *wajinga* were usually thought of as nothing more than the labour force on the plantations.

Indeed, the same categorisation was employed by slave masters. One of only a few contemporary texts to reveal slavery from the viewpoint of the masters is *Desturi za Wasuaheli na khabari za desturi za sheri’a za wasuaheli* published in 1903. The title means literally, *Customs of the Swahili People and Information on the Customs and Codes of the Swahili People* and the information in the text was collected at the request of Carl Velten from the free-status male elders of Bagamoyo. Velten was a German linguist, and the Kiswahili text, written in Arabic script, was brought to Berlin along with additional information, by Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bakari, a lecturer at the Oriental Seminar in Berlin and himself a native of Bagamoyo. A *mzalia* is defined in *Desturi za Wasuaheli* as “one whose mother came from inland. On arrival she was married to another slave and had a child. He is called ‘mzalia’,” while a *mjinga* is so called because “he has just arrived on the coast and does not know the language or customs, neither how to wash clothes, nor how to cook.” *Desturi za Wasuaheli* has separate sections for *mzalia* and *mjinga*, a characteristic difference between the two being that *wazalia* worked at a master’s home, while *wajinga* worked on the plantations.

From such records it is safe to say that *wazalia* lived in town with their masters while *wajinga* lived on the plantations outside the towns. If that is correct, then the question arising is the reason behind the difference. Modern researchers, like contemporary observers, tended to believe the clear division of slaves into the two categories was in accordance with whether the slave in question had been born locally or brought into Zanzibar’s society from

outside.²⁴⁾ However, it is important to remember that the only sources we have for information on *wazalia* and *wajinga* were written some time after Clove Mania in Zanzibar had subsided. We might well wonder therefore if the claimed correspondence between the places of origin of the slaves and their places of work is perhaps the result of that limitation of the available sources and stereotypic discourse, and we do indeed find that the consistency of designation and fate of slaves is not always there in actual cases, especially in the cases of *wajinga*. Before the great manumission of 1860, Rigby researched slave ownership among British subjects in Zanzibar. He actually arrested a British subject named Kanu Munji on a charge of possession of slaves at his plantation. Munji was in fact found in possession of 52 slaves and Rigby's interviews with some of those slaves were documented. From those records we discover a wide range of treatment of *wajinga*, with many certainly working only on plantations, but at least one who worked and lived with Kanu Munji in town, and one such, actually a woman, turns out to have been a household slave. In fact, she was even allowed to work outside the house to earn her own money.²⁵⁾ The documented interviews indicate therefore that there were at least some slaves within the *mjinga* category were treated as if they were *mzalia*.

What differentiated the treatment of such *mjinga*? What is certainly clear from the statements of the slaves themselves is that at least one of them who had been designated a *mzalia* had lived in a coastal society before coming to Zanzibar, while others sent direct to the plantation had no similar experience. Here it would be proper to consider the matter of assimilation, which is one of the keys to understanding slavery in many of the societies in the Western Indian Ocean World.²⁶⁾ Many such societies including East African coastal urban ones tended not to isolate outsider slaves brought into their society, but to incorporate them into it, for which one historic reason derives from how slaves were employed. Unlike in the European colonies in the Americas and the Caribbean where the major role of slaves was as agricultural labour, in many coastal urban societies the main employment of slaves was as domestic labour. In these societies commercial activities historically had more importance than agriculture, so slaves had always been primarily for domestic use. Indeed that fact reflects the general term for "slave" in the Kiswahili language: *Desturi za Wasuaheli* used *mtumwa* (pl. *watumwa*) as the general term indicating slave. The word consists of the combination of the prefix of *m/wa-* which refers to human beings and animals, and the passive form of *(ku)tuma*, meaning "to be used, to be employed or to be sent on an errand". Thus, *mtumwa* literally means one who is used, employed or sent on an errand.

