Part 4:

Oct. 25 ‘The British Protectorate’
The British in Zanzibar

British involvement in Zanzibar outgrowth of role in Oman:

- 1856 succession crisis, ‘split’ Oman-Zanzibar empire created by Sayyid Said between two sons [see previous lecture]

- Sayyid Majid bin said became Sultan of Zanzibar (1856-70) [above, right]

- followed by his brothers Sayyid Bargash in (1870-88), Khalifa (1888-90) and Sayyid Ali (1890-93) [right]
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During Bargash’s reign, Germans successfully conquered mainland:

- British worried about Indian Ocean trade: ‘traded’ rights to territories of what became Kenya, Zanzibar and Pemba

- Sayyid Ali [right] had little choice but to accept British Protection in 1890 – or be destroyed by Germans

Formal British ‘colonization’ began in 1890
Al Busaidi Family Tree

Ahmed bin Said SOZ 1744-83

Hilal (blind)

Said SOZ 1783-89

Hamad SOZ 1789-92

Qais

Seif

Sultan SOZ 1792-1804

Bedr SOZ 1804-1806 (regent)

Azze (Said’s first wife)

Mohamed

Azza SOZ 1889-92

Qais

Azzan (SO 1869-71)

Hamad

Salim (1789-1821)

Moza (Barqash’s first and only wife)

Said SOZ 1804-1856 (1)

Thuwaini SO 1856-66

Muhammed

Turki SO 1871-88

Khaled (1815-54)

Maed (2) (1834-70) SO 1856-70

Barqash (3) (1837-88) SO 1870-88

Khole

Salma (1844-1924)

Khalifa (4) 1854-90 SO 1888-90

Ali (5) 1852-91 SO 1890-93

Abdul Aziz 1848-

Hamad (1853-96) SZ (6) 1893-96

Haroub

Salim SO 1866-68

Hazim (1879-1960) SO 1911-60 (9)

Khalifa (1893-96)

Abdul (10) SZ 1900-63

Jamshid (11) SZ 1903-64

Faisal SO 1888-13

Taimur SO 1913-32

Said SO 1932-70

Caboos SO 1970-

Shembu

Farschu

Khaled

Rudolph

SOZ - Sultan of Oman and Zanzibar
SO - Sultan of Oman
SZ - Sultan of Zanzibar

Only the names of the most prominent family members are given
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Key Influences on Zanzibar Consequences of Four Policies:

1. Abolitionism (ending slave trade 1873, ending slavery 1897)

2. ‘Indirect Rule’

3. ‘Ethnic Categorizing’

4. Immigration Policy
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Ending of Slave Trading:

- Rashid’s story revealing of impact 1873: he probably arrived in Kilwa and was subsequently sold (twice) c. 1880
- trade and market commerce continued but clandestinely
- undoubtedly affected profits accruing to major traders in employ of Sultan
- did not end slavery (eg Rashid c. 1895/6 still slave, freed because of Bibi Zem-Zem’s death, not ‘end of slavery’ – freed with 500-600 others…)}
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Ending of Slavery:

- worrying to all Zanzibar *shamba* owners, British ‘colonizers’ for same reason
- labour: feared food, copral (coconut) and clove economies would collapse if slave labour fled
- mainlanders Africans [freed slaves] ‘brought over’ to take up slack
- also came voluntarily [not only freed slaves]: Zanzibar seen as prosperous
- Zanzibar freed slaves often left *shambas* but not Island
- turned to ‘urban’ economy, culture: consciously becoming ‘Swahili’ [eg think of Rashid in Mombasa]
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Indirect Rule:

- form of government honed by Lord Lugard first in India, then West Africa (Nigeria)
- applied in all British (non-settler) colonies in Africa
- ‘chose’ what British considered to be most effective and legitimate tribe/ethnic group to rule
- acted as ‘advisors’
- in Zanzibar, no reason to remove Bu’saidi family: had established commercial credentials, network to the interior, literate and influential among Zanzibar’s scholars, educated elite, collected taxes
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As a consequence:

- privileged ‘Arab’ elite, principally Omanis [see below for more on what they understood as ‘Arab’]
- also extended to ‘Arab’ (as distinct from ‘Indian’) landowners
- needed support during WW I (Germans in neighbouring Tanganyika): against some public opposition [see ‘Another Andalus’], received it
- late 1920s, into Depression 1930s: many ‘Arabs’ in financial difficulty: commodities market collapsing, unable to pay debts (often to Indian financiers/creditors), threatened with bankruptcy
- British ‘rescued’ many of them in attempt to bolster strength of ‘ruling class’ they depended upon
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Ethnic Classification:

- common everywhere: colonial rulers identified, defined, sketched ‘typical tribes’
- part of determining who could/should legitimately rule
- also tied into Oriental and Darwinian view of ‘the other’ [see previous lectures]
- imposition ‘census’ part of both indirect rule (how much to expect in taxation) and categorization (had to establish categories before census could be undertaken)
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Initial ‘categories’: Arab, Asian, African

Census report of 1924:
- given groups not sufficient
- those cited were Arab (Omani), Swahili, Hadimu, Tumbatu, Shirazi, Pemba, Mainland ex-slave, Mainland migrant, Other African, Hadrami and Comorian.

Census report of 1931:
- the categories were Arab, Swahili, Shirazi, Hadimu, Tumbatu, Pemba, Mainland ex-slave, Mainland migrant, Other African and Comorian.
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By the time statistics found their way into Annual Report of 1931, they had been distilled into Arab, Asian and African

- these were the categories that determined food rationing policies during WW II: Arabs and Asians were granted same ‘cultural’ rights to certain foods (most notably rice)

- Africans were instructed to (learn to like) maize (corn)

- in terms of formal ‘categories’, Swahili did not exist – they appear to have become ‘Africans’

[see YouTube: ‘Zanzibar – Ports of Call, 1934’, Additional Readings]
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Summary:
- generally speaking, British ‘view’ of Zanzibar largely shaped historiography
- slavery and slaves ‘disappear’
- mainland freed slaves largely replace Zanzibar slave labour
- ‘Arabs’ dominate politics, economics culture as ‘collaborators’ of British
- as British Africa ‘decolonizes’ and moves to parliamentary democracy (political parties, limited forms voting): Zanzibar National Party [‘Arab party’] dominates
- independence 1963: social unrest, inequity so great – leads to Revolution 1964, end of ‘Arab’ dominance/presence
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Readings cast doubt on this interpretation:

Limbert challenges (convincingly) image of ‘Arab’ = ‘Omani elite’, so firmly established in colonial literature [refer also to ‘Marriage that never was…’]
- looks at subsequent Omani ‘poor’ immigration and impact on society, through to impact of Revolution
- [will see impact of last factor ‘Immigration Policies’]

Ghazal challenges (equally convincingly) that ‘Arabs’ (in her argument presented as ‘Omani elite’) were collaborators
- shifts emphasis from Arab identity as racial/ethnic to Religious – specifically ‘Ibadi Islam’ and cultural ‘Arabic language’
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‘Another Andalous’ – reference to Zanzibar as centre of Islamic renaissance:

- Ghazal’s argument is essentially that: Zanzibar’s ‘literati’ including scholars, administrators, landowners, merchants, journalists and ‘rulers’ were central to revival of purist Islam in face of compromising Christianity
- had close relations with Ottomans from nineteenth century during rule of Abdulhamid II
- impacted by fall of empire (post WW I)
- now ‘centre’ as colonized as ‘periphery’
- involved in Pan Islam, Pan Ibadi, Pan Arab movements
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Zanzibar became centre of new ‘renaissance’, tied into Algeria (southern region), Egypt and Oman:

- scholars travelled between regions
- newspapers spread ideas
- **Maghrib newspaper editor** (*al-Hilal*) regular correspondence Zanzibari sultans, journalists
- saw/portrayed Zanzibar sultans as ‘Arab Heros’
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Article printed on Tippu Tip:

- Egyptian editor provided ‘introduction’
- presented al-Marjibi as ‘Arab Hero’ and ‘Omani adventurer’
- focused on role in expanding Omani rule
- “… who performed miracles in politics, in prudence and in leadership – and whose efforts should be revealed to all”
Ghazal concludes her discussion of this point:

“The editor [Zaydan] ended his introduction by thanking [the Zanzibar journalist who’d sent him the story] “his earnest concern to make known the achievements of the Sharqiyyīn [Easterners].” During a period of Arab self-glorification and resurrection of a celebrated past, it is very significant that Zaydān chose Zanzibar to represent that history, and to remind the Arab world of that golden moment when history witnessed the expansion of Arab rule in Africa. Al-Marjibī’s achievements in East Africa, in Zaydān’s eyes, were Arab ‘heroic’ achievements worth placing al-Marjibī among the greatest ‘celebrities’ … and among those who helped build the Arab legacy.”
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Key Question: why – if ‘Arabs’ were collaborators with the colonialists?

- Ghazal not denying role of Bu’saidi family in working with British, enjoying privileges but…

- argues that historians have overlooked degree to which ‘Omani Elite’ had felt itself to be part of larger ‘Arab-Muslim’ world

- AND degree to which those in southern Algeria and Egypt, although ‘African’, were part of that network

- AND degree to which those who came to see themselves as Arab Muslims (Ibadi) also saw themselves as victims of colonialism – traces expansive, international ‘anti-colonial’ network
- interesting: cross-cuts usual British-French colonial boundaries
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Asks us to consider that even though ‘Arabs’ privileged:

1. they were privileged as defined by British (back to issue of “what is Arab”)

2. they (‘Arabs’) were still colonized!
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“Who was an ‘Arab’ in the British Protectorate?
- British did not see ‘Arabness’ in same way as Omanis or other Zanzibaris:

[Ghazal] “‘Arabness’ … in addition to being associated with ‘race’, was a socio-economic identity. An ‘Arab’ was a land-owner, ‘a perfect gentleman’, and a dweller “in a massive, many storied-mansion.” He was “par excellence a landed proprietor, and usually has his money in clove and coco-nut plantations.” Arabs of Hadrami or Comorian origins who did not fit in those categories were looked upon as inferior to Omanis. … the British distinguished not only between an ‘Arab’ and a ‘negro’ …but also between Omanis and other Arabic-speaking communities…”
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“Who was an ‘Arab’ in the British Protectorate?

“[c. 1920] the British definition of an ‘Arab’ was one with which few Arabs would agree. An ‘Arab’, as the British Resident in Zanzibar Francis Pearce indicated, is “the true Arab of unmixed descent,” while “the Zanzibar negro”, he added, “whose great-great-grandmother may have had some connection with an Arab harem, cannot fairly be classed at the present day as an Arab, as the term is understood in Zanzibar.” This definition of the term ‘Arab’ was surely one that was understood by the British alone and not by the Swahili society with its Arab and non-Arab members.”
“[by a decade later]…Omanis seemed to have been regarded as more Arab than Hadramis and Comorians – indeed Comorians had to petition the British to be classified as ‘Arabs’ in 1930. [an observer] writing in the late 1920s, considered Omanis the ‘principal’ Arabs in Zanzibar, although he admitted Hadramis were the most numerous. His description of ‘Arabs’ lifestyle, social organization and occupation was restricted to Omanis.”
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By these definitions:

- many of Bu’saidi family would themselves not be considered ‘Arabs’ (eg Bargash, son of Sayyid Said…)
- certainly Tippu Tip could not be considered an ‘Arab Hero’…
- Omani elite of Tabora [story of ‘Marriage that never was…’] could not be regarded as either ‘elite’ or ‘Arab’ – bride in story likely daughter of African concubine, family typical of others in region
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But Ghazal says this is where British ‘got it wrong’:

- for Zanzibaris, being Arab was not about race [reflect on ‘visuals’ we have seen]
- argues it was language (Arabic) and culture (Omani) that marked differences (vis-à-vis Swahili) in local terms
- ‘ideal of cultural Arabness’ had long been important – acquired central role with arrival and development Bu’saidi dynasty/empire

Therefore, many felt ‘disenfranchised’ as consequence of British racial categorizing (and laws which followed on assumptions of ‘race’).
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Moreover: “Arabs”, including the Omanis and rest of Zanzibari elite conscious of being ‘colonized’:

- Ghazal points to various moments of ‘resistance’
- 1895 Sultan Hamad financed attack on Muscat to recover Oman from British, re-establish Oman-Zanzibar ‘empire’ (failed)
- against British ‘instructions’, appointed Khalid as successor
- attempts to foment rebellion from Zanzibar let to ‘shortest war in history’: twenty-five minutes of British bombardment ended sultan’s ‘rule’; many who supported fled to Oman

- 1913: another attack (in Oman) with overt involvement from Zanzibaris who’d returned to Oman and Zanzibar’s support
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Support both material and ideological:
- leading Zanzibari poet urged that ‘all Muslims should follow this exemplary revolution and overthrow rulers [everywhere] who bowed to Europeans’
- and ‘[join them] in attempting to revive the past glory of Islam’

Key Development to emerge from this: ‘neo-Ibadism’
- merging pan-Ibadis and pan-Sunnis in response to shared experience of colonialism

[development also relevant for both Sokoto and Algerian case studies]
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“Salafiyya” movement:

- platform Islamic Reform and Unity
- Jamal al-din al-Afghani (central figure in Ottoman pan-islamism, late 19th C.), began to have impact in Zanzibar
- number of Egyptians prominent in movement, resident in Zanzibar
- wealthy Omani landlords and Sultans ‘open to these ideas’
- close connections between Egypt and Zanzibar turn of century
- continued relations Ottomans: 1907, Sultan Ali received in Istanbul, next year, Grand Vizier visited Zanzibar
- general ‘sympathy’ for Ottomans under European attack
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WW I:
- Ottomans joined in war on side of Germans: Sultan issued ‘call to *jihad*’ – exploiting pan-Islamism, Muslims everywhere had duty to fight against ‘threat’ of British-French alliance
- raised problem of ‘loyalty’ for Zanzibar: under British ‘protection’ but long and close connections with Ottomans
- many argued for open support of Ottomans/Germans
- British attacking Germans on neighboring mainland
- needed Zanzibar support: difficult to obtain
- under pressure, Sultan Khalifa issued formal statement that ‘Muslims in Zanzibar and East Africa’ should cease their support for ‘the Turks’ and show loyalty to the British
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Not universally effective:

- Omani ‘Arabs’ in Tabora gathered support for exiled Sultan Khalid (victim of ‘shortest war’) to aid Germans against British on mainland Africa. [think how seamlessly Rashid bin Hassani moved between these two enemy territories…British not exaggerating vulnerability.]

- Inland ‘resistance’ movements continued until Khalid’s capture 1917

Situation best expressed in intelligence report July 1917 (quoted by Ghazal):

“[the] Mohammedans of the Swahili speaking area have been given furiously to think by the declaration of the JIHAD from STAMBOUL”
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Interwar years: anti-colonial ‘tone’ sharpened

1. dismemberment of Ottoman empire
   - former ‘centre’ of Islam, dominated intellectual discussion
   - opened up role for ‘peripheries’, including Zanzibar

2. colonial policies re: education and economy:
   - education policies (favouring English) seen as marginalizing language (Arabic) and religion (Islam)
   -
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1. Dismemberment Ottoman Empire