Between *Ushenzi/Ujinga* and *Ungwana*

In view therefore of the basic understanding within coastal urban societies of the normal function of slaves as essentially domestic or household servants, sending slaves to work on plantations seemed a rather novel idea. Indeed, *shamba*, the Kiswahili word for plantation, is derived from French word *champ* meaning “field”, which indicates that to the locals the very concept of a plantation was something imported from an alien culture. In fact the plantation system had most probably been introduced about the time cloves had first been imported from the Mascarene Islands in the early 1810s. However, that is not to say that the division of slaves into *mzalia* and *mjinga* types originated then, for the two categories certainly existed prior to the introduction of plantations. Clearly, the designation of slaves into the two different categories was already an essential characteristic of slavery in East African coastal urban societies. To understand fully what the terms meant we must therefore devote the rest of this section to analysis of *Desturi za Wasuaheli*.

There is a section in *Desturi za Wasuaheli* entitled “the work of *mzalia*”. It says this:

The work of the *wazalia*. Being employed at home to wash vessels or plates, or to wash clothes, or to be taught cooking, and to plait mats, and to sweep the room, and to go to a well to draw water, and to go to the shop to buy rice or meat. And when the meal is ready, to serve it to the master, and to hold the basin for him to wash his hands, sometimes to wash his feet and to oil him; but only with permission of his wife. And when the wife wants to go into the country or to a mourning or wedding ceremony, she goes with her. The wife has an umbrella; she carries it for her.

The male *mzalia* travels with his master, to attend him. If the master wants to have his clothes washed, to wash; if he wants something at a shop, to buy it; he does anything the master wants. Or he may be sent to the workshop to learn to sew kanzu and shoes, to embroider cloth, to sew kofia; also, he is taught carpentry to make decorated doors, or to build a stone or wooden house. When he masters these skills, he retains his own profits, and if he is a good *mzalia*, he remembers to give his master a part of it.²⁷⁾

Here, the text clearly distinguishes between male *mzalia* and female *mzalia*. In other words, gender difference is unambiguously recognised. A

female *mzalia* principally served her master's wife, while male *wazalia* served the master. In fact women functioning as "masters" were not rare in Zanzibar society, in which cases, female *mzalia* simply served "masters" who happened to be women. However, no such gender-based role difference is found in the description of *wajinga*. *Desturi za Wasuaheli* describes the work of *wajinga* as follows:

In the morning the overseer and the headman showed him where to dig, and his plot was marked out for him. He was given a task, that is, a section in which he must dig cassava and plant vegetables and beans. The master did not have to give him the yield of this plot, unless he wished to do so. If he grew rice or sorghum, he gave him a little rice as pepeta or sorghum as msima out of kindness.²⁸⁾

Given that gender roles reflect associated standards in a society, we can see that masters in coastal urban societies did not recognise *wajinga* as worthy of having normal standards applied to them. On the other hand, *wazalia* were considered worthy of it. Interestingly in fact, the description of the work of women of free status in *Desturi za Wasuaheli* corresponds with the female section of the description of *wazalia*:

Women cook at home, and when the meal is ready, they serve it to the men. And they wash the vessels of the house, and they wash the clothes of the master, and they wash their own clothes, and they clean their own house, and they go to a well to draw water, if they do not have a slave. And in the evening, she makes her husband's bed, and rubs his feet and spreads oil over them, and massages him gently until he sleeps. By day, after eating she takes her hank of raffia and plaits a mat. Some make buns or cakes for her child to go and sell, or split wood into bundles for sale...²⁹⁾

To serve food, clean the house, to draw water from the well, oil the master's feet; all these are common to both texts, which implies that women in the master's household—and notably his wife—taught female *wazalia* the various household chores and the *wazalia* therefore learned the normal work of women in free status households. In other words, female *wazalia* were expected to assume the gender roles that would have been appropriate for them in coastal urban societies if they had been free-born women.

The key to understanding the different treatment of *wajinga* from *wazalia*

and the correspondence in the description of female *wazalia*'s work to the work of women of free status is *ungwana*. The word *ungwana* is included in one of the earliest Kiswahili-English dictionaries compiled by Arthur C. Madan who defined it as “good breeding, education, accomplishments, civilization, in contrast with *ushenzi*, barbarism.”³⁰⁾ Prior to that explanation, Madan also noted it as applying to “the condition of a free man, commonly contrasted with that of a slave, but also denoting a relatively high social grade.” That latter part of the definition contrasting freedom with slavery seems to be the more common usage, although it should be pointed out here that Madan's dictionary too was compiled after the time of Clove Mania.

Madan's extension of the definition of *ungwana* is therefore to an extent based on hindsight, because “good breeding, education, accomplishments, civilization” are considered preconditions of “a free man”.³¹⁾ On the contrary, the lack of such qualities was known as *ushenzi* (barbarism) or *ujinga* (ignorance) and was applied to slaves newly brought in from outside coastal urban society. Even though *ushenzi* or *ujinga* was recognised as a hereditary characteristic, *ungwana* was regarded rather as something acquired. Masters therefore recognised variations in the degree of *ungwana* in each slave, which is why in turn some slaves new to Zanzibar society mentioned in the previous section were employed domestically, while those who lacked such experience were sent to the plantations. Children however embodied an exception to the rule for they were regarded as having the potential to acquire *ungwana* much more easily and quickly than adults. Therefore, even if they had not experienced coastal urban society, in expectation of quick acquisition of appropriate social skills certain promising-looking ones were kept in households. That particular category of slaves were sometimes known as *kijakazi/vijakazi*.

It was believed that *ushenzi* and *ujinga* were hereditary while *ungwana* could be acquired, so that the relationship between *ushenzi/ujinga* and *ungwana* was seen not as binary but continuous. For example, *Desturi za Wasuaheli* explains how free-born children learned manners and proper behaviour both at school and at home,³²⁾ and as a rule for the relationship between teacher and student, “treat your teacher as if you were his slave. About work, anything he gives you to do, you must do it.”³³⁾ In other words, the two characteristics, namely the perfect *ungwana* that was supposed to be an acquired characteristic of masters and other free-status—particularly adult—members of coastal society, and *ushenzi/ujinga*, were imagined as lying at opposite ends of a spectrum from each other. Slave masters then judged where each of their slaves stood along the spectrum, using their judgement to determine how each slave should be used. Within the domestic space, education was an important

element of the master's and his family's behaviour towards slaves to whom they wished to teach the ways of *ungwana*. A good example to reinforce the sense of similarity seen in *Desturi za Wasuaheli* of the description of female *wazalia* and free-status women, is provided by an idiom recorded by missionary William Taylor, of the Church Mission Society to East Africa. Taylor recorded the saying, "*Mtumwa mwelewa hafunzwi adabu,*" which he translated as, "a smart slave is not taught manners,"³⁴⁾ and the saying neatly captures the essence of this teaching of slaves. The remarkable thing about the saying is that the content to be taught was not *kazi* (work) but *adabu* (manners). Good manners would therefore be included in the list of qualities household slaves were required to work on in order to enhance their *ungwana*, which could be done only through experience of living in a coastal urban society. Another idiom recorded by Taylor says, "*mtumwa mwenyi busara ni azawao* ("born-here" is the sensible slave)."³⁵⁾

In practice therefore, the *mzalia/mjinga* dichotomy and different treatment of being either kept in households or sent to the plantations did not always correspond quite fully. In the literal sense *wazalia*, meaning those born in a coastal urban society, were expected to have already acquired enough *ungwana* to know how to behave acceptably in a master's household as well as towards *waungwana*, free-status people. For slave masters, that they would be sharing *ungwana* with their household slaves was an important factor in deciding whether to employ them or not in the first place. On the other hand, any slaves newly brought to coastal urban society were generally recognised as *washenji*, meaning "barbarian". Since slave masters believed that *washenji* had not experienced life in a coastal urban society, they did not expect them to possess *ungwana*, so those slaves were sent straight to the plantations on the newly reclaimed land away from the master's town-house. However, there were *washenji* who had indeed experienced life among free status coastal urban dwellers, and masters considered that some of them had already acquired a certain amount of *ungwana*. Masters therefore did not send such slaves to the plantations but kept them too in town, as they often did children, even if the children had not experienced coastal urban life, because children were usually expected to acquire *ungwana* much more easily than adults would. Such child slaves too were then treated within the household as if they were *wazalia*, and to enhance their potential to acquire *ungwana*, their masters were keen to educate them.