- “Another Andalus”…
- reference (Ghazal’s title) was to effort in medieval Europe (Spain) to ‘recreate’ centre of Islamic learning, culture, wealth beyond the increasingly ‘corrupt’ East (Damascus, Baghdad)

- Zanzibar was seen by one observer as fulfilling same role as Ottoman empire ‘declined’
- in post-war settlement, empire divided up between victors
- colonization emasculated Islamic world

- Zanzibar’s Arab, Muslim elite saw itself as opposing colonialism on behalf of larger Arab, Muslim world – in no way part of narrow ‘Arab’ definition attached to them by British
2. Colonial policies re: (a) education:

[Ghazal] “‘Arabs” saw in British educational system attempt to de-Arabize and de-Islamize Zanzibaris and Zanzibar and a threat to those most sacred elements of the elite’s identity: language and religion. Al-Falaq [main newspaper] criticized the Department of Education for being:

“headed by a foreign colonizer aided by a number of his fellow citizens, executing a plan of pure colonization and enslavement… It is a department that chases, persecutes and uproots the Arabic language while it is the language of the master of this country, that of the victors who converted this land, the language of thirty one thousand Arabs… By not knowing their language and by lacking national pride, they [Arabs] are behind in terms of the renaissance among their kin in other countries. By not knowing the language of the Qur’an, the Muhammadan sunna [tradition] and the Islamic Sharī‘a, they have moved away from their religion, its merits and its virtues.”
“By eroding the Arabic language and religious studies from the curriculum, Omanis believed the British were not only trying to damage their identity and that of the island but also trying to sever Zanzibar’s relationship with the broader Arab-Muslim world.”

This is her key argument vis-à-vis ‘traditional’ presentation of ‘Arabs benefitted from and supported British Rule’.
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2. Colonial policies re: (b) economy

- Ghazal acknowledges *general* policies favoured ‘Arabs’ (as defined by British)
- points out that impact of anti slavery policies in economic sense cannot be underestimated: elite lost considerably (and increasingly) with respect to benefits of commerce and labour
- (read alongside Limbert): shifting policies encouraging different crops led to increased emphasis on colonial ‘cash crops’, less on subsistence crops (food)
- recent thesis argues that shift affected growing of rice, staple foodstuff of *all* Zanzibaris but part of ‘cultural identity’ of so-called Arab elite
- wanted Zanzibar to import rice from other British colonies: had price and supply implications
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- many ‘Arabs’ forced increasingly into debt
- early 1930s, impact of Depression: some ‘Arabs’ forced into foreclosure vis-à-vis Indian creditors
- British ‘policy’ to protect only extended as far as its definition of ‘Arab’
- economic policy ‘celebrated’ by those arguing for British collaboration, seen as part of problem of ‘disenfranchisement’ felt by ‘other’ Arabs
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What we do not learn from Ghazal’s analysis is how others in Zanzibar society understood the situation during colonial rule.

Limbert speaks in part to this issue: differentiates between ‘Omanis’ (not addressed by Ghazal because of focus; not recognized by British)

- introduces nuances of socio-economic background
- and gender
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Limbert’s article uses different methodology and has very different focus:

- notes that early 20th c. immigration from Oman was very different than 19th migrations
- from interior of Oman (not coast), migrate because of poverty (not wealth/power)
- unlike predecessors: farmers, shopkeepers, migrant labourers, plantation overseers
- unlike predecessors: included women (as workers, not concubines)

Story is of one woman who came to Zanzibar as part of those migrations, made life in rural Zanzibar – was forced to leave by Revolution – history recorded orally (1996)
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Limbert confirms Ghazal’s characterization of the ‘historiography’ of the Omanis:
- notes in particular over-emphasis on either ‘mercantile’ or ‘scholarly’ role/contributions

BUT: would be critical in one respect – degree to which Ghazal ‘buys into’ received wisdom about socio-economic ‘class’ of Omanis
- argues that in fact, most Omanis belonged to neither category (neither merchants nor scholars) but were in fact ‘petty’ merchants, itinerant labourers, farmers – who moved with their families
- also these migrants did not live in StoneTown or other urban centers but rather in rural areas, villages, shambas
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Were they ‘Arabs’ in British Colonial Zanzibar?

- some ‘fit’ definition ‘patrilineal descendants of free Arab men’
- others clearly ‘servants’, patrilineal descendants East African slave women:

[Limbert] “[while] others were akhdâm, literally “servants,” who were themselves patrilineal descendants of slaves from East Africa. Although in Zanzibar these early twentieth century immigrants were (officially at least) considered “Arabs,” they were generally also considered of lower status than the Omanis who had settled in Zanzibar in the previous centuries and who had established themselves as an elite, creole community. Many of the newcomers were termed “manga Arabs,” a pejorative term with debatable Zanzibari origins that was appropriated by British officials and that continues to have significance in contemporary Zanzibar.”
“Manga Arabs” vs “Arabs”:

- Rashid bin Hassani noted difference when he spoke of being purchased by ‘Manga Arab’ in Kilwa, sold in Zanzibar through ‘master of slave market’ an ‘Arab’: terms and distinctions not limited to colonial era

Limbert recounts that relations were often conflictual: violence recorded between ‘Omani’ and ‘Manga’ Arabs 1925, 1936, 1941

Numerous attempts by British to limit immigration: still % ‘Arabs’ nearly doubled (8.2 % to 14.2 1931) during that time, many ‘Manga’
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Economic Changes:

- 1939 Clove Growers Association began purchasing directly from producers
- eliminated role of agents, many of whom were immigrants
- increase in number destitute Arabs: forced repatriation, limited immigration
- WW II: controlling ships in Indian Ocean
- uncertainty of immigrants being accepted in Zanzibar led to ‘price gouging’ on part of private companies
- meanwhile, Oman suffering from drought, poverty, sporadic civil war: Zanzibar remained distant ‘Andalus’
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- Local “Arab Association” brought in to ameliorate situation
- in part, shifting responsibility

- 1945 Acting British Secretary of State wrote:
“\textit{I think the food situation [shortages affecting Zanzibar, East Africa because of the war] and the employment position are the best remaining arguments for continuing [Arab immigration] restrictions, and more might be made of them}”

Clear that the ‘Arab Problem’ was no longer one of the Omani Elite.
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Story of Ghania:

- situation provided context for story Limbert recounted
- like Ghazal, found much of Zanzibar’s history in Oman
- Ghania’s story reveals much about post-war Zanzibar from ‘Manga Arab’ perspective
- also degree to which Zanzibar and Oman remained ‘connected’
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Ghanaia:

- was from very poor family, married paternal cousin
- early 1950s: migrated to Zanzibar where ‘life was better’
- initially ‘looked after’ by Arab Association
- went to live in village outside of Zanzibar Town
- clove economy in trouble, her husband worked in copral
- managed store: Ghanaia proud of her independence
- of interest is ‘labour question’: all Omanis, ‘they were servants or you rented them’
- Ghanaia elides question of “how people of the servant class, although engaged in wage labour, continued to be servants” [Limbert]

From here, her interview moves into 1964 and The Revolution [for discussion Wednesday]
Interview revealing of how ‘connections’ with Oman continued to shape Zanzibar’s population during Protectorate

- cannot understand role of British solely in terms of ‘Indirect Rule’ and traditional historiography
- colonialism and colonial economy fundamentally re-shaped nature of ‘being Arab’
- elites drawn increasingly into Arab Muslim (Ibadi) world, anti-colonial movements: ‘being Muslim’ changed (Salafiyya movement)
- saw themselves as victims of colonialism
- others --Swahili, mainland Africans, poorer ‘Manga’ Arabs -- saw them as privileged, benefitting from colonialism
- Political situation during late 1950s: volatile