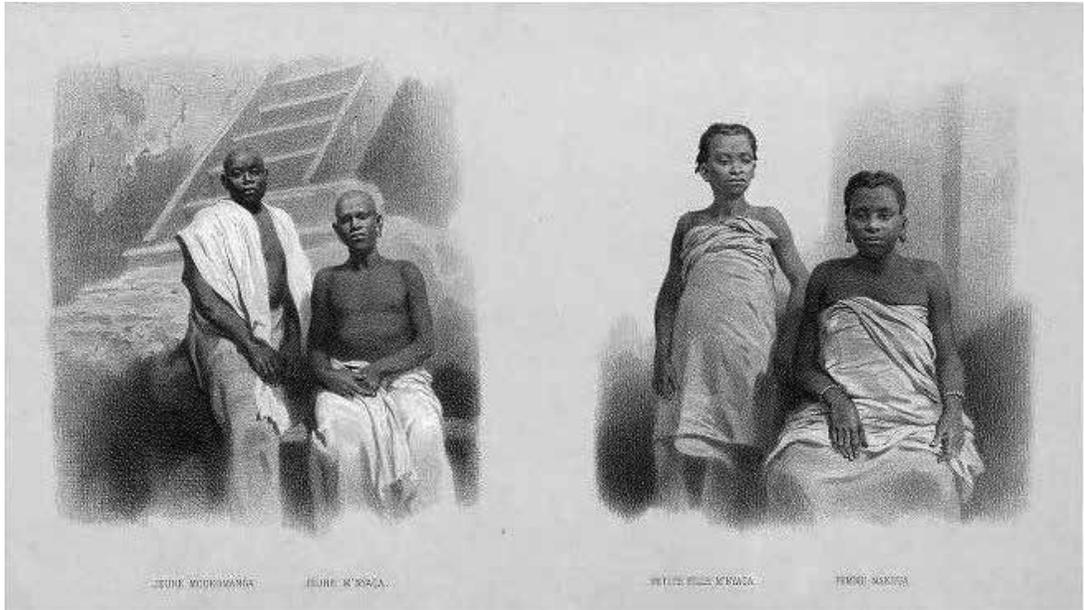
Restriction on the Teaching of *Ungwana*

If slave masters trained and educated household slaves to enhance their *ungwana*, because they believed *ungwana* could be acquired, a logical consequence was that the slaves might attain the same degree of *ungwana* as their masters. In fact, *Desturi za Wasuaheli* mentions that free status was obtained by the seventh generation of children born of parents both of whom had themselves been born in coastal urban society. That suggests that the free status elders in Bagamoyo who supplied information for *Desturi za Wasuaheli*, considered that living in the same town for seven generations would be enough time for slaves to obtain enough *ungwana* to be entitled to free status. However, the reality was that while the masters encouraged their slaves to acquire a degree of *ungwana*, they deliberately restricted the level of *ungwana* the slaves could show both to their masters in the household and to the public outside. Indeed, in the chapter entitled “Slaves in the past” in *Desturi za Wasuaheli* we find the following:

In the past slaves were given no consideration by freemen on the coast. A slave was known by his dress, for never in his life did he wear a cap... He never wore sandals nor a kanzu long enough to cover his legs... He did not protect himself from the rain with an umbrella... Nor did he ever in the house wear clogs. At parties they sat separately, not with the gentry... Nor does a slave sit on a cane chair nor have one in his house. If he does so, people say “This slave thinks himself as good as us. He has cane chairs in his house...”³⁶⁾

Indeed, Richard Burton observed that “the Murungwana [*sic*], or free-woman, is distinguished from the slave-girl, when outside the house, by a cloth thrown over the head,”³⁷⁾ and other 19th century visitors made similar observations.³⁸⁾ We can see even more clearly in lithograph images from the time a marked difference in physical appearance between masters and slaves. Pictures are lithographs based on daguerreotypes taken during a French naval expedition in the mid-1840s and Pictures 1 and 2 show slaves, most probably those who work at plantation, while Picture 3 shows a family of free status.³⁹⁾

There were two main reasons why masters and free status people were so keen to restrict slaves’ appearance and behaviour. One was that obviously, if slaves had behaved and dressed exactly as their masters did, it would have been difficult to distinguish free people from slaves. In fact, *Desturi za Wasuaheli* recorded episodes when elderly free persons vehemently protested to the *jumbe*



Pictures 1 and 2



Picture 3

(chief) when he gave his slaves clothes appropriate to persons of free status.⁴⁰⁾ People of free status felt the need to maintain a visible difference between themselves and slaves not only in how they looked but in behaviour too. The chief's action clearly overstepped the mark and the elders' protests reminded slaves that they were certainly not of the same status as their masters. Furthermore, if slaves were to behave exactly as their masters, it would be difficult for masters to make good use of slaves. The quotation from *Desturi za Wasuaheli*'s chapter about "work for females" cited in the previous section notes that women were in the habit of buying raw fish which they then fried and offered for sale. It mentions too women's various commercial activities such as selling *pombe* (the local beer) or toddy.⁴¹⁾ To a certain degree such activities supported free status women's economic independence from their husbands, but as *Desturi za Wasuaheli* mentions, among Muslims in Swahili society, free women were generally not allowed out unaccompanied.⁴²⁾ In fact free women could not go out at will but were obliged to ask either their children or their female household slaves to sell the items they had produced. Similarly, when a man who was the master of slaves travelled, male household slaves accompanied him. On the journey, the master might for example require fresh laundry, so that although washing clothes was normally women's work, an accompanying male household slave would wash his master's clothes.⁴³⁾ Clearly then, if male household slaves had followed the examples of their masters' domestic behaviour in every detail to the extent of refusing to do "women's work", or female household slaves refused to go out to shop for their female masters, then their masters would not be able to behave fully in accordance with their own *ungwana*,⁴⁴⁾ for of course every slave was and remained fundamentally *mtumwa*, "one who is used". In other words, while household slaves were required to acquire *ungwana*, their masters did not allow them to behave fully in accordance with quite all they had learned, and the *ungwana* of household slaves was always sufficiently restricted so that they would remain useful to their masters.

Conclusion

During the 19th century, East African coastal urban societies, notably Zanzibar, experienced a great transformation affecting many things, and slavery was no exception. Combined with increasing demand for slaves from overseas markets, the successful introduction of cloves and the switch to the plantation style of production in Zanzibar created the condition for a quite active slave market in Zanzibar, which in turn extended the slave grounds

farther into the interior of the mainland beyond the coast. Zanzibari society was now forced to accommodate vast numbers of new slaves who had never experienced anything like the coastal urban society of East Africa. Most mid-19th century observations and the modern scholarly analysis based on them seem to agree that the categorical *mjinga/mzalia* distinction corresponded to the place of origin of slaves and determined whether the slaves either remained in the town or were sent to the plantations. It is important to remember here that the noted correspondence is first and foremost theoretical and that it stems from observations made during the 19th century by travellers who appeared on the scene only sometime after the plantation system had become well established in Zanzibar and various coastal urban settings. In fact there is nothing in the sources to suggest that any such correspondence existed before that time and above all we should avoid any idea that the correspondence applied universally everywhere and at all times. Indeed an obvious problem is that some number of slaves who were strictly speaking *wajinga* were nevertheless treated as *wazalia*. We have now seen, however, that we can easily explain the apparent anomaly by reference to the concept of *ungwana*. Coastal urban society saw *ungwana* as a learned attribute of free-born people, so quite logically they believed it could just as well be learned by suitable candidates among the people brought in as slaves. Good manners and civilised behaviour were a requirement of household slaves so masters took the trouble to educate them, although to a limited extent only in order to maintain the distinction between slaves and free people and not to compromise the function of these people as slaves.

Slavery in East African coastal urban societies was highly fluid. Owners carefully assessed the degree of *ungwana* of each new slave, and in the cases of children their potential to acquire *ungwana*. Promising individuals were sent to learn *ungwana* but in a limited version appropriate to slaves, to make sure that they would not undermine the status of free people, who were the only ones for whom the full value of *ungwana* should be available. In effect, there was what we might think of today as a sort of glass ceiling for slaves.

Notes

- 1) Sheriff 1987, 119–127; Suzuki 2018, 148.
- 2) al-Mughayrī 1979, 181; Reda Bhacker 1992, 126–127; Ruschenberger 1838, 51; Sheriff 1987, 49–50; Tidbury 1949, 4–5; Vernet 2017, 51–52.
- 3) Suzuki 2016.
- 4) Sheriff 1987, 64–65.
- 5) ANOM OIND 5/23(4) “Girofle.”

- 6) al-Mughayrī 1979, 189.
- 7) ANOM OIND 5/23(4) “Girofle.”
- 8) ANOM OIND 5/23(4) “Girofle.”
- 9) NAUK FO84/540/177 [Hamerton to the Earl of Aberdeen, 2 January 1844].
- 10) Bennett and Brooks (eds.) 1965, 427 [A Visit to Eastern Africa, 1849].
- 11) This phrase indicates East African territory of the Bū Sa‘id.
- 12) ZZBA AA12/29/43 [Hamerton to the Secretary to Bombay Government, Zanzibar, 2 January 1842].
- 13) Burton 1872, Vol. 1, 462–463.
- 14) Lovejoy 2012, 151.
- 15) Sheriff 1987, 226–231.
- 16) NAUK FO84/1279/43–46 [Tables settling forth the legitimate slave trade at the port of Zanzibar].
- 17) ANOM OIND 5/23(4) “Girofle.”
- 18) Burton 1872, Vol. 1, 243.
- 19) For an overall picture, see: Suzuki 2018. For Malindi, see: Martin 1973, 56–57; Salim 1973, 26.
- 20) Alpers 1975, 152–153, 199; Colin 1809, 304, 312; Prior 1819, 75–77; ZZBA AA12/29/45 [Hamerton to Smyth, 1 January 1842], 211–212 [Hamerton to Secretary to the Bombay Government, Zanzibar, 2 January 1842]; MAHA PD/1860/159/830/210–212 [Rigby to Anderson, Zanzibar, 21 March 1860], 272 [Rigby to Anderson, 14 September 1860]; MAHA PD/1860/159/1500/291–293 [Rigby to Anderson, Zanzibar, 1 June 1860].
- 21) Suzuki 2012.
- 22) Burton 1872, Vol. 1, 463.
- 23) Burton 1860, Vol. 2, 310.
- 24) Deutsch 2007, 132–133; Nicholls 1971, 288; Weidner 1915, 31.
- 25) MAHA PD/1860/159/12/234–235 [Depositions of various male and female African slaves found in the possession of Kanoo Munjee, a Banyan, residing at Zanzibar, Zanzibar, 5 February 1860].
- 26) Campbell 2004, xviii–xix.
- 27) Velten 1903, 257–258.
- 28) The Kiswahili language has no personal pronoun distinguishing gender; therefore all personal pronouns (he) indicating a slave in the above text may be replaced by “she”.
- 29) Velten 1903, 168.
- 30) Madan 1903, 405.
- 31) Randall L. Pouwels notes that a mungwana was “a person who dressed in a certain way, ate certain foods, earned his livelihood in certain ways, attended to his prayers assiduously, lived in certain types of houses, behaved in certain ways in public, and, above all, spoke the vernacular Swahili well.” (Pouwels 1987, 73.)
- 32) Velten 1903, 39–54.
- 33) Velten 1903, 42.
- 34) Taylor 1891, 78.
- 35) Taylor 1891, 78.
- 36) Velten 1903, 259–260.
- 37) Burton 1860, Vol. 1, 40.

- 38) Elton 1879, 48–49; Guillain 1856–58, Part 1, 82–90; New 1971, 58–62.
- 39) Guillain 1856–58, Part 2, Vol. 1, Pl 31, Pl 32.
- 40) Velten 1903, 259–260.
- 41) Velten 1903, 168–169.
- 42) Velten 1903, 116–118.
- 43) Velten 1903, 257–258.
- 44) Deutsch 2007, 133; Mirza and Strobel 1989, 31; Strobel 1983, 116–123.

Archives Materials

ANOM: Archives nationales d’outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence, France.
 MAHA: Maharashtra State Archives, Mumbai, India.
 NAUK: The National Archives, Kew, the United Kingdom.
 ZZBA: Zanzibar National Archives, Zanzibar, Tanzania.

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